

**SOCIALIZING LANDSCAPES, NATURALIZING CONFLICT:
ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSES AND LAND CONFLICT IN THE NEGEV
REGION OF ISRAEL**

by

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PREFACE: NOTES ON LANGUAGE

Fieldwork for this dissertation was conducted in Hebrew, Arabic, and English. Unless otherwise noted, all translations in the text are my own. When providing original Hebrew or Arabic terminology, I generally transcribe using characters easily understandable to English readers. Rather than using extensive diacritics to transliterate Hebrew or Arabic characters that differ dramatically from English characters, such as *ayin* (א.ע), *chet* (ח), and *qaf* (ק), I approximate them to English characters. When referring to Bedouin colloquial Arabic terms, I transliterate the colloquial pronunciation, rather than the Modern Standard Arabic pronunciation. Where it may be of particular interest to Hebrew and Arabic speakers, I include the original term in Hebrew or Arabic characters.

Choosing conventions for labeling people and places in a context of sociopolitical conflict is notoriously sensitive. An array of labels exists to identify approximately the same group of people: “Bedouins,” “Bedouin Arabs,” “Israel's Arab citizens,” “Bedouin Palestinians,” and “Palestinian citizens of Israel,” to name a few. Group belonging, both in terms of the proper terminology and lines demarcating insiders and outsiders, is a key area of contestation for the conflicts I study. Do Bedouin residents of Israel have more meaningful connections with Jewish Israelis or with Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza? Are Bedouins a distinct cultural group, or is this label an artifact the Israeli government uses to weaken Arab unity? And what does it mean to be Bedouin in a time and place where nomadism is impossible and pastoralism is nearly so? These are not idle academic questions of definition, and so I choose my terminology carefully. “Bedouin Arab” encompasses the multiple senses of belonging most commonly expressed by interlocutors in the field, so I prefer this term. However, when referring to others' perspectives in the text, I shift to using their terminology.

The label “Jewish Israelis” distinguishes other residents of my research site from the global ethno-religious group of “Jews.” Though this label is less contested, there are

those who find it restrictive, for instance those self-identifying as “Arab Jews” or advocates of a shared “Levantine culture,” both of whom call for recognition of a common Arab identity that is not negated by Jewishness. These social labels are ethnographically useful because they convey common understandings about group boundaries in Israel. Unfortunately, the labeling convention also risks reifying these group boundaries and sidelining alternative notions of identity and relatedness. I discuss the theoretical implications of this issue further in the introduction.

Place naming is also fraught with historical and contemporary power relations. When discussing a place within the narrative of one group or another, I use the name commonly attributed by that group, such as “Naqab” among Arabic speakers and “Negev” among Hebrew speakers. Otherwise, I use common English names (in this case, “Negev”), where these are available.

To guard my interlocutors' anonymity, all personal names given for them are pseudonyms, unless they were acting as public figures (e.g., governmental officials). In choosing pseudonyms, I have attempted to preserve the cultural, gender, and generational associations of original names. Because much of my fieldwork was conducted in two small communities, I use pseudonyms for these two places: ‘Ayn al-‘Azm for the Bedouin township and Dganim for the Jewish *moshav*. However, community pseudonyms are not always sufficient to protect community members from unwanted scrutiny and unwelcome social analysis (Scheper-Hughes 2000). For the sake of accurately depicting these communities and understanding the socio-environmental dynamics shaping land relations and views of land conflict, I include significant detail about these places and their residents, and those intimately involved in Negev society and politics may well guess the communities to which I refer. Together with the use of individual pseudonyms, though, I hope to safeguard the personal details of those who were kind enough to teach and talk with me.

When writing of Bedouin “unrecognized villages,” however, I use the settlements' actual names. As I analyze the efforts of residents in these communities to gain recognition from the Israeli government and public, I do not wish to repeat the social erasure against which they struggle. Similarly, when writing about Bustan, the grassroots activist group with which I researched for the first half of fieldwork, I have complied

with leaders' request that the real name of their organization be used. When referring to members' activities in previously publicized contexts, I use their real names, as well. For private conversations, I use pseudonyms, and efforts taken to disguise personal identities may include altering small details, such as the time or location reported for a conversation.

Finally, I follow norms of quotation that distinguish between verbatim and reconstructed statements. Any text set in quotation marks represents a verbatim transcript of a statement. When reporting speech based on field notes, but without a full transcript, I strive to render text that is true to the style and content of the original comments. However, because it is not verbatim, I do not use quotation marks.

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GLOSSARY

AJEEC	Arab-Jewish Center for Equality Empowerment and Cooperation
Bedouin Authority	Bedouin Advancement Authority
Bustan	Bustan l'Shalom (Bustan al-Salaam)
Coexistence Forum	Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality
Green Patrol	(הסירת הירוקה); enforcement branch of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority
Green Police	(המשטרה הירוקה); enforcement branch of the Ministry of Environmental Protection
Histadrut	General Federation of Laborers in the Land of Israel
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
ILA	Israel Land Administration
IUED	Israel Union for Environmental Defense
JA	Jewish Agency
JNF	Jewish National Fund (Hebrew: <i>Keren Kayemet l'Yisrael</i>)
KKL	<i>See</i> JNF
NDA	Negev Development Authority
NGO	nongovernmental organization
RCUV	Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages (in the Negev)
SPNI	Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel
WZO	World Zionist Organization
<i>aliyah</i>	“ascent,” commonly used in Hebrew to refer to immigration to Israel
<i>aretz</i>	“land” or “country,” <i>see footnote 21</i>
<i>‘arisha</i>	a gathering space for the women of the household and their visitors
<i>‘ashira</i>	tribe
<i>barra</i>	“outside,” or “outside the planned townships” for Naqab Bedouins
<i>bedaawa</i>	Bedouinness
<i>chalutz</i>	pioneer (plural: <i>chalutzim</i>)
<i>chevreman</i>	“group guy,” or a good or friendly person
<i>dira</i>	a well-defined territory within which a tribe or group migrates
<i>dunam</i>	approximately ¼ acre
<i>eda</i>	ethnic group (plural: <i>edot</i>)
<i>fallah</i>	(peasant) farmer (plural: <i>fallahin</i>)
<i>freier</i>	approximately, “sucker”
<i>hagshama</i>	realization (of the Zionist mission)
<i>‘izbe</i>	a camp or retreat (however, <i>see</i> chapter four for a more specific usage)
<i>Iyur HaBedowim</i>	Urbanization of the Bedouin

<i>kibbutz</i>	a collective, or formerly collective, agricultural community
<i>madrach</i>	guide or advisor (plural: <i>madrachim</i>)
<i>meshek</i>	family plot of land (plural: <i>meshekim</i>)
<i>moadon kashishim</i>	senior's club
<i>moshav</i>	a type of cooperative agricultural community, less economically and socially collective than a <i>kibbutz</i>
<i>moshav olim</i>	immigrants' <i>moshavim</i> (plural: <i>moshvei olim</i>)
<i>sabr</i>	patience
<i>sabra</i>	a Jew who was born in Palestine during the <i>Yishuv</i> period, especially during the 1930s and through the end of World War II
<i>sayaara</i>	shared taxi (literally, “car”) (plural: <i>sayaarat</i>)
<i>shabbat</i>	Saturday, the Jewish day of rest
<i>shetach</i>	territory
<i>shig</i>	a tent or room for hosting guests
<i>siyag</i>	fence, enclosure; a specific area of enclosure instituted in the northern Negev
<i>sumud</i>	steadfastness
<i>tabo</i>	deed of ownership
<i>taboun</i>	oven, traditionally made of earth and straw
<i>wadi</i>	dry stream bed
<i>Yishuv</i>	a time period beginning with the initiation of Zionist immigration to Palestine (in the 1890s) and ending with the establishment of the state; also used to designate the society of Jews living in Palestine at this time

Introduction

The problem of land conflict in the Naqab is bigger than in the West Bank, Sliman told me. We stood together one spring day in 2009 on a rooftop overlooking the hills of the northern Naqab/Negev and the faint outline of the Separation Barrier running through the southern West Bank near the horizon.¹ Soon, Sliman continued, the Palestinian Authority will take real governmental control throughout the West Bank, and there will not be a problem of land conflict there. But here, he gestured to direct my gaze to the land below us and to the south, there are Bedouins in almost every place. The problem, he told me, is that all these lands are also “designated as something else” now.

The areas where we saw clusters of Bedouin Arabs' homes were designated in Israeli state records as national forest lands, sites for building Jewish communities, or agricultural zones. State government officials do not recognize Bedouin hamlets and villages as legitimate settlements and order residents—between 65,000 and 100,000, by widely varying estimates—to move to one of seven government-planned townships.² Because state land-use designations have been assigned without consideration of village families' ownership claims and historical residence in these landscapes, despite the presence of many of these villages and hamlets since prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Bedouin Arab residents do not recognize the legitimacy of these state plans. An impasse festers, forming layers of resentment and sometimes erupting into violence. Residents continue to inhabit and expand the villages labeled as “unrecognized,” and government demolition crews continue to destroy houses and crops

1 The region name, “Naqab” in Arabic and “Negev” in Hebrew, is most often referred to in English as Negev. The Separation Barrier is also referred to as “security barrier,” “separation fence,” and the “Apartheid Wall,” depending largely on the political viewpoint of the speaker. All terms refer to a complex of concrete wall, electrified fencing, trenches, barbed wire, patrol roads, and watchtowers that is partially constructed and slated to run along the entire West Bank border, though veering well into West Bank territory in many places.

2 See Swirski and Hasson (2006). An additional nine communities have gained statutory recognition under the Abu Basma Regional Council (formed in 2005). Residents of these villages have seen few material changes, such as the building of roads or connection of homes to the national electricity grid, and the villages are not open for the settlement of new families.

in these villages.

Sliman's pronouncement of forthcoming clarity and calm in the West Bank may have been unrealistically optimistic. But his negative contrast between the Naqab and the West Bank, a region publicized world-wide for its virulent land conflict, conveys the deep and stubborn tensions he senses in Naqab land relations. This was not a naïve comparison. As we stood on this rooftop in a *kibbutz* built and occupied by Jewish settlers in 1952,³ we were also standing in the place where Sliman, a Bedouin Arab, and his family had once lived. Sliman and his immediate family have Israeli citizenship, but their extended family members do not, because they were on the other side of the Green Line in 1949 when this boundary was established by the armistice between Israel and Jordan.⁴ Sliman lived with his extended family in the West Bank, on a section of their family lands there. He came across the Green Line every day to work as a guide in the Bedouin cultural museum on the *kibbutz*, as well as in his own business as a desert tour guide. He knew the region well, and he was voicing a concern I had heard in different forms during many other conversations since first arriving in the Negev two years earlier.

Public discussions and newspaper articles, as well as both Jewish and Arab interlocutors, worried of a looming “Bedouin Intifada” because of mounting frustration over structural violence and second-class citizenship status (Barzilai 2004; Kabha 2007).⁵ I asked many people how this problem should be solved. It's not possible, many replied. The sense of inevitability and pessimism surrounding land conflict was palpable in the attitudes of my interlocutors, both Jewish and Bedouin Arab. In another ten years, Sarah told me as we sat together in the shade of her courtyard in a Bedouin Arab township, “there will be more people with less land... The same situation, but worse.” Or, as Ofra summarized as we sat in the living room of her home in a Jewish *moshav*, “it's a very complicated problem, more like hatred... And it's only getting worse.”⁶ As they spoke of

3 A *kibbutz* is a collective, or formerly collective, agricultural community.

4 The Green Line was originally the demarcation set by the 1949 Armistice Agreement between Israel and Jordan. Following the 1967 War and Israel's capture of the West Bank, it became a *de facto* border between the Israeli occupied Palestinian West Bank and the internationally recognized territory of Israel.

5 Intifada, meaning awakening or popular uprising in Arabic, is commonly used to refer to the Palestinian uprisings in the Occupied Territories with the approximate dates of 1987-1993 (the First Intifada) and 2000-2005 (the Second Intifada).

6 A *moshav* is a type of cooperative agricultural community, less economically and socially collective than a *kibbutz*.

hatred and ethnically divisive competition for land, Sarah and Ofra sat in two of the segregated communities that result from and feed into this conflict. While border crossing such as Sliman's did occur, it was relatively rare, and even Sliman's *kibbutz* employment did not challenge Israel's norms of residential segregation.

There has been no shortage of plans offered to solve these land disputes and their social reverberations. Many start from decidedly limited, “one-eyed” perspectives (Schoenfeld 2005) that project the historical narrative and priorities of one side uniformly to all of the parties involved. These “one-eyed” narratives describe “the Bedouin problem,” condensing all the complexities of these socio-environmental conflicts and assigning singular blame. For example, Ofra concluded her pessimistic forecast by suggesting that the situation would improve if Bedouins simply stopped “spreading out all over, taking all the lands of the Negev for their *chamulot* (clans).”⁷ If they have land, she explained, they should pass it on to one son, like “us, here,” where one son can build on the *meshek* (family plot of land), and the other sons must go elsewhere to live.

Other proposals are more binocular. On an earlier visit to the same *kibbutz* where Sliman and I gazed out from the rooftop, I had met with and interviewed Oren, one of the *kibbutz*'s founders and a retired administrator for the Bedouin Authority.⁸ Oren is an outspoken critic of land dispute narratives that assign blame solely to Bedouin Arabs; he calls for significant changes from government administrators. He has been sought out by Bedouin leaders in the past, being perceived as a fair arbiter who could help them negotiate disputes with various local and national governmental authorities. We sat in a well-appointed living room full of books and artwork, many pieces of which had been gifts during his travels in Jordan and among tribal leaders in Israel, as Oren shared colorful stories and social analysis. He contended that the main problem is a lack of equality between Bedouin Arab and Jewish citizens, and that the solution lies in education and governmental initiatives to raise Bedouins' material living standards. “It's not possible,” Oren declared animatedly as we sat sipping tea from delicate china and

7 *Chamulot* is a Hebrew pluralization of the Arabic term for clan (حمولة). As used often in popular Hebrew speech, it carries connotations of an unsophisticated sociopolitical system, corruption, and an inward family focus.

8 The Bedouin Authority, a department of the national government without the participation of Bedouin Arabs in leadership positions, was established in 1965 under the Israel Land Administration and has drawn comparisons, among scholars and interlocutors in the field, to the United State Bureau of Indian Affairs (e.g., Swirski and Hasson 2006).

looking out his window to the misty, early-spring hills, “to have a population like that, of the Bedouin, that doesn't have industry or [a way to] earn a living, nor quality of life, and beside them, you build another [Jewish] settlement that has a high quality of life. There will always be conflicts between these two settlements.” While Oren's approach is binocular in terms of seeking satisfaction for both disputing parties, it still applies a single standard of quality based on his notion of progress. He praised some Bedouin leaders who “came to me. They understood that it's necessary to change, to advance” by leaving behind agricultural practices and seeking integration in Israeli schools and labor markets. This advancement will come, he asserted, “only... if settlements are built this way: that they are progressive settlements, allowed to develop, and good schools, education. And that's the basis. After that things will come on their own.”

Oren achieved his optimism, in part, by setting the problem of land disputes aside, as something that would resolve itself if all residents of the Negev had more equal employment opportunities and more similar education. But are attachments to land and the particular ways of life they enable so easily set aside? Before Sliman and I had climbed to the roof that day to view the contested hills around us, he led me a few steps down a walking path set amidst tall pine trees. Now, he stopped and said, he wanted to show me the well that his grandfather made. He explained how his extended family had been scattered by the war in 1948 and subsequently settled in surrounding townships in Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan. One old woman from his family was born here but went to Jordan in 1948 and had not been back since. Sliman brought her here recently, he told me, and she was amazed at how much the place she remembered had changed, the pine forests that had been planted and the *kibbutz* houses, factory, and education center that had been built. Yet, amidst all these changes, she walked around pointing out that there had been a house here, and here. And there was a well here, too, she had recalled, standing just where Sliman and I paused along the path. Sliman described how they had searched for the well that day, but could not find it. After she left, Sliman said, he was coming in this side gate one day and noticed a piece of wood on the ground, overgrown with brush. Grasping this wood as he spoke to me, he lifted it up to reveal the cap of a narrow well. After more than fifty years, she still remembered just where the well had been, he concluded quietly. Sliman said no more, but silently led me back up the path,

leaving me to interpret the meaning of this long-held memory.

A cacophony of opinions, emotional expressions, historical explanations, and prognostications, circulates within the Negev, and increasingly, throughout Israel and beyond. No single Bedouin perspective exists, as some pursue gradual integration within Israeli society in economic, political and cultural terms, while others push for distinctive cultural rights that would allow for some Bedouin separation and autonomy within the Israeli state. Some live in unrecognized villages and refuse any resolution short of full recognition of land tenure rights, while others seek compensation for loss of their land and call for better government-planned townships. Similarly, there is no single Jewish Israeli perspective. Some appeal for recognition of Bedouin land rights and participate in collaborative political projects, while others criticize these collaborators as traitors to the Jewish people. Jews of many ethnic backgrounds, including Mizrahim, or “Arab Jews,” have experienced discrimination at the hands of other Jews. Yet, despite this heterogeneity and these cross-cutting affiliations that challenge strictly bounded group identities, land disputes in the Negev are most commonly spoken of—in media coverage, personal testimonials, and scholarly analysis—as a stand-off between well-defined and naturally distinct groups of Bedouin Arabs and Jews. To understand this seeming contradiction, I address three central questions that reach to the heart of the conflict. What kinds of attachment to land are people fighting over? How are particular lines of opposition entrenched as “natural,” such that conflict is taken for granted? Do any avenues being explored to resolve this conflict move beyond these naturalized oppositions?

In this dissertation, I argue that the Negev's current land conflicts have been built and escalated largely by the entrenchment of environmental discourses. These discourses draw boundaries around and naturalize opposing groups of Jews and Arabs, establish land relations as a competitive clash between these groups, favor certain land-use practices and aesthetics over others, and privilege a circumscribed notion of property rights over other types of land claims, such as historic occupancy. This conclusion draws from an examination of environmental discourses across different realms in Israeli society, including residential communities, legislative proceedings, and sociopolitical activism. This research addresses the personal, experiential sides of this sociopolitical

conflict, which is too often analyzed primarily in impersonal strategic terms.

Commonly, the term “environment” connotes rurality and wilderness or refers to an interactional model that focuses on human and non-human beings sharing a landscape. My use of the term includes both landscapes and ecosystems, whether a dense, urban neighborhood or a high desert plateau. These environmental discourses are also applied to the relationships between and amongst inhabitants of these places. In Israel, this often includes a biologized view of discrete Jewish and Muslim groups. I draw on Foucault's notion of “discourse,” which includes a range of discussions, bodily practices, and institutional norms (Foucault 1977). Thus, herding sheep, planting crops, building fences, houses, and factories, and speaking about these and other land-use practices all constitute environmental discourses.

Institutional practices, such as legislation, land-use planning, and social policy, work powerfully to coalesce dominant environmental discourses and enact their material consequences. However, it is also necessary to attend to the “micro-practices” (Moore 2005) of both everyday dwelling and organized activism to fully understand the pervasiveness of socio-environmental conflict in the Negev. Norms of land use and group boundaries are defined and deployed in the documents of government ministries, public statements by political and cultural leaders, the material realities of state-planned residences, and the everyday practices and discussions of people living in these places (Kosek 2006). In this strife, territory is not being fought over merely by brute force and the instrumental manipulation of laws. Rather, people on both sides are making claims through ethical arguments. Actors from all points of the political spectrum, including residents, are using environmental discourse to make and impose claims about good and bad uses of land, the moral character of persons, rights and responsibilities of community membership, and ethical governance.

The Negev is a “remote area,” both in topographical terms and in its sociopolitical position (Ardener 1989) within Israel, and this remoteness has shaped the development of land conflict and the depth of scholarly knowledge available about it. Because of its remoteness, disputes in the Negev have been understudied in comparison to land conflict regarding the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Peteet 2005b; Swedenburg 1990; Braverman 2009; Collins 2004) or areas in central and northern Israel (Slyomovics 1998;

Rabinowitz 1997; Stein 2008; Abu El-Haj 2001). This study contributes to existing literature by focusing on the Negev as a site for understanding the social drivers and dynamics of land conflict. Such a focus requires attention to the specificities of the region that shape land struggles, such as its geography, sociopolitically remote status, historical social relations, and the shared citizenship of all involved.

The Negev desert's overall aridity, widely variable yearly precipitation, and lack of permanent rivers historically encouraged pastoralism and semi-nomadic lifestyles, rather than intensive farming or large, permanent communities (Abu-Rabia 1994; Hillel 1982).⁹ The northern Negev, which has long been the most densely populated area and is now the site of most land ownership disputes, consists primarily of high plateau and receives more rainfall than areas further south.¹⁰ The region's sparse settlement in the past, and its hilly and arid inaccessibility, meant that imperial governance by the Ottomans and later the British was relatively indirect. But this was followed abruptly by the creation of a state in 1948 that simultaneously applied citizenship status to Bedouins and other Arabs living within the new borders and imposed military rule over them.¹¹ The

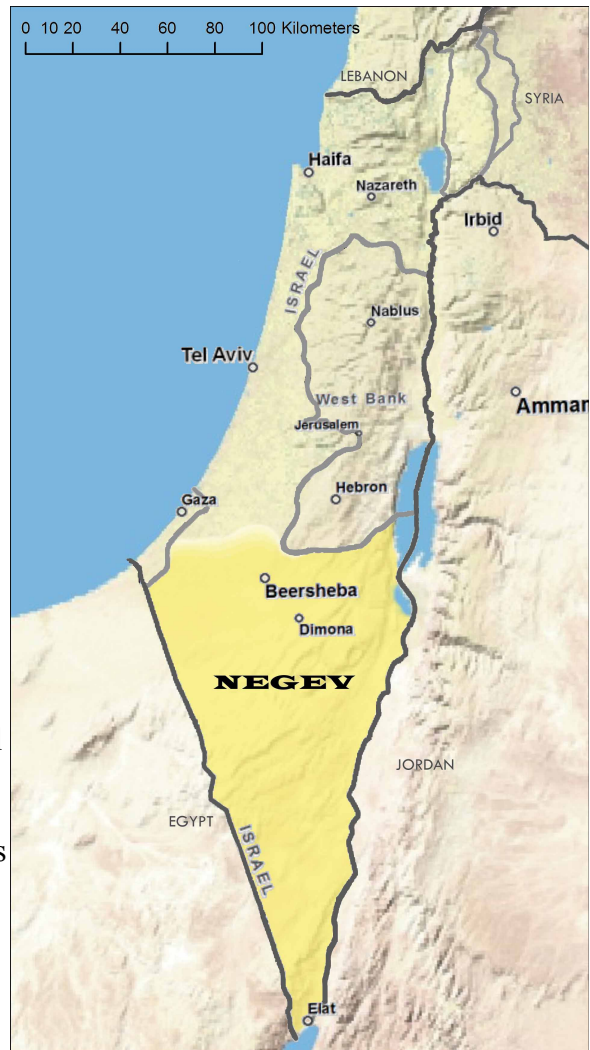


Image 1: Map of Israel, Negev region shaded

⁹ The Negev is primarily a rocky landscape with many craggy hills. Loess soil (“buff-colored, fine-grained, wind-borne deposit of desert dust”) covers some areas, being particularly plentiful in the northwest and some valleys in the central Negev (Hillel 1982:74).

¹⁰ Precipitation levels are lowest in the Arava Valley of the southeast (25mm) and highest in the northwest (200-300mm annual) (Hillel 1982:74).

¹¹ Legal citizenship in Israel is conferred by the 1950 Law of Return and the 1952 Nationality Law. The former grants every Jew the right to “settle in Israel,” but does not actually use the language of citizenship. The latter grants citizenship by birth, the Law of Return, residence, and naturalization, and stipulates that former citizens of British Mandate Palestine who remained in Israel from the

region's previously sparse population and low-intensity farming also influenced the way Zionist projects were taken up there. When Zionist settlement and farming efforts, which had begun elsewhere in Palestine in the late nineteenth century, reached the Negev in the 1940s, they were particularly closely tied to rhetorics of taming the wilderness and dependent on intensive, state-driven infrastructure projects such as irrigation networks. The Bedouin Arab groups who inhabited most of the Negev prior to 1948 were organized tribally, and land governance and use rights were recognized primarily through undocumented means and according to norms that have proven to be incompatible with subsequently established Israeli property law. All these factors have influenced the environmental discourses and practical tactics, such as identity politics, legal arguments, and insurgent planting, enlisted in the land struggles of this region.

Notwithstanding its remote status, these land struggles in the Negev has developed within the larger context of Palestinian-Israeli battles over land, sovereignty, and security, and within the wider set of Arab-Israeli hostilities. As during earlier periods of settlement, Jewish Israeli leaders continue to emphasize the need to secure strong, impermeable state borders and buffer zones from surrounding Arab countries. They win considerable popular support among much of the electorate for such efforts. Among Jewish Israelis, anxieties about these external borders reverberate with concerns over “internal frontiers,” those areas within Israel with a high proportion of Arab residents, such as the Negev (Kimmerling 1983; Yiftachel and Meir 1998). Many Jewish Israelis express anxieties about the loyalties of Bedouin Arabs, wondering whether ties of religion, ethnicity, or nationality across state borders will override their shared Israeli citizenship.

For their part, Bedouin Arabs are well aware of these suspicions and struggle to negotiate ambivalent affiliations with Palestinian or pan-Arab identities and nationalist movements and Israeli state and society. Though juridical citizens of Israel, Bedouins, like other Palestinian citizens, experience a form of differentiated citizenship (Holston 2008), not being fully incorporated members of the nation-state because of its definition as Jewish. Furthermore, many Bedouin Arabs within the Naqab have ties of family and trade that cross-cut state borders. Before the establishment of these political borders,

establishment of the State in 1948 until the enactment of the Nationality Law of 1952 would become Israeli citizens (www.mfa.gov.il).

complex interrelationships of cooperation and competition had developed between residents along the northern ecological border regions of the Negev desert (el-Aref 1974; Marx 1967). Nomadic and semi-nomadic herders of the hilly and arid desert region traded, fought for land, negotiated, and married with farming families in the more thickly vegetated Hebron/Judean Hills to the northeast and the grassy coastal region of Gaza to the northwest (Abu-Rabia 2001; Parizot 2001).¹² These ties have been challenged in the wake of recent political developments, such as outbreaks of violence, changing employment trends and travel restrictions between the West Bank and Israel, and the building of the Separation Barrier, but residents have continued to adapt them (Parizot 2008).

Conflict and violence have become central to Israel's social structure and norms of relations (Sheffer and Barak 2010; Kemp et al. 2004; Smootha 2004a; Kimmerling 1983). Most often, this context of conflict manifests in the “everyday violence” (Scheper-Hughes 1993) of interpersonal prejudice and state-sanctioned structural inequalities, but open warfare has also killed many people and shaped the lives of those who remain. For example, during my fieldwork in 2009, armed conflict in and around Gaza killed more than 1,100 Palestinians in Gaza and 13 Israelis. Though such extraordinary events of violence dominate depictions of the region in international news media, they affect the daily lives of Negev residents in more subtle ways than this coverage would suggest (Swedenburg 1995b). Violence becomes routinized and part of the Negev's social landscape; residents continue in their daily routines (Scheper-Hughes 1993; Nordstrom 1997).

However, bursts of brutal violence continue to influence people's lives long after the missile firings and shootings have subsided. Resentment and suspicions shade interactions between Jewish and Arab Negev residents. The ambivalent affiliations of Bedouin Arabs of the Negev to Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank, with whom they share cultural and familial ties but from whom they are divided by state borders and societal differences, grow more vexed. As Victor Turner (1957) tells us, conflict and

¹² “Judean Hills” is a biblical name for this area deriving from the ancient Hebrew tribe of Judah, which carries connotations of a centuries-old connection between ancient Hebrews and modern Jews. “Hebron Hills” is a commonly used term without this biblical association, which associates the region with its largest city, Hebron. In Arabic, the hills are referred to as “Khalil.”

disharmony can be just as constitutive of a society's structural relationships as continuity and consonance, as the upheavals of social dramas most often reinforce pre-existing divisions. From a phenomenological perspective, “violence is a dimension of people's existence, not something external to society and culture that 'happens' to people” (Robben and Nordstrom 1995:3). This wider context of Palestinian-Israeli conflict profoundly affects individuals' senses of place, the political and economic consequences of changing land-use practices, and the stakes of personal senses of identity and affiliation.

In the remainder of this introduction, I will situate the dissertation's contributions to scholarship on nationalism and citizenship, environmental anthropology, theories of power, and social change theory. This discussion is divided into five sub-sections that outline the dissertation's arguments regarding (1) the formation of Jews and Arabs as bounded social groups, (2) the symbolic and material attachment of these groups to particular landscapes, (3) the application of a “dwelling perspective” to Negev socio-environmental relations, (4) a place-based analysis of power relations, and (5) the integration of activism with other practices of social change aimed at altering land relations. Throughout these sub-sections I explain how I integrate Foucauldian notions of power and discourse with phenomenologically influenced understandings of landscapes and dwelling to illuminate the development of Negev land conflict, its subsequent entrenchment, and potential resolution. After the theoretical introduction and discussion, I present the methodological and ethical conditions of my research and writing. Finally, I present an outline of the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

Groups and Boundaries

Negev residents' meaningful group categories—citizenship, ethnicity, national community, and culture—overlap and intertwine in often unpredictable ways. Bedouin Arabs may express fond affinity for Israeli society, as did one former farmer in his 60s as he told me about traveling in Turkey. He was walking through a foreign city, feeling out of place, when he heard two people speaking Hebrew as they walked past him. My heart warmed toward them, he said with a smile, just from hearing the language, because I thought of home. A young, Jewish American-Israeli expressed a different mingling of nationalism and cultural affiliation when she explained how important her Zionist ideals

were in prompting her activism on behalf of Bedouin land claims. Zionism, she said, helped her feel connected to “the land (*ha-aretz*)” and its people.

Within such an overlapping web of affiliations, how does Bedouin-Jewish division—and an overarching discourse of Jewish-Arab separation—become so taken-for-granted in political discussions of the region and often in mundane interactions? Scholars have addressed the hardening of group boundaries and the effects of inclusion and exclusion using a variety of lenses. Drawing on insights from research on nationalism, citizenship, and recognition, I examine the practices by which groupness is formed (Brubaker 2004) and differential citizenship is established and contested.

Though not simply a nationalist opposition, the Bedouin-Jewish and overarching Arab-Jewish divisions invoked in Negev land conflict draw force from the historical development of conflict between Zionist movements and Arab and Palestinian opposition. Attempting to account for the powerful force that nationalism has become in our world, recent scholars have argued against earlier primordialist approaches to nationalism that viewed national identity as a manifestation of real, natural connections between “a people” and “a land” (e.g., Smith 1987, 1989; Herder 1800). Instead, these more recent studies focus attention on how nationalisms form by building on other divisions, such as race (Anderson 1991), gender (Petee 1991), language (Gal 1995) and ethnicity (Zubrzycki 2002; Brubaker 2004). Yet, even these studies risk reifying land-people mappings by taking the “groupness” of entities such as the French and the Germans, Serbs and Croats, or in the case of the present study, Jews and Bedouin Arabs for granted and simply explaining how such groups have come into conflict (Brubaker 2004).

I aim to avoid this pitfall by heeding Rogers Brubaker's (2004) call to treat groupness as a social event, rather than an analytic category. Similarly, Donald Moore and his colleagues (2003) urge scholars to attend to the tangible political effects of cultural practices surrounding notions of race and nature. Brubaker (2004) suggests that researchers examine the discursive framing of ethnicity and the interpretation of group boundaries as they occur both through public projects involving organizations and institutions and through individual cognition.¹³ Here, I examine groupness as an event

¹³ Brubaker (2004:165) suggests that “Ethnic common sense—the tendency to partition the social world into putatively deeply constituted, quasi-natural intrinsic kinds (Hirschfeld 1998)—is a key part of what

and group-making as a project by tracing discourses of Jewishness and Bedouinness across the practices of Zionist organizations and governmental bodies, residential dwelling, and environmental justice activism.

For decades, actors on all sides of this socio-political conflict have participated in the instantiation of a “dual society paradigm,” which posits Jews and Arabs in Israel as discrete societies (Piterberg 2008).¹⁴ Of course, as I discuss these group-making processes, I must name the groups being formed, and in doing so, risk reifying them. This is an unavoidable dilemma, since attempting to discuss social life in Israel without reference to labels of “Jew,” “Arab,” “Mizrahi,” or “Ashkenazi” could not succeed in accurately depicting the place. Decades of group-making processes have done much to instantiate the dual-society paradigm as a material reality that includes residential segregation, separate schooling, social censoring of “intermarriage;” and differential access to medical care and reproductive assistance, high-income employment, and election to political office (Kanaaneh 2002; Rabinowitz 2001). In such a context, where these groups have become real and have profound consequences for the courses of people's lives, naming them is necessary, but sustaining a focus on how they are created and maintained is equally important. In addition, I attend to ways that these group-making processes are contested. For example, residents and scholars of Israel-Palestine sometimes invoke common Semitic roots, historically shared nomadic routes, and certain overlapping religious beliefs to express notions of relatedness (Shohat 1999; Alcalay 1993). The shared juridical citizenship of Jewish and Bedouin Arab residents of the Negev also contradicts a dual society paradigm in normative and practical terms.

Because this shared Israeli citizenship exists alongside stark inequalities, my analysis attends to the ways citizenship is mediated by discursive and material practice (Holston and Appadurai 1999; Ong 2003). Approaching citizenship as a juridical matter, other scholars have demonstrated the discrepancy between legal Israeli citizenship (which grants equal juridical status regardless of Jewish or Arab identity) and other legal mechanisms—such as laws of land ownership and land-use planning, military

we want to explain, not what we want to explain things *with*; it belongs in our empirical data, not in our analytical toolkit.”

14 Scholars who study these as natural groups, rather than categories created through ongoing group-making practices, risk participating in the bounding off “Jew” and “Arab” as separate and salient social markers.

conscription, employment law, and budgetary allocation—that differentiate between Jews and Arabs (Abu Hussein and McKay 2003; Quigley 2005).¹⁵ I build on this scholarship by examining citizenship's inclusionary and exclusionary role in group-making.

While the formal rights of juridical citizenship are important (Locke 1988; Mill 2003), citizenship's benefits and pressures to conform do not always correspond neatly to juridical categories. For example, as Ong (2003) shows among Cambodian immigrants to the United States, accessing the benefits of citizenship is not simply guaranteed by passing a test and taking an oath, but rather requires immigrants to assimilate certain cultural and religious ethics. Ong unbundles citizenship as an idiom of rights from citizenship as a social process, which shapes citizen-subjects according to behavioral and ethical expectations, and which is mediated by the practices of governmental workers who distribute state resources and services. Ong's work is part of a wider trend in scholarship that focuses on the practices that define members of society and shape the uneven flow of resources through society (B. S. Turner 1993; Holston and Appadurai 1999). This citizenship research also shows the frequent gaps between legal citizenship and other aspects of belonging in nation-states along lines of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, and health (Ong 2003, 2006; Chase 1998; Ticktin 2006; Asad 1993; Brown 2006). This unbundling and attention to gaps and uneven flows helps to explain seeming contradictions between the equal juridical status of Bedouin Arabs and Jews and the vast discrepancies in their abilities to exercise political rights and experience other forms of belonging within Israeli society.

Concentration on citizenship also reveals the contradictions inherent to this mode of belonging. On the one hand, in the Negev as elsewhere, some residents and activists, particularly of poor, urban areas (Holston 1995, 2008; Appadurai 2002), successfully invoke democratic citizenship to counter entrenched systems of inequality and gain access to the state resources denied them. On the other hand, inclusion through multicultural citizenship can feel oppressive for some, rather than emancipatory (Brown 2006; Shohat 1999; Povinelli 2002).

15 Some political scientists and sociologists draw from this set of legal contradictions to debate typologies that would define Israel as an “ethnic democracy” (Smootha 1997), “non-democratic” (Ghanem, Rouhana, and Yiftachel 1998), or an “ethnocracy” (Yiftachel 2000). Others focus on these legal considerations because they serve as a documented and widely recognized basis for claiming rights and resources (Abu Hussein and McKay 2003; Shafir and Peled 2002; cf, Soysal 1994).

In the Negev, these boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are often discussed in terms of recognition. Though entwined with the practices of citizenship, the politics of recognition also invokes wider questions of identity politics and social belonging. For the approximately 90,000 Bedouin Arab residents of “unrecognized villages,” recognition refers to the status they seek from the Israeli government to gain legal protections for their homes and fields. The current non-recognition of their land-use or ownership rights means that all residents, simply by living in these villages and building homes, cannot belong within Israel as law-abiding citizens. But their efforts to gain recognition are about more than juridical status. Many feel their equal worth as human beings is not recognized. “Tell your friends that we are people too, that we walk on two legs,” one council head implored me at a public information night in Beersheba about the unrecognized villages, after he learned that I would be teaching and publishing in the United States about life in the Negev.

Such quests for recognition, whether from states or non-state entities, entail considerable risks. As Charles Taylor argues, “due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need” (1992:26). Both the village head and Taylor express a notion of identity that acknowledges a significant role for interpellation (Althusser 1971). The state, as well as imagined communities in Israel and the United States that are not explicitly understood as political entities, have great power to shape personal identity and worth by withholding or granting recognition. Bedouin Arabs in Israel are pressured toward what I refer to as acultural accommodation. They are not able to seek inclusion in the state and access to substantive citizenship through recognition of difference, as offered by liberal multiculturalism. And because of Israel's definition as a Jewish state, Bedouins cannot gain recognition of similarity, as offered by assimilation, either. Instead, the terms for juridical recognition require Bedouin Arabs to accommodate Zionist nation-building projects by relinquishing cultural practices and ties to place. To attain legal recognition and protection of their homes, Bedouin Arabs are expected to abandon land ownership claims and trade rural livelihoods for urban communities and wage labor. Further, they are pushed to replace collective cultural and tribal affiliations with individual identities as neoliberal subjects.

Contemporary dilemmas of recognition faced by Bedouin Arabs are tied to a

wider history of recognition and non-recognition in the Negev. Bedouin Arabs are not the only Negev residents who seek recognition. Ashkenazi Jews, those with ancestry from European countries, led Zionist settlement efforts, and their cultural expectations set the norms of progress and civility among Jews. Thus, Jews with non-European ancestry, such as the Mizrahim of Middle Eastern and North African origins have also experienced problems of non-recognition, though in different form. Particularly from the 1940s through 1970s, but with continuing reverberations, these Jews were pushed to assimilate to Ashkenazi norms (Domínguez 1989; Shohat 1999). Expressing Orientalist attitudes (Said 1979), government officials, social workers, and teachers in the Zionist movement treated Mizrahi immigrants as dirty, disordered, and in need of training to become “modern” members of Israeli society. Zionist leaders feared “engulfment by the East,” and so they shunned the languages, foods, and clothing common among these immigrants, referring to them as “Oriental” and “primitive” (Shohat 1999:8).¹⁶ The cultural traditions and practices of Mizrahi immigrants were not recognized as potential building blocks of the New Hebrew society being formed in Israel.

In recent decades, Mizrahi Jews in Israel have gained some political and social recognition. This has been due, in part to Israel's participation in a wider, global trend toward multiculturalism in state politics, and in part to the work of the Mizrahi Black Panthers movement and several Mizrahi political parties (Chetrit 2000). However, recognition even within liberal multiculturalism is selective (Povinelli 2002). Political and social gains for most Mizrahim in Israel still come at the cost of self-distancing from customs, languages, and ideologies deemed Arab (Shohat 1988, 1999; Ein-Gil 2009). In a more radical sense, some social and political activists are bringing attention to and criticizing these pressures to erase Arabness, such as advocates of a “Levantine culture” that melds Arabness and Jewishness (Alcalay 1993) and the “New Mizrahim” who publicly criticize the “Ashkenazi Zionist revolution” for its victimization of Mizrahim (Chetrit 2000). Yet these efforts remain marginal, and strong rhetorical and material pressures push apart Jews and Arabs as separate groups.

In the ethnography that follows, by focusing my gaze on the micro-practices, as

¹⁶ Settlers' ambivalent attitudes toward Palestinians during the Yishuv era as both threat and ancestral link did prompt some degree of imitation, but anxieties about repairing Jewish unity following the Diaspora made these markers of Mizrahi difference too threatening to condone (Shohat 1999).

well as institutional events of group-making, I construct nuanced accounts of how the boundaries creating these groups are drawn, policed, and challenged. These accounts demonstrate how the inclusion and exclusion of recognition are intertwined, shaping each other. Jewish Israelis are hailed, sometimes willingly and sometimes unwillingly by governmental officials, family, and neighbors as participants in nation-building. In contrast, Bedouin Arab residents are excluded from participation and face pressures of acultural accommodation. The continuous work that goes into maintaining these boundaries, as well as the efforts of some people to breach them, suggests the contingency of a Jewish-Arab division. Yet, this division remains symbolically and materially powerful.

Naturalizing Boundaries, Socializing Landscapes

On a sunny day in May of 2008, several young boys trailed behind a large group of people walking on the dusty paths between their houses. I was taking part in and recording observations of this environmental justice tour, led by a community elder to teach visitors from throughout Israel about the environmental health hazards faced by this unrecognized Bedouin Arab village. Walking at the back of the tour, I spoke with another participant, a woman my age whose hair was wrapped in a headscarf and who wore a long skirt. I wore slacks and a button-down shirt. Overhearing our conversation in Arabic, one boy on a bike approached and asked me to explain myself:

“Are you Jewish?,” he asked, pausing, “or Arab?”

“No, and no,” I replied, trying to sound friendly despite the shortness of my response.

There was another pause, and then the boy repeated his question, seeming to think I had not understood, “are you Jewish?”

“No,” I repeated.

“So, you're Arab,” he persisted.

“No,” I said again. “I'm not Arab and I'm not Jewish.”

The boy stood looking at me with confused eyes. “Then where are you from?” he asked. I told him that I was from America, but the puzzled look did not fully leave his face.

I spoke Arabic, but my appearance did not match what the boy knew of Arab women, so he suspected I was Jewish. When I denied both of these identities, the boy seemed at a

loss. While he astutely noted my out-of-placeness, his questions suggested that he had grown up in an atmosphere dominated by “us” and “them,” Jewish versus Arab, which made it difficult to understand my existence in a third category. Though complex, interwoven categories of identity and belonging do exist in his social world, discourses of conflict frame belonging in binary terms. Equally striking, the boy's final attempt to clarify my identity was not to ask *who* I was, but *where* I was from. He lived in a social setting in which deep links are assumed between place and identity.

To understand the real force of ideologies of groupness and exclusivity in Israel, we must examine how notions of identity and recognition become emplaced, how group boundaries become naturalized and landscapes become socialized. To become naturalized is not simply to become normalized in a general sense, but with specific reference to nature. At times, this naturalizing of group boundaries happens through a cultural politics of race (or ethnicity) and nature that assigns “natural” qualities and differences to socially constructed groups (Kosek 2006). Boundaries also become naturalized through a politics of place that assigns socially constructed groups to particular landscapes, often asserting natural, primordial attachments. As Zionist efforts have, from their start, been focused on redemption of the Jewish people through settlement, participation in Israeli nation-building relies on land claims and ongoing land-use practices that exclude non-Jews from lands deemed Jewish (“state lands”). In the Negev, governmental efforts to remove Bedouins from “state lands,” such as forest planting, the drafting of legislation, the demolition of unauthorized buildings, and the construction of more dense government-planned townships, form boundaries that define Bedouins as a separate group. These practices of exclusion carefully circumscribe Bedouin places in order to “protect” lands designated as Jewish. Yet, some Bedouin Arab residents and Bedouin rights advocates counter these efforts through court cases, demonstrations, and insurgent dwelling practices.

Territory is contested not only through brute force and procedural appeals to the law, but also through emotional and ethical claims-making. Many Hebrew-language news accounts, governmental policies, and kitchen-table conversations among Jewish Israelis laud Jewish *chalutzim* (“pioneers,” or early settlers) as valued participants in Israeli nation-building, as they simultaneously cast Bedouin settlement of open spaces as

a threat to the nation-state. But many Bedouin Arab residents of the Naqab object to what they consider to be the seizure of tribal lands and their unjust designation as state land. They continue to assert, through words and deeds, a necessary connection between their cultural identity and attachment to particular desert landscapes.

Scholars have demonstrated the importance of symbolic and embodied links to nature and particular landscapes for the shaping and shoring up of group identities. Nationalist movements around the world and in different historical moments have shared a preoccupation with rooting people in their purportedly native lands (Malkki 1992; Geschiere and Jackson 2006; Barnard 2007; Zenker 2011). These movements have drawn on the nature imagery of homelands, often asserting connections between the characteristics of the land and the character of the people (Smith 1987; Schwartz 2006). In addition to asserting the “natural” cohesiveness of a group, nature may be invoked to exclude people deemed not to have such natural connections to a place. In his analysis of the cultural politics of nature and difference in northern New Mexico, Jake Kosek (2006) shows how environmental anxieties about degradation aligned with racial anxieties about purity to feed an American nationalist narrative that relies on naturalized racial difference. These symbolic links to nature and landscapes need not necessarily be nationalist, but apply to a variety of place-based identities (Descola 1994; Brosius 1999; Escobar 2001; Kirsch 2006).

Practical and rhetorical claims-making in the Negev draws on the specificities of Israeli-Palestinian landscapes (Zerubavel 1996; Almog 2000; Abufarha 2008). Trees have often been enlisted for projects of both Jewish and Arab rootedness, including the pine and olive trees that are long-standing and globally circulating symbols of both Zionist and Palestinian nationalisms (Bardenstein 1999; Long 2009). This rooting of people in landscapes is done symbolically, in art, literature, and oral story-telling (Bardenstein 1998; Almog 2000); and materially, through competitive planting, uprooting, and arson (Cohen 1993; Braverman 2009). Central to Palestinian national narratives is the concept of *sumud*, or steadfastness, which signifies closeness to the soil and continuous residence in place, often despite great hardships incurred by remaining (Swedenburg 1990; Bardenstein 1999). A literary tradition links *sumud* with olive and orange trees and prickly pear cactus as symbols of the Palestinian nation (Bardenstein

1998). These are multivalent symbols, though, as the same plants are taken to express Jewish “rootedness,” as well (Bardenstein 1998; Almog 2000).

Both Zionist and Palestinian nationalist assertions of spiritual and possessive connections to land through labor draw on images of the pastoral landscapes of farming and shepherding. For example, advertisements for Jewish immigration refer to the picturesque hills of Hebrew patriarchs. These same brush-stubbed slopes, and their valleys dotted with agricultural fields, orchards, and villages provide the landscapes for countless pieces of nationalist Palestinian literature (Bardenstein 1998). In addition, expertise in a place and its plants, animals, and landscapes is used to stake claims, often though not always, in nationalist terms (Zerubavel 1995; Almog 2000; Hayden 2003; Peteet 2005a).

To understand the role of such emplaced group-making in land conflict, we must investigate how particular lines of difference and domination become naturalized and tied to specific landscapes (Handler 1988; Kosek 2006). Kosek's (2006:286) ethnography of conflict over forest use and management in and around the Santa Fe National Forest demonstrates how nature became the basis of “moral imperatives and entrenched hierarchies.” Through competing narratives of the area's past and disputes over ethnic groups' rightful belonging in the present among Hispano and Ácoma residents and white environmentalists and government officials, “discussions of degraded forests slide into discussions about degraded communities; forest health becomes a proxy for bodily health; knowledge of exploited soils becomes a mechanism to understand exploited souls” (Kosek 2006:286). Attending to shifting environmental discourses in the Negev reveals a similar dynamic of melding the social and the natural. The moral character of groups is being connected with landscapes, for example, when people look at the ramshackle houses of an unrecognized village and determine that Bedouins are lazy and undeserving of land rights, or when others point to fences around a *moshav* as evidence of Jews' greediness.

How, precisely, can we attend to these environmental discourses? Two rather different scholarly approaches have been useful for me. First, Tim Ingold's (2000) dwelling perspective attends to the intimacies of dwelling, learning skills, and engaging these skills to shape landscapes. However, Ingold's work does not incorporate a robust

theory of power.¹⁷ In a second scholarly approach, the primarily geographical and sociological analyses of place and space, operations of power are a central concern (Lefebvre 1974; de Certeau 1984). Unfortunately, these theoretical works do not often include as nuanced an ethnographic sense of actual dwelling practices. Here, I draw elements from the two approaches together to synthesize an intimate and politically attuned analysis of environmental discourses.

Dwelling in Environments

My choice of the term “environmental discourses,” rather than “discourses of nature” is deliberate. “Nature is perhaps the most complex word in the language,” Raymond Williams (R. Williams 1985:219) tells us, before attempting to clarify this complexity by parsing its many uses into three main areas of meaning: the essential quality of something, the force that directs humans and/or the world, and the material world itself (with or without humans). This semantic complexity does not simply complicate efforts to define the term, but creates analytic challenges for scholars. Anthropology has, since its origin, been grappling with questions of nature, primarily trying to move beyond an oppositional nature–culture split that has long proven temptingly simple but inadequate for understanding our world. From Lewis Henry Morgan's (1868) investigation of the social life of beavers and cultural ecology's analysis of energy exchange (Geertz 1963; Harris 1966; Rappaport 1968) to Donna Haraway's (1991) discussion of cyborgs and Hugh Raffles' (2002) work on natural history, scholars have been attempting to explain how the plethora of factors we typically refer to as “natural,” “social,” and “cultural” fit together.

In this study of the Negev, I am interested in relationships, and theories of nature have difficulty dealing with relationships on non-oppositional terms. Some theorists have attempted to explain relationships within different notions of nature in terms of labor. A Hegelian tradition distinguishing between a “first nature” that is independent of human production and a “second nature” that is produced has been taken up in Marxist strands of

¹⁷ In an essay answering to critics, Ingold admits a lack of attention to “the political” in his prior work on dwelling, but suggests that dwelling can indeed “be the foundation for a genuinely political ecology” because “while we may acknowledge that dwelling is a way of being at home in the world, home is not necessarily a comfortable or pleasant place to be, nor are we alone there” (2005:503).

anthropology, history, and geography. In these accounts, processes of labor simultaneously draw distinctions between first and second natures, or nature and society, and obfuscate those distinctions, making both seem as though they are all part of natural history (Schmidt 1971; Smith 1984; Cronon 1991; Harvey 1996a). Similarly, in cultural ecological accounts of energy exchange, it is the labor of, for example, raising pigs for sustenance, ritual exchange, and the building of kinship ties, that regulates cultured populations within their ecosystems (Rappaport 1968). But, as nuanced and intertwined as these accounts of labor may be, they continue to reify the objects of nature and culture, whether in opposition to or complementarity with each other.

Instead, I write in terms of environment, drawing upon Ingold's (2000) insights about the relational and processual thinking that this type of analysis encourages. "Environment," in this sense, is a term relative to the being whose environment it is and entails a perspective from within what is being analyzed and described, rather than standing apart from it. Ingold draws on phenomenology to argue that we cannot understand any such thing as Nature, but can only deal with environments in the plural, as we encounter our surroundings through the experience of being-in-the-world (Heidegger 1996). Environmental analysis is also processual, as organisms and their surroundings are never complete or bounded entities, making it an ideal approach to unpack the complex and ongoing development of Negev land struggles.¹⁸ Nature as a concept is often enlisted in the rhetoric of nationalists and other exclusivist groups claiming land, as well as environmental activists. I examine how nature is invoked and sensed by those involved in the Negev's contentious land politics. But while I write about these uses of nature, I take environments as my analytic framework in order to avoid oppositions of nature and culture and to attend more fully to relationships between elements often treated separately in natural and cultural realms.

To examine the immersion of "the organism-person" in an environment, Ingold proposes a dwelling perspective that examines the ongoing formation of landscapes (2000:153). From this perspective, a landscape is "an enduring record of—and testimony to—the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves" (Ingold 1993:152). This understanding of

¹⁸ *Environmental* is not equivalent to *environmentalist*, which, as I explain in a later section of this chapter, I use specifically as a term tied to protectionist or reparative intentions.

landscape is distinctly different from its typical treatment in both anthropological literature and everyday speech, as a visual field or a framing backdrop for the true object of study (Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995; Mitchell 1994), or as a metaphor for understanding the place of people in a globalized world (Appadurai 1996:27).¹⁹ This perspective focuses on practices, for it is through dwelling that people (and non-human agents) form landscapes, and through acts of dwelling, we are also shaped and molded by our landscapes. Ingold (1993) refers to these acts of dwelling as “tasks,” and he emphasizes that tasks are influenced by past tasks and by the places where they are being performed. These tasks may be explicitly acts of work, like plowing, chopping, or hammering, or more generally part of dwelling, such as walking or sitting. An ensemble of these tasks constitutes a taskscape.²⁰ A landscape, then, is the embodied form of a taskscape, and because these tasks are ongoing, a landscape is never static. Rather, it is a continuously changing and evolving embodiment of our lived history in a place. In vying for control over Negev landscapes, the participants in land conflict continuously alter the places over which they are laying claim.

The temporality of landscapes is key here because past taskscapes continue to be perceptible in the present. “To perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past.” (Ingold 1993:152-153). The future is also present in landscapes through the imagination (Cloke and Jones 2001). For instance, an imagined “reunification” of “Greater Israel” is present in Negev landscapes, along with the possible mass “transfers” of Arabs out of Israel feared by some Palestinian citizens of Israel if certain right-wing factions gain power.

Ingold (1993) distinguishes between “land” and “landscape” in ways I have found useful for this study.²¹ He describes land as an abstract, idealized portion of the earth,

19 As in English, “landscape” in Arabic (*manzar*, منظر, from the verb for “to view, gaze”) and Hebrew (*nof*, נוף, meaning also, “high place”) is primarily a visual term, with the connotation of a distanced observer.

20 Ingold’s treatment of tasks is similar to Bourdieu’s (1977)(1977)(1977)(1977)(1977)(1977)(1977)(1977) discussion of *habitus*, though with less emphasis on explaining shared social or class norms, and more concern for individual phenomenological encounters and more explicit attention to the role tasks have in shaping us and our landscapes.

21 “Land” in Arabic is *ard* (ارض), while in Hebrew the two words, *adama* (אדמה) and *aretz* (ארץ), can both be translated as land and have some overlapping connotations. *Adama* means “soil” or “earth,” as well as “land” as an observable area. *Aretz* holds the sense of “Earth” (as in *cadur ha-aretz*, “the

that is typically treated in quantitative and homogeneous terms. However, one cannot ask of a landscape how much there is. Landscape is both qualitative and heterogeneous. It is in terms of land that accounts of territorial gains and political land-swap proposals are conducted. But how do the complex interrelations in which people live become shaped into such two-dimensional notions, and what is lost or obscured by this re-formulation?

Phenomenological approaches to places and being-in-the-world, including Ingold's particular dwelling perspective, have been taken up in and at the intersections of several related disciplines, particularly archaeology (Ingold 1993; Tilley 1994; Bender 1998; Thomas 2004), but also anthropology (Pink 2009), geography (Cloke and Jones 2001), environmental studies (Roth 2009), religious studies (Tweed 2006) and postcolonial studies (Lien 2010). Yet, very little has been written on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from this analytic perspective.²² Instead, most works dealing specifically with land enlist the same legalist and genealogical models embraced by so many within the conflict.²³ Both models are powerful tools of argumentation for making land claims, but they are unlikely to reveal more about the conflict's origins and underlying causes of perpetuation. A dwelling approach helps us move beyond the two-dimensional terms of acreage so often employed in discussions of diplomacy and policy. It can take seriously both the landscapes being fought over (including the histories lived in these landscapes) and the people doing the fighting. By stepping away from zero-sum, quantitative discussions of land, and towards the more qualitative and experiential discourse of landscapes, I hope to bring a new perspective to studying the many forms of attachment residents establish with landscapes. This examination reveals the processes that turn

globe/world”) or “the country,” and is associated specifically with Israeli land, as it is so commonly used as an abbreviation for *Eretz Yisrael*, “the land of Israel.”

22 Several studies of Israel overlap with aspects of a dwelling perspective. For example, Benvenisti (2000) draws inspiration for his work from a very personal attachment to particular landscapes and takes seriously the presence of the past in contemporary experiences of landscapes. But, he frequently adopts external, overlooking views of landscapes that are inconsistent with a dwelling perspective. Stein (2008) attends to physical travel throughout Israel and the experiences of crossing social border zones. However, she draws explicitly neither from a dwelling perspective nor from phenomenology. Slyomovics' (1998) discussion of Palestinians displaced from their village in northern Israel includes close attention to the emotional, material, and political making of place, but does not use a specifically interactional framework that considers landscapes as natural and cultural.

23 Legalist analyses define legitimate evidence in ways that exclude a broad spectrum of dwelling practices from consideration (Shamir 1996). In the genealogical outlook, land is critical as a reference point proving the continuity of a genealogy, rather than as a richly textured and ever-changing site of living (Ingold 2000).

landscapes into land when making political claims.

Outside of the Middle East, researchers conducting collaborative and politically engaged projects have taken a phenomenological approach to landscapes. Some see such an approach as facilitating strong arguments “in defense of place” because it validates the rights of indigenous and minority groups to particular “local” places (Escobar 2001). Others view the dwelling perspective, despite its origin in Western scholarship, as a liberatory tool for stepping outside the culturally imperialist imposition of (Western) abstract space in research settings (Roth 2009). The focus on taskscapes and embodied knowledge moves away from positivist models of expertise, and can thus be inclusive of “traditional ecological knowledge” and “local knowledge.” Researchers have drawn upon a dwelling perspective for conducting community mapping projects in Thailand (Roth 2009), making fair environmental impact assessments in Sweden (Soneryd 2004), strengthening indigenous advocacy in Amazonia (Heckenberger 2004), and advocating for participatory conservation in Nepal (Campbell 2005).

One shortcoming of phenomenological approaches to landscapes, such as a dwelling perspective, is their lack of attention to operations of power. Critics point to the romanticism that sometimes creeps into analyses of ideology and landscapes. For example, while Bender (1998) agrees with most aspects of the dwelling perspective, she also criticizes Ingold’s ahistorical and romanticized depictions of indigenous people’s relationships with landscapes. To keep romanticism at bay, she urges researchers to maintain the temporality of landscapes at the center of analysis, not just in terms of the sensual individual experiences of being-in-the-world, but also in terms of wider historical specificities like class relations and political structures. In Israel, this requires attention to Negev residents’ encounters with the new limitations and possibilities of a globalizing Israeli economy and governmental policies that support the legal transformation of land from being collectively managed to privately owned. Decisions to farm, herd sheep, build fences, or join civil protests—all of which are both taskscapes within the Negev and contested practices with political valence—depend as much on these historically dependent institutional structures as on individual phenomenological experiences of dwelling.

Other critiques of a dwelling perspective warn of its potential use to buttress

exclusionary territorial attachments. Robert Spencer (2010) finds the focus on authenticity, coming from Heidegger's phenomenology and surviving in contemporary dwelling perspectives, to be fundamentally problematic. In discussing a recent rapprochement between postcolonial studies and environmental analyses, he warns against letting the *blut und boden* ("blood and soil") notes of Heidegger's work be taken up uncritically to make nationalist claims over places, even if in the name of subalterns. Indeed, it behooves us to heed this warning, as it is easy to see parallels between a dwelling perspective according to which landscapes and people jointly form each other, and the Zionist ideals of reviving a Jewish people through labor in the land of Israel (Long 2009). However, Zionist ideals such as these are part of the content to be analyzed, rather than the basis for my analytic approach.

Rather than refusing to take a dwelling perspective because of the romanticizing and nationalistic elements in its genealogy, I take Spencer's warning as a useful reminder not to conflate dwelling with exclusionary possession. A dwelling perspective, itself, is not necessarily exclusionary; it simply prompts us to attend to how people move through and dwell in landscapes. But dwelling practices, when combined with a Lockean understanding of ownership and adherence to territorial nationalism, can be used to make exclusive claims. It is not the dwelling practices, but the particular discursive norms and operations of power often tied up in dwelling practices that may create a frame of zero-sum land conflict. Thus, in my analysis of exclusionary attachments to land, I employ a dwelling perspective along with attention to how, when, and where groupness and its attendant inequalities are constructed and reinforced.

Landscapes of Power

The creation of groups, their naturalization and fixation in particular places all occur within fields of power. To understand how land conflict in Israel has developed and become entrenched, we must attend to operations of power, and specifically, how place matters for these operations. I do this by tracing the environmental discourses that shape and are shaped by dwelling practices.²⁴ Although Foucault contrasts his

²⁴ Alatout (2006) calls for the joint examination of power and place in Israel-Palestine, but through different means. He argues that the different power relations operating in Israel and the Palestinian Territories influence the forms of power emphasized in their environmental narratives. He suggests that

archaeology of discourse to phenomenology (Foucault 1972:203-204), I argue that elements of the two can be brought together to create a more robust understanding of power and place.²⁵

Theorists of power and place have proposed various “topographies of power” (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:8), which also suggest different methods of investigating power relations. Critical theorists of colonialism, capitalism, and world systems identify centers of power that impose their plans on peripheries or marginal communities (Wolf 1982, 1990; Wallerstein 1974). Such explanations are helpful in showing the force of structures and institutions, such as state governments or international trade routes, that might otherwise be lost, as the forest for the trees, in accounts focused on more intimate, lived experiences of power. Yet, in these approaches, habitable places and experiences of being-in-place are sidelined by explanations of power that focus on larger spatial structures.

Michel de Certeau (1984), Henri Lefebvre (1974), and other theorists of space and place, attempt to fill in this gap by identifying spaces of power and habitable places of resistance. Guided by the premise that certain spaces oppress and homogenize while others offer the potential for differentiation and liberation, Lefebvre (1974) “resuscitates” Marxism to trace historical trends in the production of space. He contends that each society produces a space conducive to its dominant economic activities. From “absolute space,” which combined natural space and social activity, Western societies produced a “space of primitive accumulation” during the Middle Ages, followed by “abstract space,” an oppressive space of functionality and capital accumulation.²⁶ Geographically minded

Palestinians' lack of clear borders or political sovereignty prompt them to seek control over environmental factors through sovereign-territorial power, whereas Israeli environmental narratives sideline territory and seek control through bio-power.

25 In *The Order of Things*, Foucault writes, “If there is one approach that I do reject, however, it is that (one might call it, broadly speaking, the phenomenological approach) which gives absolute priority to the observing subject, which attributes a constituent role to an act, which places its own point of view at the origin of all historicity – which, in short, leads to a transcendental consciousness. It seems to me that the historical analysis of scientific discourse should, in the last resort, be subject, not to a theory of the knowing subject, but rather to a theory of discursive practice.” (2002:xv). See also the conclusion of *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972:203) for Foucault's critique of a phenomenological understanding of history and the subject.

26 While championed as an aid to a “revolution of space” (Lefebvre 1974:419), this separation of imposed spaces of power versus practiced places of resistance has also drawn criticism. Through its parallel with distinctions of ideal/material and freedom/determinism challenged by critics of vulgar Marxism (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), it risks mystifying powerful abstract entities, such as “the West” and “the development regime” (Escobar 1995). Such an approach understands “freedom” in terms of its distance

theorists, particularly Marxist geographers, describe this production of space as a manifestation of the imposition of power (Harvey 1990, 1996a, 2001; Smith 1990). James Scott suggests that, despite planners intentions, spaces of control may actually be variegated and incomplete. He differentiates between, on the one hand, state-imposed plans that attempt to demarcate space and make it legible from afar (Scott 1998), and on the other hand, acts of resistance that arise in villages and other places removed or hidden from state centers of power (Scott 1985, 2009).

At first glance, the Negev may seem to be such a variegated space of inconsistently successful state plans for ordering space and making it legible, and as such, a patchwork of places falling along a hypothetical scale from spaces of imposed power to places of resistance. *Kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, collective agricultural settlements established through the centralized Zionist movement planning efforts since the early 1900s, are bordered by fences, with numbered houses and easily accessible streets. The city of Beersheba and other large towns are similarly numbered and labeled, with wide boulevards and separate districts for businesses and residences. Townships planned for Bedouin Arab residents also include paved streets with numbered neighborhoods and houses, but many of these roads have been blocked by residents, creating new neighborhoods or strengthening the borders of existing ones; and small businesses are scattered throughout the townships in areas zoned as residential. Unrecognized villages would seem to fall even further along this hypothetical scale of imposed power versus resistance. These villages lack the legibility of street signs or, in many cases, even streets; neighborhoods form as additional grown sons in an extended family build houses for their wives and children. Throughout these spaces, people are divided and ordered through residential segregation of Jews from Arabs, as well as, less starkly, of religiously observant from non-practicing Jews or Muslims, and between Jews of different ethnicities (*edot*). Outside these inhabited spaces lies what many describe as a wilderness, a harsh desert of unpredictable weather untamed by either houses or planted vegetation and ungoverned by either watchful neighbors or law enforcement officials.

Indeed, those criticizing the status quo of governance from multiple sides of the

from “power” (Keane 2003:238). Mitchell argues that this mystification through binary logic actually produces the authority of law by granting legitimacy to a distinction between the “abstraction of the code” and the “actuality of life” (Mitchell 2002:79).

land conflict describe the Negev in terms of spaces within and outside of power. Critics of insufficient governmental enforcement and critics of overly authoritarian governance divide the Negev into spaces of more or less state control, or oppression, depending on their perspective. Whereas one Bedouin Arab resident described the hills at the edge of his family's cluster of buildings in the unrecognized village of Wadi al-Na'am as a place of freedom where he could "eat and drink from nature," the notoriously outspoken mayor of the Jewish town of Omer labeled similar places as sites of "hooliganism" and "illegal construction" (Glickman 2008).

Yet, control and resistance are not spatially bounded in such neat terms (Li 2005). Many residents of unrecognized villages, for example, host political demonstrations or publicly build without permits in efforts to bring more state planning, with its roads, electricity, and running water, to their villages. Or, in the demarcated spaces of a *moshav*, one local council leader explained how some residents tactically build first and attain permits later, blurring acts of compliance and resistance. De Certeau (1984) attempts to explain how the contradictory processes of control and resistance can occur together, all within and co-constructing a single city. To do so, he distinguishes between the practices of "strategies" and "tactics." Those in power use "strategies" in order to "produce, tabulate, and impose" regulated, grid-like space governed by numbers and designed for technocratic control (1984:30). In contrast, "ordinary practitioners of the city," or residents, are the "common heroes" who elude the legibility of planners and create habitable places as they travel (1984:v, 93). Selecting certain routes, stepping off of paved paths, and telling stories about these travels are examples of the "tactics" that people use in eluding the totalizing control that planners attempt to exercise. De Certeau's contrast between the embedded resident and the "disentangled" planner paints an unrealistic portrait of technocratic control that somehow exists outside the social practices of a city. But his discussion of the impact of everyday dwelling practices on state plans is valuable. In this account, inhabiting a planned space entails acts of resistance that allow residents to establish some paths, structures, and practices of their own, using the constraining order without ever leaving it.

Chapters of this dissertation examine different actors and settings to develop an account of power that considers why and how the tactics of dwelling reinforce or rebel

against the norms and power relations of planned spaces. De Certeau's account of power in place helps to explain the stakes of Negev residents' everyday dwelling practices in governmentally planned towns (see chapters four and five). But it does little to explain how and why some residents take part in the delineation and policing of certain planned spaces, while rebelling against others (see chapter five for an account of how both tendencies shape land relations in a Jewish *moshav*), or why planners selectively incorporate the initially rebellious tactics of some residents while harshly disciplining others (see chapter seven for a discussion of Jewish farmstead builders and Bedouin Arab residents of unrecognized villages). Such questions require attention to environmental discourses—and specifically how they assign exclusion or belonging to different groups of people and what material manifestations these discourses take in different landscapes. As I draw upon Foucault's notion of discourse, this begs the question: How are operations of power related to place in Foucault's work?

In Foucault's early work (1977), places are imbued with power, and power's operations are imminent to places. The prison is perhaps the exemplar of a place of power in this sense. Foucault provides graphic descriptions of 18th-century torture and discussion of the later penal reforms that made prisons into places for the production of power-knowledge and the practice of discipline. In these accounts, Foucault grounds mechanisms of power—surveillance, enumeration, punishment, and discipline—in particular places. This emplaced sense of power is clear for discipline. But as Foucault shifts his attention to other forms of power, such as governmentality and bio-power, he systematically steers away from particular sites—legal texts, the persona of the sovereign, particular geographical places, or even the institutional sites about which he conducts research—as instrumental for the operations of power. Instead, he insists that investigations of power must focus on relationships and discourse.²⁷ Governmentality builds on a notion of pastoral power, which entails governing a “flock” through knowledge of and care for each individual of the flock (Foucault 1980). Rather than

27 In a set of lectures in 1976, Foucault announces his conviction that his initial focus on a “domination-oppression” schema of power must be supplemented with greater attention to power at its extremities, “where it becomes capillary” (1994:213). *The History of Sexuality* exemplifies this move with its discussion of bio-power. The techniques of bio-power produce a growing population that is available and docile to the requirements of capital accumulation (Foucault 1990:141). With bio-power, norms become increasingly important for controlling bodies and behavior, and the juridical system declines in importance.

operating through direct manipulation, though, governmentality sets up conditions that indirectly encourage certain conduct, fostering self-monitoring and self-governance. Foucault's accounts of governmentality make power appear to be diffuse and ungrounded, permeating everywhere but not *of* anywhere.²⁸

But even in governing regimes in which governmentality is the norm, it is not applied equally to all people. In many colonial contexts, for example, rulers applied different forms of governance to different populations (Thomas 2004; Mamdani 1996; Stoler and Cooper 1997). They engaged with settlers (and sometimes native elites) more often through liberal governmentality, but used coercive discipline against conquered natives because these subjects were deemed to be “deficient and unable to exercise the responsibility of freedom” (Li 2005:387). Since the 1980s, Israel has been shifting increasingly toward neo-liberal practices of economics and governance (Shafir and Peled 2000b; Alatout 2006). Yet, widespread discourses of difference set Bedouin Arabs apart as less suited to the freer hand of governmentality, and so they have been dealt with via coercion more often than their Jewish neighbors.²⁹

I argue that we can, indeed *ought* to examine the material places of power's operations and still think relationally and discursively. The critical questions for understanding power in this land conflict are *how* different rules of governance are established for different groups of people and different places (Dean 1999). In the Negev, both material residential segregation and the discursive norms underlying this segregation are stark, bifurcating associations between Arabs and wildness versus Jews and civilization. These associations prompt different modes of government by framing

28 Foucault's notion of governance derives from an analogy drawn between the economy of a family and the management of a state (1991:92). His particular vision of family economy may help to explain the discrepancy between his dismissal of territory as a central concern of governance and the actual centrality of territory for operations of power. He writes, “Governing a household, a family, does not essentially mean safeguarding the family property; what concerns it is the individuals that compose the family, their wealth and prosperity...the question of landed property for the family, the question of acquisition of sovereignty over a territory for a prince, are only relatively secondary matters. What counts essentially is this complex of men and things; property and territory are merely one of the variables” (1991:94). However, this analogy proves false when applied to Israel, as to many other states. No clear borders existed, and so territory was not at all a given when the Israeli state formed. The acquisition and protection of territory was and continues to be the main anxiety driving both state policies and Jewish citizens' decision-making (Kimmerling 1983; Rabinowitz 1997).

29 A growing body of literature examines the power relations and governmental structures of Israel as analogous to and/or historically continuous with European colonialism (Shafir 1996; Shohat 1997; Massad 2006; Piterberg 2008; Tzfadia 2008a; Yiftachel 2009b, 2008).

different kinds of places. In a mutual constitution of peoples and places, the designation of particular kinds of people suited to specific forms of governance leads to the construction of appropriate places; and conversely, these landscapes shape the dwelling experiences of residents and outsiders' perceptions of these residents, such that places produce people. 'Ayn al-'Azim, the Bedouin Arab township within which I conducted fieldwork, is treated with disciplining governance because of its identification as a Bedouin place, whereas Dganim, the Jewish *moshav* featured in this ethnography, has been planned and governed differently, shifting from pastoral care to neoliberalism, because it is considered a Jewish, and specifically non-Ashkenazi Jewish place.

My multi-sited research suggests that dominant environmental discourses in Israel enframe the conflict, structuring the possibilities open to disputants on both sides. When I speak of "enframing," I draw on Timothy Mitchell's (1988, 1990) work, which refers to it as a process of domination that operates by setting up binaries and projecting these binaries as if they were the whole of reality. However, unlike Mitchell, I am not concerned specifically with a material/ideological binary.³⁰ Rather, I am interested in a set of binaries that work together to enframe social relations in Israel: Arab/Jew, nature/culture, tradition/progress.³¹ Not only have these binaries become omnipresent, but they are often aligned into a single opposition of Jew-culture-progress versus Arab-nature-tradition. The rigidity of these binary oppositions and the specific ways they have been imagined and enacted have changed over time. However, the set of nested oppositions itself has remained remarkably consistent. Through settlement policies, flows of finance, the rhetoric of politicians and community leaders, and the daily practices of residents, reality is projected as if it were based on this opposition, and through these processes, it is progressively instantiated as such.

These dominant environmental discourses make it seem as if a Jewish-Arab division is inevitable—even natural—and as though progress opposes tradition. They affix the blinders that made it difficult for the boy in Wadi al-Na'am to place me in a third category beyond Jew or Arab. More than simply setting contrasts, these discursive

30 Keane (2007) criticizes Mitchell (1988) because he uses too restricted a notion of representation, one that only allows "the modern" to stand apart from experience and see that representation.

31 These binaries defy categorization as either material or ideological, being treated as both in different contexts.

frames privilege some land uses over others, some social practices and groups of people over others. Yet, these frames, precisely because they come to seem inevitable and external to practice (Mitchell 1990), can also serve as the basis for creative advocacy work. Through innovative juxtapositions and new associations, some “insurgents” (Holston 2008) use these discursive frames as they attempt to change the status quo of land claims in the Negev. For example, insurgent tree planting campaigns assert that Bedouin Arabs can be farmers who “green the desert,” like their Jewish counterparts celebrated in Zionist pioneering mythology. By analyzing where different modes of power operate among people cast as different sorts of subjects, along with the environmental discourses being applied to these people and places, we can delve deeper into understanding the real stakes of this “land conflict” and highlight new possibilities for overcoming it.

New Possibilities in Land Relations

Possibilities for shifting the rhetoric and material practices of land attachments are of central concern to this study. Since beginning this research I have been interested not only in describing the status quo of conflict in the region, but also exploring resolution efforts that strive to ameliorate social and political disparities. These resolution efforts necessarily involve attempts to resist and change existing power structures. Though other scholars have described the Negev's land conflicts in legal terms, and some have addressed potential legal remedies (Forman and Kedar 2004; Shamir 1996; Abu Hussein and McKay 2003), few have looked beyond this legal realm. Consistent with my focus on the power of discursive frames to entrench and naturalize conflict, my interest in denaturalizing these discursive frames prompts me to attend to a variety of venues. In people's homes and fields, news media, and grassroots activism, as well as in Knesset proceedings, I attend to environmental rhetoric and practices. I find efforts that challenge dominant environmental discourses to differing degrees, including dwelling (Ingold 2000), tactics (de Certeau 1984), insurgent building and planting, and *bricolage* (Lévi-Strauss 1966).

Sociopolitical activism constitutes one genre of practices among many that reach beyond the status quo of conflict (Burdick 1995). I distinguish activism from other social

practices as consisting of more concerted, and generally collective, efforts oriented toward particular goals of social change. Though everyday dwelling practices can certainly contribute to changing norms, organized and collective activism offers people the tools and relationships to challenge dominant discursive institutions more deliberately, and potentially more creatively (Tarrow 1998; della Porta et al. 2006). I concentrate sustained, ethnographic analysis on one grassroots social and environmental justice organization named Bustan in order to probe the potential of such concerted effort to change existing discursive frames. But the rhetorics and practices of popular protest, NGO networks, and their financial resources also enter the lives and land relations of many Negev residents not directly involved in organized activism. Expanding on the call of Doug McAdam and his co-authors (2001) not to compartmentalize studies of social movements, strikes, wars, and other forms of political struggle, I seek not to overly isolate activism.³² I treat it as one variety of social practice that blends with and draws from other practices of everyday life (Edelman 2001).'

By examining these interrelations of social change practices, this research bears upon and draws from the large and growing body of scholarship on social movements. Specifically, it speaks to the importance of place for operations of power, hegemony, and resistance. Efforts to explain agency, and in so doing to locate the sources of creativity, resistance, and collective mobilization, have consistently been important but challenging for scholars of social movements (Edelman 2001; Nash 2005; Kasmir 2005; della Porta et al. 2006). In fact, Keane (2003) suggests that the question of agency has been central throughout anthropologists' many debates, with even scholars from seemingly opposed camps competing for the common goal of giving the most recognition to human agency and self-determination. When attempting to explain the coalescing or stalling of social movements, theorists tend to get caught in contrasts between power and resistance, hegemony and revolution, and the related duality of persuasion and coercion (Mitchell 1990; Abu-Lughod 1990; Abrams 1988). Yet, as Foucault has observed, "where there is power, there is resistance,...[which] is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (1990:95). Ethnographers of social conflict and social movements provide nuanced portraits of everyday life that affirm Foucault's theoretical stance and belie the

³² Drawing from detailed analysis of particular events and episodes, the authors describe dynamics of contention and practices common to all these mobilization efforts (McAdam et al. 2001).

possibility of stepping outside discursive fields in order to oppose them (Tsing 2005; Li 2007; Holston 2008; Heatherington 2010).

Similarly, in my ethnography of environmental activism, beyond asking simply whether or how much people possess agency to resist hegemonic ideologies, I explore how agency is practiced from within discursive fields and their attendant power structures. “Do people challenge one hegemonic project through another?” Rhoda Kanaaneh (2002:28) asks in her study of Palestinian citizens of Israeli living in the northern Galilee region. This query helps us to view agency and resistance as relational, acknowledging the possibility that residents and activists tactically resist and call on state power simultaneously or oppose hegemonic projects in particular times and places while participating in these same hegemonic projects in other situations (Butler 1993). Further, this approach allows for the study of “resistance as a diagnostic of power” (Abu-Lughod 1990:40), for showing how power is perpetuated through its productive modes, as well as its repressive modes (Foucault 1990). For example, far from simple resistance, grassroots social activists often encourage greater imposition of one form of governance in order to weaken another form. One environmental advocacy group concerned with air quality in Palestinian communities petitioned the Supreme Court to force the Ministry of Health to gather more thorough health statistics in Arab towns. Advocates saw inviting the statistics-compiling gaze of the state, in this case, as a step toward demonstrating the illegitimacy of state claims of equal citizenship because it would show discrimination between the “Jewish sector” and the “Arab sector.” Yet, because they present themselves as possible avenues of protest, these state bodies reproduce their power. As activists enlist the courts and the Ministry of Health, they also acknowledge these state bodies as authorities.

J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006) draw attention to activism as a full-bodied and fully emotional set of practices.³³ As they attempt to understand what motivates and pushes back against participants in anti- or post-capitalist politics, Gibson-Graham consider the roles of fear and optimism, and the historically situated and socially grounded practices of participants. Members of Bustan are engaged in a variety of efforts to counter a social environment of embittered conflict that often seems omnipresent. My close examination

³³ Kay Milton (2002) explores emotions in environmentalism and developing a love of Nature, and Jake Kosek (2006:103-141) examines emotional attachments involved in an anti-conservationist movement.

of one grassroots organization allows me to highlight these activists' specific practices and the varied motivations that push them to dedicate their time, money, and reputations to collective action. I describe how Bustan leaders and participants used discursive *bricolage* (Lévi-Strauss 1966) to negotiate amidst multiple currents of power, including hegemonic projects of nation-building, ethno-nationalism, and competition for land. Faced with dominant discourses of territorialism, the moral value of farming, and the backwardness of Bedouins, activists drew elements from these existing discourses to build a new discourse of Bedouins' environmental stewardship. This focus on activism complements ethnographic discussion of families in the Bedouin Arab township of 'Ayn al-'Azm and the Jewish *moshav* of Dganim. Some of these residents undertake projects that are less concerted, though sometimes equally creative, aimed at righting inequalities and mending the rifts of land conflict. Together, these ethnographic discussions demonstrate with practical nuance how resistance and power are inherent in one another (Butler 1993), and what this means for our understandings of discursive change.

I view environmentalism broadly as “a concern *to protect* the environment through human effort and responsibility, rather than simply a concern that the environment be protected” (Milton 1996:33, emphasis in the original). Using this definition, particularly in the midst of a geopolitical struggle such as Israel's, requires one to ask who is doing the protecting, against what or whom, and for whom. Ecological projects are intimately tied to social, political, and economic projects (Brosius 1999; Harvey 1996a). Contemporary practices of environmentalism in Israel exist in many forms encompassing ecological and sociopolitical plans that are liberal and conservative, confrontational and collaborative, Zionist and anti-nationalist (see Benstein 2005; de-Shalit 1995; and Schoenfeld 2005 for typologies). The politically charged history of practices related to land that have been termed “environmental” has, itself, shaped the current context within which environmentalists operate. For example, Israeli managerial environmentalism has included tree-planting to control land, the zoning and constructing of national parks in ways that inhibited prior Palestinian uses of the land (Cohen 1993), and differential distribution of water and water treatment facilities (Tal 2002). This history has made it difficult for Palestinians, whether Israeli citizens or not, to endorse mainstream environmentalism (Benstein 2005). Some left-wing environmental

movements, on the other hand, which call for more radical redistribution of rights and resources among all of Israel's citizens, are threatening to Zionist Jews because they challenge the current Jewish orientation of the state.

Ethnographies of environmental activism have burgeoned in recent years, and many of these works have critiqued the colonial and imperial legacies involved in conservation movements because they impose Euro-American agendas on rural, stigmatized, and indigenous communities (West 2006; Heatherington 2010; Kosek 2006). Fewer have examined socio-environmental activism as a potential avenue for empowering subaltern communities (cf, Checker 2005).³⁴ This is part of my goal here, to explore the potential of grassroots activism to shift the discursive frames that currently bind Negev social relations in a set of binary oppositions. I draw upon Gibson-Graham's (2006) "politics of possibility," both as a useful description of the practices and political stakes involved in Bustan's work, and to place anthropology in dialogue with social movements. Ethnographic research holds the potential to elucidate the processes that construct groupness, the power of oppositional environmental discourses to frame social relations, and the consequences of linking landscapes to the moral characters of persons within contexts of socio-environmental conflict. Some social activists are engaged in this unpacking and analytical work, too (Kirsch 2006), as part of their efforts to imagine and realize new social relations and discourses. A politics of possibility recognizes individual subjectivities as both the sites and sources of political action with wide, indeed, potentially global implications. It builds from the insights of feminist scholarship about the importance of place-based practices related to the body, environment, and economy for the spreading of a globally present, and yet not globally unified feminist movement (Harcourt and Escobar 2005).

By tracing environmental discourses across circles of socio-environmental activism and everyday practices, and across the many physically and socially demarcated sites of my research, I suggest that change can happen through continuity, that resistance occurs from within existing relations of power. My research on the instantiation of exclusionary lines and attempts to soften them also contributes to our understanding of place and power by combining Foucauldian theories of power with emplaced and

³⁴ More writing has been done in less ethnographic styles (Bullard 2000; Cole and Foster 2001; Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997).

phenomenologically influenced approaches to landscapes. Specifically, I combine the careful attention to power that is inherent in genealogical discursive analysis with the focus on personal practices and meanings of a dwelling perspective. A dwelling perspective and other phenomenologically inspired approaches need not necessarily rest upon “a transcendental consciousness” that “places its own point of view at the origin of all historicity,” as Foucault criticizes of existential phenomenology (2002:xv). Rather, attention to experiences of being-in-the-world can highlight the contingency and concrete practices involved in participating in discursive fields and learning from them. This perspective keeps the importance of individual experience at the fore, preventing discourses from appearing to be unassailable and monolithic things. Meanwhile, Foucauldian theories of power remind us of the larger historically and institutionally constituted power relations at play in any individual encounter.

Fieldwork and Writing Methodologies

A Regional Approach

Because of my aim to study processes of group-making, I chose not to research within one group. Drawing inspiration from ethnographic studies of land and resource conflict in other settings (Kosek 2006; Merlan 1998; West 2006), I adopted a regional focus on the northern Negev in order to learn from those on the multiple “sides” of this conflict. The northern Negev includes both Jewish and Arab residents and also encompasses other potentially cross-cutting lines of affiliation, such as Bedouin and non-Bedouin Palestinians, Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jews, and differences of religiosity, occupation, and political orientation.

Within this regional focus, I conducted multi-sited research. For most of a twenty-month period, I lived in the Negev and spent time learning from environmental NGOs and community members. I gained my first introductions in the region via participant observation with Bustan. Studying in the informal, but still somewhat institutional setting of a grassroots NGO included assisting in the planning and implementation of campaigns and holding semi-structured interviews. I lived in Bustan's volunteer housing in Beersheba, participated in the organization's daily routines, gathered extensive fieldnotes, and conducted in-depth interviews with Bustan members, campaign

audiences, and members of other environmental and social activism groups in the Negev. I collected data on tactics of activism and campaign design, as well as the frustrations, large and small, that these activists faced (Fortun 2001). I noted to whom activists looked for help and what kind of group belonging was relevant in these circumstances (e.g., family, nationality, or religion). I conducted more extensive ethnographic research with a small number of activists. This involved longer interviews eliciting their “microhistories” (Toren 2002), as well as visiting them in their homes and meeting their friends and families. By following these individuals' social networks and personal histories, I learned how they incorporated environmental work into their everyday lives, and vice versa. Participating in the planning and implementation of the NGO's campaigns taught me about the rhetoric and practicalities of environmental activism. Coordinating one of their outreach classes helped me understand from an experiential standpoint.

Jointly led by Jews and Bedouin Arabs, Bustan promoted socially and environmentally sustainable lifestyles in the Negev in their quest for greater distributive justice of land and resources and brought together fragments of Israel's citizenry that are typically pulled apart. Though at the margins of Israel's socio-political spectrum, this NGO's bridging position between Bedouin Arab and Jewish communities helped me gain a footing in both. As I traveled with the NGO for coalition meetings, neighborhood garden-plantings, and media events, I met an array of Negev residents. This wide social network, which, in a society with such residential segregation, is uncommon outside Arab-Jewish coexistence activism, provided the basis for my study across boundary lines. I met those who would become my host families during a second research period, as well as a wide variety of Negev residents from the region's towns, cities, *moshavim* and *kibbutzim*, and unrecognized villages.

During my second period of research, I shifted to residentially based ethnography in order to explore land-use practices in the Negev in a more mainstream social context. I lived for four months in one of the area's Bedouin Arab townships, ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, and for four months in the neighboring Jewish *moshav* of Dganim. I chose these neighboring towns, only two kilometers apart across a dry riverbed, for their potential to reveal both social divisions and overlooked commonalities between Bedouin Arab and Jewish

residents. In each community, I lived with families, took part in daily life, and conducted in-depth interviews with residents and community leaders. Informal leaders in each community introduced me to a range of individuals and families with whom I cooked, cleaned, tended gardens, built homes, tutored children, took care of elders, and shared meals. In addition to casual conversations throughout these activities, I conducted lengthy interviews focused on individuals' and families' histories of residence, land-use practices, and perspectives on local and national governance and current environmental issues.

In both communities, I sought out interlocutors who were grappling with similar questions as I was about land struggles, emplaced identities, and conflict resolution. Being pointed by local residents to those they deemed to be experts on these issues taught me about wider perceptions of knowledge and authority and also allowed me to learn from these experts. In ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, this approach led me to a woman whose knowledge of “old ways” and whose hobbies in observing and making crafts from local fauna had led fellow residents to recommend her not just to me, but to several prior local researchers, as well. It also led me to a man building his home from mud, straw, and recycled trash, and to a woman from Gaza known only within her neighborhood for her lush garden, as well as to the woman known township-wide for her entrepreneurial project in tourism and herbal medicines. In the smaller community of Dganim, I was pointed to the charismatic local council leader who was spearheading his community's shift from agricultural to tourism-based livelihoods, the two remaining large-scale farmers, and a woman charged by the local council with environmental beautification of the *moshav*.

Living and working in these communities, I experienced Israel's residential segregation (Rabinowitz 1997), but during each successive period, I continued visiting friends, colleagues, and host families from prior periods. As I moved back and forth between Dganim, ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, Beersheba, and surrounding villages, I learned when and how to shift languages and manners of comportment and to rearrange clothing. Learning these adjustments required attention to the subtle gestures of others, like adjusting a headscarf, as well as more obvious features in the landscape, like fences. Such social and environmental cues participate in the drawing and policing of emplaced

group boundaries. Taken for granted in the typically segregated dwelling practices of residents, they became more obvious in journeying and interacting across social boundaries.

During fieldwork, it became clear that my methodological choice of a regional focus on the northern Negev was controversial and promised innovative insights. When I arrived in Israel and began meeting people and introducing my research as an ethnographic study based in the Negev, I was struck by how consistently both residents and fellow scholars assumed this meant that I was studying either the Bedouin or (less often) Jewish collective settlements. After I heard these assumptions repeated several times, I reexamined the anthropological literature and realized how segregated most ethnographic research in this region has been (Rabinowitz 2002b).

This segregation of anthropological research among either Jewish or Arab interlocutors, but rarely both, has multiple sources. To some extent, it reflects a legacy of the trend within earlier anthropology to assert the fixed boundaries of cultural groups and to erect epistemological separations between the researcher and the researched Other (Fabian 1983; Appadurai 1988). It takes its particular shape in Israel largely from the nationalist and nation-building climate within which Israeli anthropology developed. Although scholars who align themselves on each side of this nationalist divide have contributed to this segregation, state agencies have been particularly influential in enlisting “culturalism” to demarcate and authenticate a national Jewish-Israeli cultural core (Rabinowitz 2002; see also Domínguez 1989). Jewish Israelis affiliated with state institutions (e.g. surveillance services) were among the first to conduct ethnographic research in Israel (Rabinowitz 2002b). Their studies helped shape and solidify a national Jewish Israeli identity in opposition to an Arab Other.³⁵ To a lesser extent, Palestinian scholars have drawn on anthropological studies to strengthen a definition of Palestinian culture (Nakhleh 1977).

This partitioning has powerfully shaped the kinds of questions contemporary ethnographic research asks, and the kinds of social patterns and phenomena it seeks out. The development of anthropological literature on Israel has imposed separate theoretical

35 The characteristics asserted by these early researchers as being central to Palestinian culture, such as their rurality, political dependence, traditionalism, and “backward” family structures stand in stark opposition to those characteristics deemed central to Israeliness (Rabinowitz 2002b).

metonyms for Jews and Arabs. Ethnographic research tends to assign topics such as collective communities and nation-building (including the challenges of melding ethnic groups) as metonymic of Jewish communities, while it designates tribal structures, gender roles, nomadism, and troubled encounters with modernity as metonymic of communities identified as Arab or Bedouin.³⁶ Diversity on either side of a Jewish-Arab divide is acknowledged, comparing Ashkenazi and Mizrahi cultural practices, for example, or comparing Bedouins with Palestinian *fallahin* (peasant farmers). But rarely does nuanced interpretation of overlapping differences and similarities encompass people across the Jewish-Arab division. Thus, the norms of anthropological research practices risk intensifying the segregation of an already divided society, rather than taking this division itself—or rather, the practices that create this division—as our objects of inquiry.

Today, though separation of research among Jews from research among Arabs remains strong (e.g., Hertzog et al. 2010), some critical scholars are challenging the supposedly natural division between Arab and Jew. For instance, Daniel Rabinowitz (1997) provides an intimate account of Palestinian and Jewish residents living as uneasy neighbors in Nazareth Illit. Susan Slyomovics (1998) examines the palimpsest of Jewish and Palestinian occupancy of the same village in the Carmel Mountains. And Cédric Parizot (2009) discusses the porousness of the Separation Barrier around the West Bank, highlighting economic collaborations among Jewish Israelis and Palestinians across this supposed security barrier.³⁷ More work of this kind must be done if we are to understand how these social categories are constructed and how conflict between groups of Jews and Arabs in this region has come to seem so primordial.

Ethics in Studying Conflict

Though studying across social cleavages was methodologically important because

36 Examples of anthropological works addressing these topics include, for nation-building and ethnic minorities, Ashkenazi and Weingrod (1987), Dshen and Shokeid (1974), and Goldberg (1972); and for collective communities, Weingrod (1966), Schwartz et al (1995), Kushner (1973), and Shepher (1983). The anthropological literature on Palestinian Arabs typically treats Bedouins separately from Arabs (from north of the Negev). Ethnographies about Bedouins often focus on tribal structures (Ginat 1987; Marx 1967; Kressel 1996), gender roles (Dinero 1997, 2006; Fenster 1999), and nomadism and troubled encounters with modernity (Abu-Rabia 2001; Abu-Rabia-Queder 2006; Abu-Saad, Horowitz, and Abu-Saad 2007; Meir 1998; Marx and Shmueli 1984).

37 See also Lavie 1999. A few comparative literature and media studies scholars have concentrated more on intersections between Jewish and Arab identities than have anthropological accounts, including Arab Jews and Levantine culture (Alcalay 1993; Shohat 1989, 1999; Levy 2008).

it helped me understand these divisions as dynamic features of the social landscape, it also presented important ethical questions. My choices of study topic and regional approach were, themselves, ethical matters. This conflict—both localized in the Negev and the wider Arab-Israeli strife—has become entrenched in the lives of Israelis and Palestinians to the extent that an entire generation of young adults has grown up not having known any other state of affairs. I feel a responsibility to engage in research that contributes to efforts to resolve conflict, not simply by divvying up land and resources in ways that would halt active opposition, but leave basic inequalities and resentment unassuaged. Rather, by demonstrating that the seemingly natural categories of Arab and Jew are historically contingent and socially constructed, I contribute to efforts, both within scholarship and in the social change movements of some Negev residents with whom I worked, to highlight and challenge dominant discourses that naturalize existing social inequalities. I have placed deconstruction and the elucidation of discursive frames at the heart of my practice of anthropology, participating in the unmasking of power dynamics that shape social relations and opening more space for Bedouin Arabs and other minorities to advocate for themselves (McKee 2010).

This commitment to study on “both sides” of land conflict has shaped the logistical and ethical considerations of my fieldwork. First, it presented me the challenge of gaining a social toehold in the unfamiliar region of the northern Negev in a way that would allow me to establish intimate relationships with residents while also maintaining the physical and social mobility to move between people who may have less than cordial relationships with each other. While working with Bustan, I met with members of other organizations, some of which competed with Bustan for funding or social influence. I was careful to assure all involved that I would not pass potentially sensitive information between these groups about financial status, tactical planning, and the like. On the other hand, as a long-term participant observer with Bustan, I did share with them my analyses about the social and environmental messages they were conveying and to what extent these corresponded with the priorities of their intended audiences. Acting as a “committed critic” (Burdick 1995), I shared feedback with Bustan based on preliminary analysis of my materials through frequent, informal conversations and a mini-workshop that I conducted with the staff during a planning retreat.

While living among the reluctant neighbors of Dganim and ‘Ayn al-‘Azim, my potential role as liaison was more sensitive. Social boundaries have impeded personal discussion between the residents of these two towns, and media coverage has failed to cross these boundaries. The resulting lack of intercultural communication has fostered caricature portraits of irrational, sometimes even hateful opponents. Because I traveled across these lines, I was sometimes treated as a conduit of information or social interpreter. This role became more fraught during periods of violent conflict in the surrounding region, when group boundaries hardened and enmities festered more openly. For example, during the 2009 outbreak of armed conflict in and around Gaza, I was asked by interlocutors in both towns to explain what a vague “they” were thinking, or specifically, how residents of the other town were responding to the war. At kitchen-table conversations in each town, I was asked to explain their neighbors' baffling views. In such circumstances, I did my best to disassemble caricatures and report the fears and hopes I heard in each community. Whether regarding war or more mundane matters, I assiduously strove to protect personal confidences, but willingly discussed my observations in each community.

My placement within a context of conflict has also made it important for me to conduct multi-lingual fieldwork, even though I could conceivably have completed this research project in Hebrew. Because I would be studying in a context of so much strife and social inequality, I wanted to engage with individuals on all sides of this conflict in their native language. This meant conducting fieldwork primarily in Hebrew and Arabic, but also in English, which was sometimes viewed as a language outside or above the region's conflict. At times, in addition to the hospitable gesture of using my native language, interlocutors used English to appeal to a global community or notions of universal human rights, or to assert their own cosmopolitanism.

Like the English language's perceived position “outside” of the conflict, I was often hailed as an external arbiter. Many people exhorted me to understand and agree with their interpretation of “the situation.” Some referred directly to an imagined audience of my readers they hoped I would similarly convince. But my agreement was rarely demanded. I am grateful to have been invited into so many conversations in which discussion, debate, and open disagreement were all accepted. I was surprised many times

early in my fieldwork, after what felt like a particularly contentious debate that made me worry I had squandered my welcome by expressing disagreeable opinions, to be offered another cup of coffee, given a comfortable place to lie down and rest after a long day, or invited back for dinner.

Being non-Jewish, non-Muslim, non-Arab and without any family connections in the Middle East made me appear more objective to many of my interlocutors. I certainly developed social, emotional, and practical ties to particular families and communities. But, without “natural” ties to any party in this sociopolitical land conflict, I was imagined to be a fair arbiter, as well as a candidate for education, and perhaps even enlistment to an interlocutor's “side” (Shryock 1997).³⁸ Objectivity is something I strove toward, but it is not something I claim.³⁹ The field of Israeli-Arab conflict tends to be dealt with polemically, in the most warlike and belligerent connotations of the term's Greek roots. In such a setting, I seek to write about Israeli-Arab conflict at large, and Bedouin-Jewish Israeli conflict in particular, not in order to identify righteous and victimized parties, but rather, to answer how and why questions by seeking out situated knowledge (Haraway 1988). This commitment to non-polemical engagement has been integral to my writing goals, as well as my approach throughout the research that has led to it. I believe that confrontations—with difficult contradictions, opposing viewpoints, and evidence of injustice—can move understanding of the conflict forward. However, I aim to do this without vitriolic attack.

Throughout the process of researching and writing this dissertation, I have tried to recognize the humanity of all those involved—with all their attendant frailty, anger, generosity and ingenuity—and to point out where and how the humanity of certain groups of people is threatened through this conflict. My goal here is not to provide simply a dispassionate accounting of facts. Nor is it to make as persuasive and passionate an argument as possible in favor of a particular solution or against a particular party in the conflict. Rather, I hope that this dissertation will explain where the passion,

38 As Shryock (1997:4) notes, despite shifting trends in anthropology to embrace or deny objectivity and analytic distance, ethnographers are always in a “position *external* to a local political-historical complex.”

39 Objectivity is best evaluated by observers, and just as I identify misleading narratives, incompletely analyzed assumptions, and gaps in historical accounts among even some of the best-intentioned participants in this conflict, I suspect that others may find some of this in my own analysis.

polemics, and virulence of this conflict come from; that it will offer a translation across sides, and perhaps even a step towards softening the currently hardened group boundaries. I aim to highlight basic structural inequalities in Israel that discriminate against some citizens while privileging others and that serve to perpetuate strife.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is organized into three sections. The first section examines the entrenchment and selective contestation of dominant environmental discourses in Israel, including those particular to the Negev. Chapter one traces a selective history of the development of Zionism, focusing on events and figures related to the environmental narratives that have shaped it as a movement and been propagated through its development. These historical developments in environmental discourses are important for understanding contemporary land conflict because stories told about the past are so often drawn upon in the present to promote the movement's mythology and score victories in current disputes. I examine several phases in Zionism's development, from its uncertain early days as a fringe movement to the initiation of large-scale immigration to Palestine in the early 1900s, to the solidification of a nearly hegemonic Labor Zionist movement during the early years of Israeli statehood, and finally the splintering of that dominance in recent years. Some foundational environmental discourses of Zionist movements' early years have subsided, such as the redemptive power of labor in nature. Others, like an essentialized opposition between Jew and Arab, have intensified over the years. The territorial imperative to secure identification with and control over lands as Jewish has been central to Zionism throughout its many transitions. The chapter provides historical background as to how a binary opposition of Jew-culture-progress versus Arab-nature-tradition gained its dominant status, but also acknowledges the contingency, uncertainty, and ambivalence of this development.

History is typically written by the victors, but in chapter two, I present counter narratives of the Naqab's past, told to me by Bedouin Arab residents. An alternative historical narrative offered by these reminiscences counter certain erasures in Zionist narratives. The barren wastelands common to Zionist accounts are replaced in these reminiscences by social landscapes, peopled by vibrant communities and complex

cultural traditions. These narratives assert the value of land for the freedom it granted residents, and for the family connections and healthy lifestyles it supported. As I analyze the environmental discourses underlying these counter narratives, I find that Naqab Bedouin narrators must negotiate complex and overlapping discursive fields of Zionism and Palestinian nationalism. At times, even those accounts that most forcefully oppose Zionist histories on the surface actually rest on shared environmental discourses. At other times, in denying Zionist historical accounts, narrators align with a Palestinian nationalism that has never been centrally concerned with the Naqab desert or its residents.

The second section moves deeper into the landscapes and social relations of the Negev. After describing contemporary residential segregation of the region in the bridge chapter (three), I focus on how residents shape and are shaped by the state-planned landscapes within which they dwell. I juxtapose two communities, which, though segregated between Jews and Bedouin Arabs, also share neighboring landscapes and contemporary obstacles to formerly agricultural livelihoods. Chapter four focuses on life in the Bedouin Arab township of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, where residents formed ambivalent attachments to the places they lived. Noting the duress under which most families moved to the township and the sense of loss they felt for other landscapes and past agropastoral lifestyles, most felt strong attachments to family and neighborhood, but felt alienated from the township as a collective landscape. Grappling with dilemmas they faced living in a state based on Zionist norms and priorities, residents generally coped with the restrictions of urban plans by “making do” in de Certeau’s use of the term, but rarely in open defiance of these plans.

Chapter five presents the Jewish *moshav* of Dganim, settled by a group of new immigrants in the 1950s. The residents of this formerly agricultural village narrated agentive stories of building their *moshav* and recalled earlier cooperative relationships with governmental bodies. Aligning with dominant discourses heralding agriculture as nation-building, and following the guidance of state experts, *moshav* residents took part in shaping a socio-environmental landscape centered on collective agriculture. In more recent years, agriculture's status in Israel declined, and direct state support for farming was replaced by a less direct, neoliberal logic of governance. As agriculture collapsed,

residents needed other sources of income. Seeking inclusion in an avowedly neoliberal and multicultural Israel, community leaders began reshaping the *moshav* as a site for rural and heritage tourism. As residents sought to incorporate themselves more deeply into Israeli society, their visions of and daily practices in their community contributed to the drawing and policing of separations between Jews and Arabs.

A second bridge chapter leads to the final section, in which I investigate challenges to the governmental planning of divided landscapes and to the dominant environmental discourses underlying these landscapes. Chapter seven explores how the boundaries between different kinds of Israeli citizens are drawn, policed, and contested through preferential land-use policies and opposition to them. The chapter examines two recent government threats of evictions due to “illegal” land use, one forestalled and the other carried out. In one case, Jewish farmstead owners built houses on agricultural land and in the other, Bedouin Arab residents built on lands declared as state-owned. All of these residents sought governmental recognition of their land claims. While Jewish farmstead owners won legislation that retroactively legalized their farmsteads and avoided eviction, no similar solution was found for unrecognized villages, and many Bedouin Arab homes have been and continue to be demolished. This comparison reveals both the high stakes of cultural recognition and how this recognition is entangled in the management of land use. I develop the idea of acultural accommodation to explain the pressures placed on Bedouin Arabs to conform to nation-building priorities, but without recognition in Israeli society as fully cultured beings.

The final chapter examines compliance and contestation in grassroots activism, considering the role of social movements in perpetuating or altering the status quo of land conflict. I focus on one environmental justice NGO's efforts to reshape socio-environmental relations in the Negev. Specifically, I present three campaigns run by Bustan: an ongoing series of educational tours, a set of solar energy installations for children in unrecognized villages and its attendant media campaign, and a course in environmental sustainability. Drawing on Levi-Strauss's (1966) concept of *bricolage*, I analyze Bustan's participation in a politics of possibility (Gibson-Graham 2006). Like the *bricoleur*, Bustan proceeds by resourcefully re-appropriating dominant environmental discourses. They re-signify existing ideas, practices, and rhetoric about Bedouins and

Jews, sustainability, citizenship, and nature into environmental discourses that are new in the internal disposition of their parts, though not in their raw materials nor the tools of their making. Through their discursive *bricolage*, activists reframe traditional Bedouin pastoralism as modern environmental sustainability, propose multicultural citizenship as a set of substantive rights that includes ties to land, and defines sustainability as a holistic socio-environmental goal.

With each section, the dissertation moves toward more integration across the supposed oppositions set by the binary frames of Jew-culture-progress versus Arab-nature-tradition. These social constructions have engendered entrenched and powerful material and emotional consequences for Negev residents. But this research also reveals the possibilities being explored by some residents to shift and open these restrictive, conflict-ridden discursive fields.

CHAPTER I

The Changing Nature of Zionism: Environmental Discourses in Zionist History

Lit by the afternoon sun on a hilltop just west of Jerusalem, Hebrew letters two meters tall and constructed from corrugated metal declared their message, “agriculture will win,” across the valley. It was 2007 when I saw these letters lining the steep entrance road of one of Israel's few remaining collective *kibbutzim*, dominating the skyline above the community's vineyards. The first *kibbutzim* (plural of *kibbutz*) of the early 1900s were small, agricultural settlements run as economically and socially cooperative communities. Today, most *kibbutzim* have privatized, and many have shifted away from agriculture. This *kibbutz* had many productive acres of vineyards, orchards, and vegetables, but in recent years it had also become increasingly reliant on the income from a glass factory and a children's water park.⁴⁰ Mark, a proud resident of the *kibbutz*, explained the message his community hoped to send via these metal letters to the other Israelis who drove the roads of the surrounding hills or participated in the housing development projects that were encroaching on the *kibbutz*'s farmland. We are struggling to keep the agriculture and the green space, Mark said. It is not as profitable as using land to construct buildings, but we think agriculture will win.

In some ways, the struggle to which Mark referred is typical of any society undergoing a transition from an agrarian economy to one more reliant on industrial production, tourism, and other services. In other ways, this struggle is unique to Israel and the Zionist movement. When he made these concluding remarks, Mark was referring to a past in which agriculture dominated his society. But this dominance was not primarily economic. Agriculture never provided more jobs than the service or manufacturing sectors of the economy, nor did it produce the highest portion of GDP for Israel (Kellerman 1993). Instead, the dominance Mark harkens back to and wishes to see

⁴⁰ See also Grossman (2004) on *kibbutz* tourism and other structural and economic changes to *kibbutzim*.

in the future is social and ideological. Understanding the complex political, emotional, and ideological resonances of Mark's comments and these giant metal letters on a hillside requires a look at the environmental discourses that have developed throughout the history of Zionism as a social movement and state ideology. This message in metal was not directed to Palestinian citizens of Israel, but to other Jewish Israelis. That such separate worlds could be imagined is part of the historical development this chapter explores.

This chapter traces the stabilization of certain environmental discourses within Zionism, namely Jewish redemption through labor in land, a fundamental difference between Jews and Arabs, and a territorial imperative tying existential safety to the establishment of “Jewish lands” (also referred to as the “Judaization” of areas). These discourses gained influence by and through the stabilization of Zionism from a collection of related but sometimes discrepant ideologies to the institutions, narratives and practices of the Israeli state government and a majority of its residents. The chapter is not a comprehensive history of Zionism, nor is it a full historical account of nationalism and state-building efforts in the region of Israel/Palestine. Thorough histories of Zionism, as well as Zionist, revisionist, and post-Zionist historical accounts of the region have already been written (eg, Kellerman 1993; Piterberg 2008; Levensohn 1941; Attias and Benbassa 2003; Laqueur 1972; Sternhell 1998). Instead, I present a historical account of these key environmental discourses through phases in Zionism's development, from the contentious nineteenth-century debates among European Jews about consolidating a Jewish nation-state, through the ascendance of Labor Zionism as an ideological and practical driver of Jewish settlement in Palestine and Israeli state building, and to Labor Zionism's fall from power in recent years and the proliferation of competing Zionist narratives and practices relating land and people.

This historical examination is important because, as Tania Murray Li notes, “the stability of a discursive formation is demonstrated when elements that are pragmatically 'lashed up' become systematized, their discrepant origins submerged” (2005:386). The historical account that follows highlights these discrepant origins. By tracing the historical development of environmental discourses that are now so dominant they are often taken for granted, I demonstrate the contingency and open possibilities of a

situation that is so often narrated with heavy fatalism. Since Zionism's initiation as a political movement, there has been a tension between tendencies to reforge a bond with nature in the Jews' ancestral home, and to construct a boldly progressive society using Europe as its model. This tension has been dealt with differently through the years. Some of the environmental discourses that were foundational in Zionism's early years have subsided, such as the redemptive power of labor in nature. Others, like a naturalized antagonism between Jew and Arab, have intensified over the years. The importance of establishing lands as Jewish and securing territorial control over these lands has remained central to Zionism throughout its many shifts. Over the years, these environmental discourses have been influential in shaping Zionist labor, landscapes, and personhood.⁴¹

The historical development of these particular environmental discourses is important for understanding contemporary land conflict because stories told about the past are so often drawn upon in the present to promote Zionist national myths and score victories in current disputes (Kellerman 1993; see also Kosek 2006). For example, myths of Zionist settlement tell of brave predecessors struggling with wild and dangerous nature in order to create a new society (Kellerman 1996). This is similar to the founding settlement myths told in other colonial contexts such as North America (Cronon 1983) and Australia (Lines 1991). These myths arise from and perpetuate particular ethical stances and shared assumptions about nature and human nature, which can then shape political disputes in often unacknowledged ways. Beyond simply recounting historical narratives, these environmental discourses are instantiated in and read from landscapes by the people dwelling in these landscapes. The past is present in landscapes through the memories and interpretations of its inhabitants (Ingold 1993). As Negev residents dwell in their landscapes, they are dwelling in the past, as well. So, to comprehend their current attachments to land, one must also understand what is being remembered.

In presenting this coalescing of dominant environmental discourses in Zionism, this chapter begins to uncover a genealogy of the binary oppositions that enframe

⁴¹ Because the purpose of this chapter is to begin tracing the developments that have led to an entrenched “side” in today's conflict, this may appear to be a teleological history. Indeed, one characteristic element of many Zionist historical accounts is to tell a teleological story in which all events lead to the creation of the state of Israel (e.g., Levensohn 1941). However, this is an element I would like to analyze, but not replicate. One key point I hope to convey is that Zionism, as the powerful force it constitutes today, was not preordained.

contemporary land relations in Israel. This enframing “seem[s] to resolve the world's shifting complexity into two simple and distinct dimensions” for ease of control (Mitchell 1990:566). Because this history focuses on Zionist movements, it is a partial genealogy. But the institutions, charismatic leaders, and many other participants in Zionist projects have powerfully shaped the socio-environmental landscapes of Israel as a whole and of the Negev in particular. They have played a dominant role in propagating a binary frame of Arab versus Jew, and in linking this binary opposition to those of nature versus culture and tradition versus progress.

A Movement Consolidates

Nationalist movements draw strength from myths of long ancestry, and proponents of Zionism, like other nationalist movements, often draw deep historical connections to claim a continuous ancestry of Zionist thoughts and deeds stretching back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and sometimes even earlier (Zerubavel 1995). However, the early Jewish leaders that many Zionist historians point to did not agree on elements which have become fundamental to the Zionisms of the Israeli nation-state. Not all supported the imperative of Jewish return to the Holy Land (or *Eretz Israel*, Hebrew for the area's Biblical designation of “The Land of Israel”)⁴², and many of those who argued for return did so on religious grounds, and without any discussion of political mobilization or the need to revive a purportedly broken connection between Jews and nature (Attias and Benbassa 2003).⁴³

Amidst a number of movements of the 1800s that sought to improve the lives of Jews in Europe—movements for assimilation, redemption through nature, and individual salvation through immigration to the Holy Land—Zionism consolidated around a combined belief in the powers of state guidance and physical attachment to land to redeem the Jewish people.⁴⁴ Discernible in this period are the beginnings of certain

42 The related term, “Promised Land,” invokes Judeo-Christian theology by referring to God's promise of territory to the Israelites.

43 For example, Hasidic and Kabbalist writings of the seventeenth century that urge a return to the Holy Land focus primarily on Jerusalem as the site of the ancient First and Second Temples, but speak little of surrounding areas (Attias and Benbassa 2003).

44 This history of environmental discourses in Zionism is Eurocentric because what came to be known as Zionism developed from the efforts of a group of European Jews motivated by Enlightenment and nationalist ideas. Historical accounts of Zionism's development would look very different if told from the point of view of Jews living in Palestine before the 1900s or elsewhere in the world (Attias and

environmental discourses that have gained prominence, though with some important alterations, throughout Zionism's development. These include the redemptive potential of agricultural labor and a deep connection with nature, the naturalness of the nation-state as a form of group belonging, and the guiding role of the state in shaping good people.

However, both the geographical focus on Israel and the collective drive to establish a Jewish nation-state that are commonly associated with Zionism today were far from certain during this early period (Eisenzweig 1981; Attias and Benbassa 2003; Elon 1971). Before 1917, Zionism was simply a “somewhat eccentric movement of young idealists who met every other year at a congress and espoused various political, financial, cultural, and colonising ideas” (Laqueur 1972:xiv). It was not obvious then that this social movement would become a state ideology with hegemonic influence. The late 1800s through the beginning of the 1900s was a period of shifting alliances and disputes, of competition over monetary support and political influence. Certain Orthodox religious movements were attempting to redeem Jews by pulling them away from the corruptions of modernity. At the same time, some European Jewish leaders were advocating assimilation as they struggled to bring Jews into social and political mainstreams and gain acceptance as modern coevals with their non-Jewish counterparts. Others began calling for independence and sovereignty for Jews. This period only gains coherence as the story of Zionism in retrospect.

The common narrative of Zionism's development identifies Theodore Herzl as its father. Indeed, Zionism did crystallize as a significant movement in the 1890s and gained momentum largely under Herzl's charismatic leadership. A particular view of human nature fueled Herzl's conviction in redemption projects during both his assimilationist and sovereignty-seeking phases. Because his theories on creating the new Jew became so influential and because he is so widely viewed as the founder of modern Zionism, this view of human nature deserves further attention. For Herzl, a person could only truly be honorable by contributing to and sacrificing for a community larger than himself. Herzl experienced anti-Semitism in his life and adopted anti-Semitic views of his own. His writings depict Jews as materialistic and weak of character, and they direct epithets like

Benbassa 2003). At certain historical times Jerusalem and the Holy Land declined in importance for Jewish life and spirituality in the diaspora, and there has been significant non-Zionist Jewish residence in the Holy Land.

“Jewboy,” “Jewish vermin,” and “parasite” at his Jewish opponents (Kornberg 1993). However, he maintained that these character flaws were the result of Jews' exclusion from full belonging to the states where they lived. Anti-Semitism barred Jews from gaining the full benefits of citizenship, he argued, and thus also denied them the motivation to uphold responsibilities, such as military service, to the wider community. But if they were allowed full participation, or rather, if the state required this of them, Jews would be formed into honorable contributors to the common good (Kornberg 1993).

European Jewish intellectuals who later became leaders in Zionist organizations developed within the secular and assimilationist milieu of the *Haskalah*, or Jewish Enlightenment movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe. Given the nationalism and emancipationist ideology infusing the wider European society, it is not surprising that Herzl and others wrote of citizenship in a nation-state as the ideal, indeed, the natural form of participation in a larger community (Kornberg 1993). Some, such as Herzl and Leon Pinsker, initially advocated for Jews' assimilation in Europe in order to gain respect and stronger moral standing.⁴⁵ But as hopeful early signs of Jewish emancipation and integration in Europe failed to blossom and expressions of anti-Semitism moved in unpredictable waves throughout Europe, Herzl and other Jewish intellectuals grew disillusioned and shifted their focus from assimilation to sovereignty (Kornberg 1993).

How best to achieve that sovereignty became a matter of fierce debate, and this debate reveals important disagreements about states, subjects, and sovereignty. By 1897, when Herzl was selected as president of the newly formed World Zionist Organization (WZO), he fully endorsed a statehood approach to Jewish revitalization. In fact, he argued that statehood should be the immediate goal; rather than taking the time to build a broad nationalist movement, a few enlightened Zionist leaders should take the lead in creating a state that would then forge stronger Jews (Kornberg 1993).⁴⁶ This push for immediate statehood contrasted with the views of other leaders, such as the Russian-born Ahad Ha-Am, who argued that a large, Hebrew-speaking Zionist settlement ought to be

45 Into the 1880s, Herzl even proposed measures such as mass conversion to Christianity, intermarriage with non-Jews in order to raise children in “the majority faith,” and duels fought against anti-Semites in order to improve Jews' acceptance in the wider society (Kornberg 1993:160).

46 A Jewish state could be relied on for this task, Herzl believed, because it would be in the interest of the state to foster subjects possessing civic virtue and soldierly courage.

initiated first as a cultural center for Jews. The large population of this cultural home for Jews then would provide legitimacy for Jewish sovereignty (Kornberg 1993; Attias and Benbassa 2003). A rift formed between these “practical Zionists,” who prioritized the practical establishment of a Jewish community in Palestine without waiting for political agreements, and the “political Zionists” who shared Herzl's requirement that diplomatic channels be pursued to secure a charter for land before undertaking settlement projects (Laqueur 1972; Elon 1971).

These debates also demonstrate the geographic uncertainty of early Zionist efforts. Amidst these factional disagreements, Herzl and allied leaders continued striving to gain a charter for a Jewish state with international legal recognition. Early efforts focused on negotiations with the Ottoman sultan for land in Palestine. Argentina, the Sinai peninsula, Cyprus, and Syria all received serious consideration as well. In 1903, Herzl received an offer from Joseph Chamberlain, the British colonial secretary, to conduct a mission investigating Great Britain's Uganda Protectorate as a site for Jewish resettlement and semi-autonomy (Laqueur 1972). Herzl supported this plan at the Sixth Zionist Congress, sparking the “Uganda controversy,” as it has come to be known.

Herzl's proposal ignited a brief but fierce battle between factions prioritizing political sovereignty and those prioritizing the connection of the Jewish people to the *Eretz Israel* (the Land of Israel). All agreed that land must be found for Jewish settlement. But the controversy showed that not all early Zionist factions supported the focus on a nation-state as the link between man and land that Herzl advocated, and which would later come to dominate Labor Zionism. Some opponents of the Uganda proposal argued that pursuing settlement in any place other than Palestine would be a betrayal of the Jewish people (Laqueur 1972). Their position rested on a belief in the natural connection between Jews and *Eretz Israel* and attributed less importance to institution-building and nation-state status.⁴⁷ After fierce arguments, the WZO voted in 1903 to

⁴⁷ *Haskalah* leaders of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who sought a revival of the broken connection between Jews and nature did not generally focus on a connection between the Jewish people and the land of Israel. Literature and poetry of the period depicted settings of cedar and olive trees, bubbling brooks, pastures, and shepherdesses. But, “when the *Haskalah* evoked Judean shepherds, peasants, or soldiers living in close harmony with nature,” Jean-Christophe Attias and Esther Benbassa argue, “it was less in order to exalt the land of Israel than to promote a reform of the Jewish man and of the social structure of communities, reforms that it hoped to see accomplished in the Diaspora” (2003:130). Inspired by Arcadian literature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, *Haskalah* leaders sought redemption of the Jewish character through greater connection to art and nature in

allow an exploratory mission to Uganda, but heard in 1905 from the results of this exploratory mission that the area would not be suitable for large-scale agriculture. These findings, along with the opposition to the plan that had been building in the WZO, ended consideration of Uganda. The period's Zionist leaders could not envision a thriving Jewish nation-state without productive agricultural land. The Congress used the opportunity to resolve against pursuing settlement in any site outside Palestine or adjacent lands (Levensohn 1941).⁴⁸

This united geographical focus proved to be a source of strength for the burgeoning movement. Different factions held widely divergent views of the land of Palestine. For *Hovevei Zion*, political Zionism offered legitimation and large-scale support for the scattered settlement they had already been building in these lands.⁴⁹ Right-wing religious Zionists viewed the Holy Land as the Jews' spiritual center and political Zionism as a sacred religious duty undertaken to realize this common bond. Secular, socialist Zionists sought the Jews' political and moral reinvigoration through settlement and nation-building. There were also supporters of Jewish settlement in Palestine who drew motivation from a variety of sources, including the proximity to God sought there by Orthodox Jews and the millenarian hopes of many Christians. This diversity of conflicting associations could have torn the Zionist movement apart. Instead, each faction managed to pursue similar practical ends of increasing Jewish immigration to Palestine, though for different reasons.⁵⁰

With Herzl's death in 1904, many predicted the collapse of political Zionism,

Europe.

48 Debates over the Uganda proposal had widened rifts in the WZO, and several contingents broke off from the Congress, including left-wing socialists and territorialists (Laqueur 1972). Territorialists, under the leadership of Israel Zangwill formed the Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO). The ITO did not share the WZO's emphasis on political sovereignty, nor its newly uncompromising focus solely on Palestine, and the organization continued efforts to colonize areas outside Palestine through the first decade of the 20th century (Attias and Benbassa 2003).

49 *Hovevei Zion* ("Lovers of Zion") were Russian and east European Jews who organized colonies in Palestine beginning in 1882. Many consider the group to be one of Zionism's forerunners (Laqueur 1972).

50 The friction of these diverse visions produced some new syntheses that would prove to be influential for Zionism in the future, such as the platforms of the National Religious Party and other groups of Religious Zionists. For example, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook forged a synthesis between Orthodoxy and political Zionism that disarmed Orthodox anxieties about humans preempting the ingathering of Jews that they believed could only be orchestrated by God. Kook suggested that because God works in mysterious ways, secular nationalist Jews could actually be playing a divine role in assisting the arrival of the Messiah (Attias and Benbassa 2003).

because Herzl had been so instrumental in holding the various factions together (Laqueur 1972). Indeed, in the aftermath of the Uganda controversy and with Herzl's passing, factions of “political” and “practical” Zionists vied for leadership. Political Zionists engaged in diplomatic negotiations for a charter in Turkey, but these efforts stalled, and their influence declined. Meanwhile, amidst the upheaval in WZO leadership, significant numbers of Jews fleeing pogroms in Russia immigrated to Palestine under the organization and sponsorship of socialist Zionists in the diaspora. These settlements lent weight to the practical Zionists' position, and in 1911 they gained a majority in the WZO leadership (Levensohn 1941).

The WZO and international Zionism held together, and in the early decades of the 1900s, as significant immigration was undertaken in Palestine and immigrants there began organizing political parties, Zionism's center of power shifted to incorporate leaders living in the *Yishuv* (Laqueur 1972).⁵¹ These leaders, drawing ideologically and financially from the central and east European socialist Zionists who funded so many of their settlements, developed the movement of Labor Zionism. Aligned with the practical Zionists of the WZO and drawing from elements of European socialism, Labor Zionists such as A.D. Gordon, Chaim Arlosoroff, and David Ben Gurion contended that a Jewish state in Palestine would be achieved not by relying on international diplomacy, but through the physical labor of Jewish workers in *Eretz Israel*. Though divided on many elements of ideology and tactics, these Labor Zionists shared with political Zionists of Herzl's legacy two key discourses. Both believed in the necessity of physical labor in service to the collective and the importance of land as the basis for a collective redemption.

Digging In (1904-1948): Shaping Jewish Land, People, and Labor

Zionist leaders have faced certain questions regarding nature and human nature that are common to any movement working to establish a nation-state: who belongs to the nation, how to engage with the landscapes of the nation-state's territory, and how to manage encounters with the people already living on these lands. These same questions

⁵¹ The *Yishuv* is the period beginning with the initiation of Zionist immigration to Palestine (in the 1890s) and ending with the establishment of the state. The term “*Yishuv*” is also used to designate the society of Jews living in Palestine at this time.

have confronted Zionism throughout the years, but as it shifted from the struggling movement of a vanguard elite to the basis of a state government, the answers to these questions changed.

During the early twentieth century, from the first intensification of immigration and settlement-building efforts known as the Second *Aliyah* to Israel's declaration of statehood, Labor Zionists consolidated their power in Palestine and in the WZO.⁵² Although the struggle between practical and political Zionists continued within the WZO, leaders in the diaspora began mounting a more united effort to realize their vision of redemption through labor, and Labor Zionism became a practical reality as it moved from the writing of elites to realization on the ground. Institutions were established to channel resources—money and people—into the movement outlined in theory over the preceding decades. Specifically, this meant pooling resources and centralizing land-purchasing efforts to bring Jewish people to Palestine.

During the Second *Aliyah*, these nation-building efforts focused on two practical problems—residence and employment for Jewish immigrants. The path taken in addressing these problems reveals the development of two key discourses of Jewishness and otherness, and of human-environment relations. First, Labor Zionism strove to establish a “dual society paradigm” that would naturalize a separation between Jew and other. Zionism developed, as both ideology and as political strategy, in the context of European colonialism and nationalism. Nationalist and racial ideas of belonging and exclusion underlay all strands of Zionism. This included Herzl's early vision of Zionism as a solution for the safety of the world's Jews, as well as the views of Labor Zionist leaders like A.D. Gordon and Ze'ev Jabotinsky, who worked in Palestine toward the practical realization of Zionism. But the naturalization of nationalism was particularly pronounced in the Labor Zionism that took root in Palestine. Its leaders approached Zionism less as an instrumental solution to the pressing problem of Jewish safety, and more as the realization of the natural rights of a particular people to a particular place

⁵² Historical accounts of the period between the establishment of political Zionism and the establishment of the state of Israel conventionally designate the following partitions, based on waves of immigration: First *Aliyah* (1882-1903), Second *Aliyah* (1904-1918 or 1914), Third *Aliyah* (1919-1923), Fourth *Aliyah* (1924-1931), Fifth *Aliyah* (1932-1939) (Tessler 1994). *Aliyah*, “ascent” is the term commonly used in Hebrew for immigration to Israel. It carries the connotation of holy pilgrimages that used to be made to the central temple in Jerusalem and has been taken up as a secular term that privileges immigration to Israel over immigration to any other place (Attias and Benbassa 2003).

(Sternhell 1998).

Adhering to this dual society paradigm, leaders strove to guide the development of labor and the creation of collective settlements in ways that partitioned space in Palestine according to ethnic criteria. Most dramatically this partitioning occurred in residences, but also in the workplace and other realms of everyday life. This partitioning between “two completely separate and self-contained entities in Palestine: the Jewish *Yishuv* (the settler community) and the Palestinian Arab society (the indigenous community),” became a centerpiece of Zionist discourse (Piterberg 2008:64). It is based on a premise of Zionism shared by other forms of colonialism, that the presence of natives was inconsequential for the formation of the settler society. This is the sentiment behind such emblematic slogans of Zionism as, “a land without people for people without land.” And although this separation may have begun as a conceit of Zionist ideology, because it guided decades of development in the *Yishuv* and later the Israeli state, the ideology has shaped material reality as well (Piterberg 2008).⁵³

The second key development in environmental discourses was that labor became understood as not only integral to the redemption of Jewish personhood, but also to the establishment of land rights (Sternhell 1998). Most emblematically, labor meant agricultural work, but it also included urban industrial employment. Both types of labor were ways of undertaking *hagshama* (“realization” of the Zionist mission) because they were building the infrastructure for Jewish settlement and because the practice of labor was perceived to dispel the negative qualities of urban diaspora life by “rooting” a restless, exilic Jewish identity (de-Shalit 1995; Almog 2000).

Even during the periods of Ottoman rule (until 1917) and British Mandate rule (1923-1948), before the Zionist movement had attained statehood, leaders worked through centralized institutions to construct the foundation of a hoped-for nation-state by shaping labor, landscapes, and personhood. Through socialist institutions, military practices, and the construction and idealization of collective settlements, Zionist leaders instantiated their conviction in the power of the state to guide and shape citizens during

53 The urge of Zionist pioneers to create a new society that reshaped Jewish character as well as the holy land prompted them not only to claim and strive for a dual society paradigm between Jews and Arabs, but also to overlook the presence of the pre-Zionist Palestinian Jewish community (Attias and Benbassa 2003:163).

the *Yishuv* period (Shafir and Peled 2000a). Together, discourses of Jewish-Arab separation and of Judaizing Israeli landscapes guided their efforts. Specifically, Zionist leaders sought to establish a physical and visibly Jewish presence in Palestine; to establish firm boundaries between and among the Jews, Christians, and Muslims living in and moving to these lands; and to foster a new Jewish character tied to the land of *Eretz Israel*. These endeavors promoted environmental discourses that centered on the collective settlement, the practical and spiritual value of agriculture, and the persona of the heroic and self-sacrificing European-turned-native Jew. The *kibbutz* and the pioneer-farmer brought together these discourses and became emblematic of this period.

Uprising the Exilic Labor Pyramid

Labor Zionists saw labor, rather than simply residence, as the most important connection to land because it could shape both Zionist subjects (the “New Jews”) and Zionist land (Piterberg 2008; Shafir 1996). Building on Herzl's ideas of the character-forging benefits of collective, productive labor, A.D. Gordon and other Zionists of his day, believed that Jews' low status in the world was due primarily to having become fixed in an unnatural, upside-down labor pyramid, in which most people made a living without any connection to land or production, and only a tiny portion engaged in agriculture. Gordon, an influential Zionist leader, father figure, and educator of the Second *Aliyah*, saw society as being composed of “workers” and “parasites” (a division not necessarily correlated with class in the Marxist sense), and he strove to make a Jewish community in *Eretz Israel* composed entirely of workers (Perlmutter 1971). These Zionists called for Jewish society in Palestine to upend the exilic pyramid of labor and not only engage all members of the new society in productive labor, making them workers (rather than parasites), but in particular, to bring them into contact with nature through agriculture (Biale 1992; Perlmutter 1971).

Labor in the land, and especially suffering for the land, was also seen to create a special bond between one's group and the land. Jewish labor could make the land Jewish. For example, Gordon articulated the belief that Jews held a claim over *Eretz Israel*, but they could lose it if they did not invest labor in the land. As he wrote in 1909, during debates over the rightfulness of Jews' claims to the lands of Palestine, “One thing is

certain, and that is that the land will belong more to the side that is more capable of suffering for it and working it, and which will suffer for it more and work it more.... That is only logical, that is only just, and that is how it should be in the nature of things” (Sternhell 1998:68). The barren and uncultivated state of Palestine's landscapes in the late nineteenth century was proof for Gordon and other Zionists that the Arabs living there had not gained rights in the land through their labor (Sternhell 1998).⁵⁴

Thus, one central challenge facing Zionist leaders was how to open the labor market throughout Palestine to Jewish workers. During the First *Aliyah*, land purchases and Jewish immigration to Palestine had been modeled after French colonial expansion in North Africa. Plantations were run by a few higher-paid Jews supervising a large number of inexpensive Arab laborers (Piterberg 2008). But as Jewish settlement efforts became more intensive and centralized during the Second and Third *Aliyot* (plural of *Aliyah*), immigrants began building the foundations of a state, rather than simply settling as individual families. Ethnic lines of group belonging became more salient for residents as Zionist institutions increasingly invested in shifting the labor market to favor Jews. Zionist leaders hoped to attract large numbers of Jews, but Jewish workers faced competition from the Arabs already living in Palestine, many of whom would accept lower wages than would Jews because they were supported by large family networks and could supplement wage labor with subsistence from family farms (Levensohn 1941). In addition, many Jewish immigrants were unskilled or underskilled in the kinds of tasks required both for their vision of redemption through laboring in the land and for building a state by and for the Jewish people.

Faced with this dilemma, competing parties within the Labor Zionist movement debated the possibilities and pitfalls of “joint organization,” unionizing Arab and Jewish workers together in order to demand higher wages, primarily from the British Mandate government. These debates escalated throughout the 1920s—spurred on by unrest among carpenters, tailors, and most especially, among railway workers—and came to a head in

54 Israel is by no means unique in privileging agriculture over other sorts of land uses. For example, American models of private property were based on the Jeffersonian ideal of the yeoman farmer (Worster 1993; Krall 2002) and Australia's declaration of *terra nullius* (a land belonging to no one) denied the land claims of non-agricultural Aboriginal residents in favor of colonial ranchers (Povinelli 2002; Lines 1991). Notably, Australia's High Court overturned the designation of Australian lands occupied by Aboriginal peoples as *terra nullius* in 1992.

the period surrounding the *Histadrut's* 1927 Congress, which planned to discuss and set policy regarding the question of joint Arab-Jewish unionizing. The debates and their resolution reveal a great deal about Zionist movement priorities and helped to instantiate divisions between Jews and Arabs.

David Ben Gurion, leading the party of *Ahdut Ha'avoda* ("Labour Unity") argued that parallel national sections of a joint union should be established for Jews and Arabs, with Arabs being offered membership in Jewish sections until a critical mass of Arab workers could be organized.⁵⁵ However, his proposal failed. Chaim Arlosoroff articulated the position of the rival party, *Hapoel HaTaza'ir* ("The Young Worker"). He argued that, in looking around the world for comparable contexts with helpful strategies, South Africa's situation offered the closest fit to Zionist settlement in Palestine (Lockman 1996). In South Africa, whites had established a color bar to create separate labor markets that reserved upper-level jobs for whites. Similarly, Arlosoroff advocated not only for the separate organization of Jewish and Arab workers in Palestine, but more sweepingly, for the development of "a separate high-wage, high-productivity, and exclusively Jewish economic sector, which would coexist with an unproductive and low-wage Arab sector" (Lockman 1996:101). This debate over Jewish and Arab unionizing so preoccupied Zionist leaders during this period because at stake was the very essence of the Labor Zionist movement. Would it be a purely nationalist movement that protected Jewish workers at the expense of Arab workers? Or would it include a commitment to socialism that recognized the rights of all workers regardless of nationalist lines? Though some debate continued among party leaders over the years, the two parties both moved closer to Arlosoroff's position in their rhetoric, prioritizing nationalist over socialist values (Lockman 1996).⁵⁶

55 Scholars debate whether Ben Gurion's proposal represented a socialist-Zionist *mission civilisatrice* approach that saw Zionism as an opportunity to urge Arab workers along in the development of class consciousness (Lockman 1996) or a cunning tactic for enveloping Arab workers under the control of the *Histadrut* and simultaneously using an argument of class solidarity to stall indefinitely the creation of a truly comparable Palestinian national body (Piterberg 2008).

56 Today, scholars continue to debate whether Zionism has been an idealistic experiment in socialism (Levensohn 1941; Elon 1971), or whether socialism has been used simply as a mobilizing myth to mask colonialism and nationalism under another name (Piterberg 2008; Sternhell 1998; Bernstein 2000). To a certain extent, both of these arguments are true. Herzl made his stance on economic systems clear in his 1902 novel, *Altneuland*, with which he paints a portrait of the "New Society," his ideal realization of the Zionist project. In it, the heroic young David extols the virtues of the New Society's economic system, which is based on cooperatives: "Here the individual is neither ground between the millstones of

In addition to their rhetorical stances, Zionist leaders took active measures to build up a strong and separate Jewish economic sector. They lobbied British Mandate authorities to reserve positions for Jews in large construction projects, like the deep water port in Haifa, and to pay higher wages to Jews than to Arabs (Lockman 1996), and pressured Jewish business owners to employ only Jewish labor (Shafir 1996). Perhaps the most famous such pressuring effort was the 1927 campaign pushing Jewish orange growers to dismiss all non-Jewish workers.⁵⁷ This movement toward Jewish-only labor unions resulted not only in a more divided labor market, which forged tighter links between economic interests and ethnic identities, but also established the discursive centrality of labor to the rhetorics and practices of the Zionist movement.⁵⁸

However, not all economic developments fostered a neatly divided economy that aligned economic and ethnic groups. Though lobbying efforts were partially successful in segmenting off Jewish and Arab sectors of the economy and securing higher wages for Jews, the British Mandate government resisted direct regulation of the market along national lines (Lockman 1996). Zionist leaders were limited in their ability to shape the labor conditions of key arenas of economy and infrastructure such as the railroad, main ports at Haifa and Jaffa, and the oil refinery near Haifa, which were under the control of the British Mandate government.

Establishing Collective Settlements

Because the Mandate did not exercise as much direct local control over

capitalism, nor decapitated by socialist leveling” (Herzl 1960:90). In practice, the Jewish community of the *Yishuv* and its leaders instituted some key socialist measures (e.g., universal health care and nationalization of many utilities and industries), but did not establish others (e.g., a “family-wage” system was debated but never instituted, wide wage disparities between workers and managers contributed to strong class disparities) (Sternhell 1998; Kellerman 1993). But what interests me here are the consequences of Zionism's colonial approach to the land and people existing in Palestine, and how the mobilization of socialist ideology has influenced the discourses of land and human nature that have been carried through and altered over the years.

57 Historians argue whether this and other similar campaigns were driven by the Zionist interest in fostering New Hebrews through physical labor in the land and building a nation with their own hands (Levensohn 1941), or workers' economic self-interests (Shafir 1996). Most likely, both factors led to the creation of a divided economy.

58 In the pull between nationalist and socialist politics, nationalism won out (Sternhell 1998; Bernstein 2000). Examining the debates regarding labor organizing and “the Arab Problem” shows that although some individuals may have been deeply dedicated to socialism and the international solidarity of workers, the political risks for such a stance were too high. Jewish nationalism conflicted with these socialist sentiments, and it eventually won out.

communities, though, Zionist leaders had more control over the shape of these settlements. During the late 1800s, the plantation-style settlements and housing in existing cities had been sufficient to support small numbers of Jewish immigrants on limited areas of land. But, these plantation-style settlements employed mostly Arab workers, violating the dual society paradigm. As one Zionist historical account laments, by the early 1900s, “[t]he old system had led into a blind alley.... Where, in such circumstances, was room to be found for millions—or at least hundreds of thousands—of Jews in a small country like Palestine?” (Levensohn 1941).

Beginning in 1908, cooperative settlements in the forms of *kvutzot*, *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* were established to meet the goals of Labor Zionism. *Kibbutzim* were founded beginning in the early 1900s, and *moshavim* from the 1920s. Both forms of settlement were collective, but to different degrees. In *kibbutzim* (as originally established), all members pooled resources and labor, operating in accordance with the popular socialist phrase, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” Land was leased collectively from the Jewish National Fund (JNF),⁵⁹ members lived in but did not own their homes, and children were raised collectively in communal children's homes (Shepher 1983). In *moshavim*, this collectivity was tempered. Members pledged financial support to each other and engaged in collective decision-making for developing industries and marketing produce, but they also exercised independence in developing individual tracts of land, and they owned their own homes (S. Lees 1995). Both forms of settlement fostered Jewish labor, responsibility to the group, and communal self-sufficiency. Both also tended to be built in rural places, spreading the *Yishuv's* Jewish population as widely as possible across Palestine and targeting borders and other strategic locations for establishing territorial control.

These collective settlements exemplify the centralized approach to nation-building that characterized Labor Zionism. They were made possible through two institutions, the JNF and the Jewish Agency (JA), which were established through diaspora leadership, with authority and funds delegated from the international diaspora to Palestine. The JNF had been created in 1901 by the WZO to collect money from Jews around the world. After World War I, the WZO designated the JNF as the sole body for purchasing and

59 Also known as Keren Keyemet L'Israel (KKL) in Hebrew.

managing lands in the name of “the Jewish nation.” It was delegated with the tasks of acquiring as much national land as possible and encouraging the establishment of working farms. By the authority of the WZO, it could only allocate lands through leases (so as not to permanently alienate any lands from centralized control), and only Jewish labor could be employed on its lands (Levensohn 1941). The JA grew out of the WZO in 1923 as a semi-governmental organization recognized by the British Mandate government as the representative body for Jews living in Palestine. In 1920, a third influential organization developed more directly from the demands of Jewish leaders in Palestine. The several labor groups in Palestine united to form one trades-union organization known as *HaHistadrut HaKlalit shel HaOvdim B'Eretz Yisrael* (“General Federation of Laborers in the Land of Israel,” also known simply as “The *Histadrut*”). Thus, as a rough division of tasks, the JNF, the JA, and the *Histadrut* bore responsibility for shaping Jewish land, people, and labor, respectively.

Like the central tenets of Zionist ideologies that trace their roots to European ethnic nationalisms, these forms of collective settlement, too, were formed from European colonial models for ethnic segregation (Piterberg 2008). Two German Jewish settlement experts, Franz Oppenheimer and Arthur Ruppin, drew upon German methods of settling the Polish Ostmark region of eastern Germany and played pivotal roles in designing these collective settlements (Piterberg 2008). During the late nineteenth century Germany was using two forms of agricultural settlement in the Ostmark, the “farm” and the “working people's colony,” to induce ethnic Germans to settle and establish agriculture on marginal lands in an area where the majority of residents were identified as ethnic Poles. Oppenheimer advocated exporting this model to Palestine, and in 1903 his proposal was adopted by the WZO. Arthur Ruppin, a lawyer and social theorist from Germany, had grown up in the Ostmark during the German project for settlement, where he had come to support social Darwinism and the ultimate guidance of the state (Piterberg 2008). He immigrated to Palestine in 1907 and soon became director of the Palestine Office, the chief function of which was to devise a new method of settlement that would support Jewish workers and exclude others (because First *Aliyah* capitalist agriculturalists proved unable or unwilling to prioritize the nationalist goal of using only Jewish labor) (Levensohn 1941). Through his position and the intensity of his

efforts to establish Oppenheimer's model of settlement, Ruppin became known as “the father of Jewish settlement in the land of Israel” (Piterberg 2008:82). This powerful social planner was guided by notions of homeland and human nature, and particularly Jewish nature, that echoed Herzl's concern about the weakened character of Jews, but with a racial focus, rather than a focus on lifestyle. He endorsed a biologized explanation for Jews' weakness, believing that Oriental elements had contaminated the purity of the Jewish people, and that bringing the purer Ashkenazi (of European descent) Jews back to *Eretz Israel* would strengthen the Jewish people (Piterberg 2008:83-84). A discourse of ethnic difference was institutionalized in these collective settlements.

These forms of settlement were key to the Zionist movement because they facilitated Labor Zionism's dual focus on gaining territory and establishing a particular way of life (Kellerman 1993).⁶⁰ They Judaized land by establishing presence, were self-sufficient in food supply, and established ideological barriers segregating settlement residents from surrounding Arab residents.⁶¹ As territorial tools, these cooperative villages pushed into new geographical areas (including areas far from the coast and cities) and reserved homes and jobs for Jewish immigrants. Highlighting the collective form of these villages, Zionist historical accounts often describe their establishment as a bold experiment in socialism and an attempt to forge an egalitarian society (Eisenstadt 1967). But critical historians argue that it was the commitment to national reclamation and territorial claims-making through labor in land, rather than egalitarianism or the commitment to eliminate private property that fueled the establishment of collective settlements (Sternhell 1998).

Existing legal codes of land ownership also made these agricultural settlements an important territorial tool. The Ottoman system of land tenure, which the British Mandate government continued, recognized five categories of ownership. Among three of these categories, the act of cultivation could be used to transfer land from one classification to another. *Mawat*, or “dead land,” was that which was distant from a village and mostly

60 Kellerman (1993) identifies three primary objectives of Zionism—territory, population, and mode of life. All forms of Zionism share these objectives, but the relative primacy/importance assigned to these objectives distinguishes different strands of Zionism and their manifestations during different historical periods.

61 However, most settlements have never been financially self-sufficient. They have relied consistently on private donations and, with the later establishment of the state, public funds (Sherman and Schwartz 1995).

uncultivated, and it was considered legally unclaimed. If cultivated continuously for a number of years, *mewat* land could be transferred into *miri*. *Miri* land, though technically only possessed as usufruct because actual ownership remained with the Empire, could be sold, transferred, leased, divided, and inherited by its possessor. Land committed to public uses, such as roads, schools, courts, and some village pastures and groves, was referred to as *matruka* (Cohen 1993).⁶² By the end of Ottoman rule, the majority of land in Palestine was classified as *miri*, *mewat*, or *matruka*, though most plots were not registered to particular rights-holders and large areas also remained unclassified (Abu Hussein and McKay 2003). In this context of unclassified and transferable land rights, taking possession of and cultivating land strengthened legal claims to the land.

Today, much discussion of the rights and wrongs of land conflict in Israel revolves around property rights and sovereignty. However, these legal categories are, themselves, too narrow to serve as analytic categories for processes of gaining and maintaining control over lands. In this land conflict, a variety of methods, both direct and indirect, licit and illicit, have been used to gain and control access. Only some of these fit neatly into a formal framework of property rights, “*socially acknowledged and supported claims or rights*” (Ribot and Peluso 2003:156, emphasis in original), or sovereignty. The buying and selling of property was important. But so were the reinterpretation of existing property laws and the legislating of new laws. The direct seizure and establishment of settlements or planting of trees have also been important tools in this land conflict. Furthermore, because property rules are established by the sovereign power of an area, property and sovereignty are intimately linked. One must ask not just who possesses property rights, but also, who uses the concept of property in this conflict, for what purposes, and to what effect.

Because my concern here is with relations between and among people and land, the concept of “access” is a more useful theoretical frame than “property” (Ribot and Peluso 2003). This concept provides analytical distance from the practical categories of both “property” and “sovereignty,” allowing us to examine how both categories were

⁶² *Mulk* resembled private ownership and conferred the rights to possess, use, and dispose of the land with few restrictions. Very little land, primarily only within build-up areas of towns, fell under this category. *Waqf* was land held in religious trusts, and it generally could not be alienated once it had been donated (Cohen 1993).

used in Zionist efforts to control landscapes and people (Ribot and Peluso 2003). The social action of access can be analyzed in two complementary parts, access control and access maintenance. Access control is the ability to mediate the access of others. The establishment of agricultural settlements was one example of access control. Access maintenance is the action undertaken to keep one's access open (and in a context of conflict, to close off access to others), and it requires the investment of resources or powers. This may involve formal measures, such as gaining seats in local government, or informal measures, such as maintaining patron-client relationships with government officials. For a Zionist movement attempting to establish itself under British rule, this access maintenance required managing Zionism's public image.

The agricultural basis of these collective settlements was an important part of access maintenance because of the particular kind of visible presence it created. Zionist leaders were drawing on ideas of redeeming not just the Jewish people, but also of redeeming the land itself. The Jewish people held rightful claims to the land of Israel, they maintained, because they had once made the lands blossom. When the Jews had been forced into exile, the land had gone into decline, and this “ruined” landscape of “dreariness,” “emptiness,” and “desert” was what confronted Zionist immigrants in the early 1900s (de-Shalit 1995:74).⁶³ As the Jews returned, this argument continued, they would repair the land through cultivation and afforestation.

Like agricultural settlements, afforestation was one very visible way to do this. Planting forests meant returning the landscape to its glorious biblical state, rescuing it from the “wasteland” of desert and bare hills that it had become during Jewish exile and “reintroducing nature—like the Hebrew nation—into its native landscape” (Zerubavel 1996:62). Though the notion of exile and return was more particular to Zionism, environmental narratives of land degradation under native use and the need for restoration have been used to justify colonial intervention in North Africa (Davis 2005; 2006), North America (Cronon 1983), and elsewhere (Grove 1995).

This discourse of redemption was made vividly in Herzl's (1960) *Altneuland*, an influential utopian novel written to convince Zionism's critics of both the desirability and feasibility of a charter for Jewish sovereignty in Palestine. In the story, a despondent

⁶³ Environmental narratives of land degradation under native use and the need for restoration have been used elsewhere to justify colonial intervention (e.g., Davis 2005, 2006).

European Jew named Friedrich travels with the eccentric and insightful Christian man, Kingscourt, to the port of Jaffa in 1902. The landscape of Palestine confronting the pair is a “picture of desolation,” full of “bare slopes” and “bleak, rocky valleys [that] showed few traces of present or former cultivation” (Herzl 1960:42). Friedrich sadly relates the state of the landscape to the state of the Jewish people.

“If this is our land,” remarked Friedrich sadly, “it has declined like our people.”

“Yes, it's pretty bad,” agreed Kingscourt. “But much could be done here with afforestation, if half a million young cedars were planted—they shoot up like asparagus. This country needs nothing but water and shade to have a very great future.”

“And who is to bring water and shade here?”

“The Jews!” [Herzl 1960:42]

It was important to Zionist leaders to demonstrate that their settlement efforts were making the land fruitful once more. Beginning during the *Yishuv* period and continuing after statehood, Zionist organizations (most notably the JNF) covered large areas of land with pine trees, both as a means of improving the landscape and, taking advantage of Ottoman laws of land tenure, to ‘hold’ land for future use in the (Jewish) national interest (Cohen 1993; Tal 2002).

By numerous practical measures, urban development and the service sector of the economy (healthcare, business and finance services) were at least as critical to the Jewish community of Palestine during this period as was the agriculture of collective settlements. For example, in Palestine and later in Israel, the service sector has always provided jobs for a larger percentage of the population than manufacturing (Kellerman 1993:20). And from 1917 to 1939, the JA made more substantial investments in the service sector in Palestine than in agriculture and rural settlements (Kellerman 1993:273). Further, reliance on farming villages was impractical for a number of reasons, including the lack of agricultural expertise of most immigrants, the high costs involved in draining swamps and establishing remote villages, and the hostility that these activities would aggravate with resident Arabs. In the same vein, collective settlements have never housed the majority of Jews in Palestine-Israel. But because the ideological basis of Zionism called to turn the employment pattern of the diaspora upside down by enlarging the Jewish working class, and because these settlements so visibly and physically claimed

Jewish territory, the rhetorical emphasis given to collective settlements far outweighs the actual proportion of residents they supported. The priority that Zionist leaders gave to these agricultural villages “was not the result of in-depth research into the ultimate economic structure of the national economy,” but rather, due to “the romantics of soil cultivation” (Giladi in Kellerman 1993:44).

The *kibbutz* and the pioneer farmer became models of and for society (Roniger and Feige 1992). The tools, animals, and pastoral views of these collective settlements became symbols that inspired a variety of artistic expressions. Poems, plays, and paintings propagated the environmental discourses embedded in these landscapes throughout the *Yishuv*. In addition, Zionist leaders emphasized their own participation in and enjoyment of agriculture. Though such sentiments were common in public fora like propaganda literature and speeches, these same leaders also expressed a deep connection to farming in their private lives. For example, David Ben Gurion wrote during the *Yishuv* period in his personal diaries,

The plough is in my left hand, the goad is in my right hand. I am walking behind the plough and I see black clods breaking into crumbs, and the oxen are stepping very slowly and peacefully, and there is time to wonder and dream. Is it at all possible not to dream while you are ploughing the land of Israel and see around you Jews ploughing ... Is it not a dream? [de-Shalit 1995:74].⁶⁴

Fueled by the commitment to redeem Jews and the land, the practice of farming became a goal of Zionism in and of itself, not just as a means of sustaining economies or reinforcing possession. This romantics of soil cultivation emerged from the notions of progress, nature, and human nature that underlay Zionism's territorial project and grew stronger through practical engagement in this project.

The Pioneer-Farmer and the Sabra

In addition to shaping national Jewish lands, the environmental discourses consolidated in Labor Zionism shaped Jewish personhood. In particular, the character-shaping role of agricultural labor was influential from the early years of the movement through the 1980s, and continues to carry reverberations today. But the nuances of these discourses were not fixed, as successive generations exhibited changing ideals of

⁶⁴ Ben Gurion may have been alluding to the famous slogan of the Zionist movement, “If you will it, it is no dream,” originating from a statement on the title page of Herzl's (1960) *Altneuland*.

character and human-nature relations. The distinction between the pioneer generation and the *sabra* generation has been particularly salient. The term *chalutz*, “pioneer,” has been widely applied to Jewish immigrants, and especially those who settled in dangerous or remote areas in Palestine. These early participants in the Zionist project were expected to exhibit particular behaviors and adhere to particular ideals. As these first *chalutzim* began having children in Palestine, efforts concentrated on raising the first native generation of New Hebrews. The term “*sabra*” (derived from the *tsabar*, or prickly pear, cactus)⁶⁵ came to mean a Jew who was born in Palestine during the *Yishuv* period, especially during the 1930s and through the end of World War II (Almog 2000; Dolev-Gandelman 1987). In this section, I will examine how the Zionist movement shaped Jewish personhood for members of these pioneer and *sabra* generations and analyze the discourses of human nature it fostered.

Beginning with the pioneer generation, labor, and particularly agricultural work, was a practical way for Jewish immigrants to grow strong and become New Hebrews. Labor Zionist leaders believed that physical labor on a mass scale would tear Jews away from the corrupting materialist focus of their careers in finance and transform the weak ghetto residents of Europe into strong men of the fields (Kornberg 1993). These immigrants came from a variety of cultural milieus and economic backgrounds. Through agriculture, participation in trade unions, youth groups, and other nation-building efforts, immigrants to Palestine integrated themselves into the Zionist movement and participated in forging themselves into Zionist subjects. The pioneer farmer was raised to heroic status, and farming was praised as ideal work because it provided the kind of contact with nature believed to strengthen immigrants' character and bond them with both the geographical place of *Eretz Israel* and the Jewish nation (Almog 2000).

A bond between man, nation, and nature was central to this Zionist subject. As an influential educator of the *yishuv* period, A.D. Gordon's writings reflect widespread currents in Labor Zionist thought of the time. His writings express a sacred connection between man and nature for all people, but he concentrates in particular on the Jewish condition (Perlmutter 1971). He writes that to be truly human and develop genuine feelings, sharp senses, and health, a man must live in direct contact with nature.

65 Originally, *tzabar* was used, but the term was then popularized with the modern Hebrew pronunciation of *sabra* by Israeli journalist Uri Kesari in 1931 (Almog 2000:5).

Furthermore, through his concept of the Nation-Man, Gordon posits that a man living and laboring in nature would still be incomplete without belonging to a nation. The nation holds the position in Gordon's writings as the most natural and necessary form of group belonging for people, such that, "only out of the life of the nation as a whole does the life of the individual come into being in its human, spiritual, cosmic aspects" (Perlmutter 1971:83).

This concept of the Nation-Man was influential in establishing the social structure of the *kibbutz*. Herzl asserted that virtuous men were forged through selfless contribution to a common goal and made this a mainstay of his Zionist vision. Similarly, Labor Zionists recruited for and working in these collective communities called for selfless contribution to the common good. Particularly during their early phase, *kibbutzim* structured the collective community as the most important social unit by, for example, weakening nuclear family connections by raising all children in communal residence halls, and rotating workers through all branches and leadership levels on the *kibbutz* to reduce internal social divisions (Talmon 1972). With the *kibbutz* being the vanguard institution of the Zionist movement, attachment to the *kibbutz* was also attachment to the nation.

As part of a commitment to nation, the image of the pioneer farmer also stressed strength and the ability to mount an armed defense. The gun, as well as the plow, was a salient symbol of this time period; the pioneer was expected to use both. *Kibbutzim* were consistently established in frontier regions, pushing the spatial bounds of the *Yishuv*. Skirmishes with Arab neighbors became more common as the years passed, as Jewish settlement continued to increase and Palestinian leaders called more vehemently for resistance to Zionist settlement. In this context of territorial expansion and conflict, Joseph Trumpeldor, a prominent Zionist and veteran of World War I, became one of the *Yishuv*'s most celebrated pioneer farmers. Trumpeldor, an immigrant from Russia, was killed during a battle at the farming settlement of Tel Hai in 1920. His dying words were reportedly, "Never mind, it is good to die for the country (*ha-aretz*)," and he was quickly taken up by Zionists of all political persuasions as a hero (Zerubavel 1995:43). As settlement progressed, his dying words and the Tel Hai incident were invoked in textbooks, songs, and children's stories, making the farmer soldier part of an increasingly

militarized pioneer mythology (Zerubavel 1995).

This image of the heroic pioneer stood in marked contrast to widespread perceptions among Zionist leaders of passive Holocaust victims. The place of the Holocaust within Zionist politics, depictions of Jewish identity, and historical accounts has varied dramatically over the years. While the atrocities in Europe were unfolding there was a “less than compassionate response [from] the Jewish community in Palestine to the destruction of the European Jews” (Segev 2000:11). From David Ben Gurion's public comments rebuking European Jews for not having heeded the call of Zionism earlier, to private memoranda circulated amongst movement leaders about achieving some political gain for the Zionist cause despite this tragedy, Zionist leaders of the Yishuv attempted to distance themselves from the defeat they saw in the Jewish Holocaust and push instead toward the creation of a strong society of New Hebrews (Zerubavel 1995; Segev 2000; Zertal 2005). During World War II and in the years immediately following, the Holocaust was invoked as confirmation of the Zionist position that “Jewish life in exile could lead only to death and destruction,” and that creating a Jewish nation in *Eretz Israel* was the only viable future for a Jewish collective (Zerubavel 1995:75). Though some political leaders mobilized the tragedy of the Holocaust in calculated ways to inculcate strong, even military characters in new immigrants and urge collective labor, these tactics also reflected deep anxieties about anti-Semitism and the desire to prevent such victimization of Jews again.

The transformation that was expected to strengthen Jewish character by rooting the wandering Jews of exile in the soil of Palestine was also aimed at transforming their very bodies. Through agricultural and other forms of physical labor, contact with the cleansing climate of Palestine, and holding positions in local governance, “the Jewboy beggar” of Europe could be transformed into “[a] free, healthy, cultured man who gazed steadfastly upon the world and seemed to stand firmly in his shoes” (Herzl 1960:69). Literature, photography, and promotional posters of the time extol the tanned cheeks and firm muscles of farm workers. David Biale (1992) argues that Zionism promised an “erotic revolution” for Jews, fostering the New Hebrew who would be a virile man unrepressed sexually and confident in his body. Yet, the focus on collective work also prevented this erotic revolution from being aimed simply at the happiness of the

individual. “A healthy body would make for a harmonious psyche, not only for the individual, but for the nation as a whole” (Biale 1992:284-285). This focus on the physical body as not just metaphorical but metonymic of the national body was shared with other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century nationalisms (e.g., Mosse 1985). In the Zionist case, the unrepressed sexuality, exposed skin, and gender-role challenging behavior of the New Hebrew was contrasted with popular images of the Arab, helping to solidify boundaries between Jew and Other.

Members of the *sabra* generation were expected to embody many of the same characteristics as *chalutzim*, but to an even greater extent, and with an emphasis on rooting in the land of Israel and melding with its nature. Raised in the cultural milieu of Zionist institutions, this group that constituted only approximately ten percent of the population of the *Yishuv*, contributed the role models guiding their entire generation (Almog 2000). Popular etymology derives the term “*sabra*” from the cactus-like character of the typical native Israeli, who “appears to be rough and prickly on the outside, but warm and kindhearted inside” (Doleve-Gandelman 1987). The masculine image of this New Hebrew is most emblematic, visualized in posters of brawny men farming and verbalized in the works and speeches of Zionist poets and writers (Berg 2001). Women were expected to strengthen themselves through physical labor, too, and as more women immigrated and took part in collective farms and labor movement politics, their visibility grew. But common depictions of the *sabra* remained male (Almog 2000). The term serves as a symbolic shifter connecting this generation to the land of Israel. Interestingly, the *tzabar* cactus is not native to Israel, but was transplanted from Central America in recent centuries and quickly acclimatized. Similarly, the *sabra* was expected to acclimate to *ha-aretz* (the land).

As was the case for the shaping of Jewish land, centralized institutions from the *yishuv* period onward were also influential in shaping the *sabra* character. Guided by an ethos of practicality, the *kibbutz* and *moshav* education system prioritized agriculture and shunned the competition and individual achievement involved in higher education (Almog 2000:140). These schools strove to instill in pupils “a love of nature, work, homeland, and the movement” (Almog 2000:104). Later, particularly in the 1930s-1940s, *kibbutzim*, schools, youth groups, and Jewish paramilitary groups were all

involved in concerted efforts not just to labor in the land, but also to raise a native generation of Jews with “knowledge of the land.” Young Jews attended lessons in the regional flora and fauna, read “homeland” textbooks, and participated in hikes and fieldtrips to farming *kibbutzim*—all aimed at raising a generation who would be comfortable in “nature” and willingly settle new regions of Palestine (Zerubavel 1995). With growing tensions under British rule and expectations of military conflict, *Palmachim* (members of the voluntary paramilitary organization) extended their hikes into more grueling marches. Designed to shape soldiers and military scouts, the hikes incorporated military elements like water rationing and walking in columns (Almog 2000). Being in nature became associated with military practices and the defense of territory.

Ambivalent Arab-Jewish Relations

Most historical accounts of Zionist efforts to shape the New Jew focus attention on influences from within the Zionist movement and neglect interactions with Palestinians (Almog 2000). Indeed, the idealized image of the New Jew was shaped largely in relation to social marginalization in Europe, where Zionism's early proponents were raised, and many of its myths and symbols were drawn from lore of ancient Israelites. However, the discursive activities that were undertaken in shaping this New Jew were also influenced significantly by the natural and social landscape immigrants encountered in Palestine. This included a complex Palestinian society of farmers, merchants, small village communities and cosmopolitan cities. I will discuss this society in more depth in the following chapter. Here, the focus is on Zionist discourses, and notwithstanding the overarching paradigm of the dual society, one can discern within Zionist discourses of this period certain attitudes about Jewish character and connections to place that were framed in relation to Arab character. As the sociologist George Steinmetz (2007) argues, any colonial encounter is shaped by the “ethnographic discourses” that colonizers carry with them. These expectations about the cultural, racial, or ethnic characteristics of the colonized group inform colonial policies and practices (though mediated by several sociological factors), and they also influence the development of settler identities.

During the early years of the *yishuv* period, Zionist conceptions of the relationship between Arabs and Jews was ambivalent. Zionists struggled to define the “interior frontiers,” or essence (Stoler 1992), of their aspired-for nation in ethnic and cultural terms. The establishment of Jewish collective settlements claimed territory and helped to establish barriers between Jewish and Arab laborers. But Arabs were viewed both by the Zionist leaders and individual settlers of this period as potential enemies, peaceful competitors, knowledgeable neighbors, and Semitic cousins. The anxiety in this colonial context was less about the the mixing of racially pure groups (Stoler 1992) (though this anxiety was, indeed, present as well, (Piterberg 2008; Hirsch 2009)), and more about the murky ancestral ties linking Jews and Arabs in the past, and what connotations this common ancestry might have for societal progress in the future.

Many immigrants of this period forged their identities as residents of the new landscapes in relation to Arabs. But this affiliation also involved a safe temporal distancing, as Arabs were denied coeval status (Fabian 1983). These immigrants viewed Arabs, and Bedouins in particular, as noble savages, romanticizing and idealizing Bedouin culture because of the similarities they saw between it and their image of ancient Israelite culture (Hillel 1982). Expressing an Oriental fascination with Arab customs (Said 1979), particularly those of Bedouins, writers described weddings, coffee preparation, and horsemanship in colorful terms. Practices like shepherding, plowing with beasts of burden, pressing olive oil, baking bread on a fire, living in tents of goatskin, and offering ample hospitality were all seen as reminiscent of the Hebrew tribes' ancient practices.

Thus, the Bedouins and other Arabs who engaged in these practices were viewed with a mixture of admiration (as carriers of ancient traditions) and pity (as backward, unenlightened primitives) (Hillel 1982; Almog 2000). Early settlers imitated certain elements of these practices, including *kibbutz* guards who dressed and rode horses like Bedouin, and campers who boiled coffee and baked bread in Arab fashion (Almog 2000). Some First *Aliyah* farmers sought agricultural methods from the Palestinians who had experience farming in the region. Aaron Aharonson, a leading agronomist of the *Yishuv* period, conducted experiments seeking to understand the scientific basis of Arab agricultural practices, such as terracing and legume planting in nitrogen-poor soils (Tal

2002:53-56).⁶⁶

But Zionist leaders also aimed to create a model society guided by and promulgating the values of progress and modernism that they admired in Europe. Most leaders of the 1920s and later did not share Aharon's interest in learning from Palestinian agriculture (even if through the validating lens of scientific experimentation). Trained in European traditions of agriculture, they viewed Arab agriculture as a path to stagnation, rather than economic growth, and after Aharonson died in 1922, agronomists of the *Yishuv* looked to the “mixed farm” format and adapted European farming technology (Tal 2002:53-54). The supposed primitiveness of Arabs (Said 1979), particularly of the *fallahin* (peasant farmers) and Bedouins dwelling in rural places, meant that Zionists did not truly take them as models for living in Palestine. Despite the superficial imitation of select customs, Arabs were not accepted as coevals (Fabian 1983), and they and their lifestyles were generally sidelined from Jewish social settings.

This early ambivalence also related to notions of threat. The land of Israel contained threats as well as promise, emanating from Nature and Arabs. During the early 1900s, Jewish settlers generally portrayed dangers as non-human, unrelated to contemporary Arab residents. They wrote of their struggles to conquer the land, with its mosquito-infested swamps in the north and the searing heat of the desert in the south, more often than its people (de-Shalit 1995). Such narratives of the struggle to tame wild nature aligned with European notions of progress and they also supported a dual society paradigm by erasing Arabs from the story of nation-building.

Tactical considerations prompted ambivalence, as well. Jewish settlers were a minority in Palestine who needed to negotiate between pursuing nation-building practices that elicited anger and fear from Palestinian Arabs (cornering labor markets, gaining control over large areas of land, etc.) and maintaining cordial relations with this majority population. Early during the *yishuv* period, a minority of Zionist leaders stressed the need to secure *yishuv* settlements at all costs, regardless of diplomatic consequences

⁶⁶ There was also some linguistic incorporation. Some residents of *moshavim* and *kibbutzim* learned Arabic in order to converse with their neighbors and gain their trust. The adoption of some Arabic words into Hebrew facilitated the transition of Hebrew from a scholarly language to one of everyday life by filling in words appropriate to the region (e.g., *hamsin*, *hirba*, and *chubeza*) (Almog 2000). As Almog (2000) notes, though, the integration of Arabic words into Hebrew was limited primarily to disconnected nouns, slang and cursing.

(Caplan 1978). As Jewish immigration to Palestine increased and the colonial ambitions of the Zionist movement became clear, Arab leaders reacted with more violence, prompting Zionist leaders to rally around this security focus (Caplan 1978). Particularly influential in building this “security” contingent were events like the violent attacks against Jews in Jaffa in 1921 and the more widespread upheaval of the 1936-1939 Arab revolts. In 1921, following the Jaffa riots, the WZO issued a statement asserting that,

The hostile attitude of the Arab population in Palestine incited by unscrupulous elements to commit deeds of violence, can neither weaken our resolve for the establishment of the Jewish National Home nor our determination to live with the Arab people on terms of concord and mutual respect, and together with them to make the common home into a flourishing commonwealth, the upbuilding of which may assure to each of its peoples an undisturbed national development (Levensohn 1941:83).

Notwithstanding the conciliatory tone adopted in public fora such as this, the tactic of establishing an “iron wall” between Zionist nation-builders and Arab detractors became increasingly popular (Caplan 1978). As time went on, the “Arab threat” supplemented and then supplanted threats from Nature.

The violence through which the Zionist movement realized its goal of statehood in 1948 dramatically solidified the growing division between Arabs and Jews. This war is now known by most Jews as *Milkhemet Ha'Atzma'ut*, “the War of Independence,” and by most Arabs as *al-Nakba*, “the catastrophe.”⁶⁷ It led to the declaration of Israeli statehood and the formation of a government, and it gained considerably more territory than would have been assigned the state under the UN Partition Plan of 1947.⁶⁸ It also killed many combatants and civilians, drove hundreds of thousands of Palestinians permanently away from their homes, gutted communities of their educated and wealthy residents (as these groups were most able to flee during fighting), and began a long process of seizures and expropriations of lands formerly under Palestinian control.⁶⁹ The

67 During the decades immediately following 1948, a number of other terms were used among newly dispersed Palestinian communities in Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, and elsewhere (Allen 2007). Following the 1967 War, reference to *al-Nakba* became more widespread (Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 2007).

68 During the 1930s and 1940s, armed skirmishes had increased between groups of Jews and Palestinians, including armed groups of Palestinians and the more organized Jewish guerilla bands, the Stern Group and *Irgun*. International diplomatic efforts escalated to partition Palestine into autonomous Jewish and Palestinian states, but after the United Nations passed a partition plan in 1947, open warfare broke out between the *Yishuv* and both local Palestinians and the surrounding Arab states, lasting through the signing of armistice agreements in 1949. For thorough accounts of the Zionist-Arab conflict leading to and including the war of 1947-1949, see Tessler (1994) and Morris (1999).

69 Estimates of the number of Palestinians who left or were driven from their homes range widely, from

war itself dramatically materialized further separation between Jews and Arabs, through the rhetoric of leaders on both sides who enframed the war in ethno-religious terms, through traumatic events of death and disruption, and through the stories of Jewish-Arab opposition that continue to be told. Yet, Zionist accounts rarely dwell on the war's importance in constructing this division. Rather, in popular discussion and scholarly accounts, the war has been portrayed as evidence of intractable Jewish-Arab conflict (Peri 2010), early proof that Israel is “a good country in a bad neighborhood” (Chafets 1986). It was the unavoidable result of Arab antagonism and the refusal of the Arab population in Palestine and other “unscrupulous elements” (Levensohn 1941) to accept the realization of a dual society (Shapira 1992; see also Elon 1971).⁷⁰

Early State Years (1948-1970s): Developing Landscapes and People

In 1948, having won decisive victories against local Palestinian Arabs and the armies of neighboring Arab countries, Zionist leaders declared the independence and statehood of Israel. In this section, I discuss how the Zionist movement continued with its nation-building project to shape the land and people of Israel, but now with the tools and responsibilities of a state. Settlement planning, labor policy, recreation and bodily comportment were all enlisted in nation-building—now also state-building—efforts. New military and legislative tools for controlling and maintaining access to land were added to the previous reliance on physical labor. Under Labor leadership, the state government institutionalized tools for shaping Israeli space and personhood, such as national land-use plans, mandatory Jewish military service and the privileges tied to service, state education, and the centralized absorption and housing of new immigrants.

A discourse of Jewish-Arab division became more fraught during this period, prompted by two historical developments. First, large numbers of Jewish immigrants from Arab countries began arriving, and these newcomers threatened the neat separation of Jew from Arab asserted by a dual society paradigm. Second, the Israeli state became responsible for Palestinian Arab citizens. Simultaneous aspirations to build a democratic

approximately 500,000 by an “observer sympathetic to Israel” to 940,000 by UN figures, and higher according to a number of Arab sources (Tessler 1994:279). The number of Palestinians remaining after hostilities ended vary; reasonable estimates range from 125,000 to 150,000 (Tessler 1994).

70 In contrast, Regev Nathansohn (2010) proposes a focus on counter narratives of coexistence during the war in order to challenge the inevitability of Jewish-Arab opposition.

state and a Jewish state created a situation rife with contradictions involving the inclusion and exclusion of Palestinians in Israeli society.

Tensions between bonding with and subduing nature continued to be evident in the environmental discourses of this period, though the immediate demands of mass immigration and state-building generally favored an “ethos of development” (de-Shalit 1995). Poems and plays from this time glorify building as reshaping nature, both reflecting and promoting this ethos. Development goals were directed both at Israeli landscapes, valorized as a source of productivity, and at immigrants, coming increasingly from non-European countries of origin and deemed in need of the state's assistance to become civilized. Nathan Alterman's 1934 lyrics about the transformation of coastal sand dunes into the city of Tel Aviv capture the ethos aptly: “Wake up, O sand, because cement is attacking you/stone and cement/a hand full of iron/a path is paved/a city sings a song...” (de-Shalit 1995:76). Though seemingly a far cry from the pastoral Arcadian images of 19th century Zionism, these lyrics align perfectly with the discourse of labor that has run through Zionism since its early days.⁷¹

However, a romantic ethos associated with rural places continued to support the goal of reinvigorating the Jewish people through intensive labor in nature. And at the same time, an ethos of development associated with urban spaces supported an image of the Zionist state as modern and European, one that would have made Herzl proud. Both romantic and development attitudes were related to a discourse of progress. The ruling elite in Palestine and then Israel strove to transform the environment into both wheat fields and apartment blocks in ways that “meant 'civilising' the environment. These people regarded themselves as part of the forces of progress... They wanted to convert the Middle East – including the environment – to 'civilisation'” (de-Shalit 1995:77).

Shaping Israeli Space

With the establishment of armistice lines following the 1948 war, the space of

⁷¹ De-Shalit (1995) contrasts this ethos of development with the “romantic ruralist” phase that preceded it, claiming that ruralism glorified nature and development tried to tame it. In fact, ruralism also attempted to tame “nature,” but to do so through agrarian rather than urban means. Rather than being a contradiction, this overlapping of romantic and development attitudes suggests that perhaps it is less useful to think of phases, with their connotation of distinct beginnings and endings, than to think of discourses associated with particular landscapes.

Israel became more clearly defined. The amorphous bounds of a Biblical Land of Israel were replaced by fixed lines, which, though not viewed by all Zionist leadership as finalized, because many planned to expand the borders further (Elon 1971), established the area within which state leaders would concentrate their efforts. These ventures focused on gaining control of as much land for use in Zionist projects as possible by strengthening Israeli control over border regions and “filling in” the “empty” areas (i.e., those places without Jewish inhabitants) with settlements, forests, etc.

Zionist leaders justified the Judaization of former Palestine's landscapes, in part through the military victory of the 1948 war. But an ideology of rightful belonging was equally important. Zionist leaders continued to invoke the “naturalness” of the nation-state form and myths of interrupted national ancestry in *Eretz Israel* to justify this belonging (Zerubavel 1995). Increasingly, the Holocaust was also taken as a rationale for not just for fostering strong New Jews, but for the larger Zionist project, as well. Whereas previous public depictions had focused more on heroic deeds such as the Warsaw ghetto uprisings (Zerubavel 1995), recollection of the millions killed became more central to Holocaust remembrance in the late 1950s.⁷² In addition to its invocation to urge the necessity of a Jewish state as a safe haven, the Holocaust became a source of legitimacy for the Israeli state and was used as justification for the country's increasing militarization and its defense of frontier zones (Zertal 2005).

Some areas within Israel had been purchased during the *Yishuv* period and were owned, primarily by the JNF, before the establishment of the state. However, these accounted for only about 5.7 percent of the area of Mandate Palestine (Forman and Kedar 2004:811). During the 1948 war, Jewish military forces seized millions of *dunams* more on a temporary basis, citing security and development needs as justification (Forman and Kedar 2004).⁷³ Once the Israeli state was established, leaders sought ways to consolidate these provisional gains and establish access control.

Legislative redefinition of lands is an example of this access control, and it was one key way that Zionists gained access over lands. Successive legislative measures

⁷² For example, the Israeli Knesset established a day of Holocaust commemoration in 1953, and not until six years later did it become an integral public event, when it was made a mandatory government holiday (Zerubavel 1995).

⁷³ The *dunam*, a unit derived from Ottoman land measures, equals 1000 square meters, or one-quarter acre.

reclassified Palestinian-owned lands for which owners were not present on or after November 29, 1947 (the date of the United Nations' vote to partition Palestine) as “abandoned land,” then as “absentee land.” As early as 1948, some of these reclassified absentee lands were “sold” by the Israeli government to semi-governmental Jewish organizations (such as the one million *dunams* transferred to the JNF in 1948), though the necessary legislative measures had not yet been taken to make this sale legal (Forman and Kedar 2004). Then, some of the first pieces of legislation drafted and approved by the new Israeli Knesset made these temporary seizures permanent by 1950. This freed the lands for nation-building purposes such as housing new immigrants and providing them with established agricultural fields. Further legislation was drafted and passed over the succeeding years to normalize the status of ambiguously defined appropriated lands, such as those belonging to non-absentee Arab citizens. Control over these redefined lands was scattered through a number of governmental bodies until 1960, when new legislation redesignated the lands held by the various state and semi-state bodies as “Israel Lands” and placed them under the control of the Israel Lands Administration (ILA). Thus, laws classifying land and establishing property rights have been used to construct and police spatial hierarchies (Forman and Kedar 2004), or in Ribot and Peluso's (2003) terminology, to establish access control.

Naming places, a symbolic power that is so often practiced in colonial contexts, was also used to tame and claim lands, particularly in frontier regions. In 1949, Prime Minister Ben Gurion established a special commission to lay nominal claim to the Negev. The Committee for the Designation of Place-Names in the Negev Region (Negev Names Committee, or simply, NNC) spent two years pouring over British Mandate era maps of the Negev and assigning Hebrew names to hills, valleys, *wadis*, and any newly established settlements. In the process, Arabic names were either translated into Hebrew—based on the NNC's belief that “it is likely that Hebrew names became garbled and acquired an alien form, and these are now being 'redeemed'” (Benvenisti 2000:19)—or replaced with altogether different names. The committee chairman's comment regarding these replacements is telling of Zionist assumptions about Bedouin culture and the importance of rooting: “Just as the Bedouin of the Negev did not sink roots in this place, so also are the names not rooted here” (Benvenisti 2000:18). Renaming efforts

throughout Israel exerted special effort to finding biblical sounding names that would give an ancient aura to these places, even when there was no evidence (or conflicting evidence) for a place's connection to particular biblical stories (Masalha 2007).

While these legislative measures performed much of the work of access control over these lands, settlers performed much of the work of access maintenance. Ben Gurion highlighted Zionism's preoccupation with access maintenance through settlement, declaring in 1949 as Prime Minister that, “[w]e won indeed by conquest, but without settlement these conquests do not have a decisive value, neither in the Negev nor in the Galilee nor in Jerusalem. Settlement—this is the real conquest” (Kellerman 1993:65). As Jews settled on legislatively redefined lands, they transformed these lands into Jewish lands in a practical, tactile, and emotional sense.

In addition to continued support for the pre-state settlement forms of the *moshav* and *kibbutz*, new settlement types were implemented. These new settlements continued the pre-state projects of nation-building and separating Jews from Arabs, but with more attention to the strengthening of borders, both along armistice lines with surrounding Arab countries, and along internal frontiers (i.e., areas predominantly inhabited by Arabs). They also responded to discriminatory public anxieties about the character of the new immigrants who were coming primarily from non-European countries of origin. Despite governmental efforts to direct new immigrants to rural areas, most moved to cities (Kellerman 1993). This raised fears that “quarters of poverty, dirt, idleness, sin and crime” would be created in Israel, negating the Zionist mission to redeem Jews through labor in nature (Segev 1984:151). In response, governmental agencies, the JNF, and the military cooperated to shape the settlement options open to new immigrants in line with territorialist and segregationist priorities.

To channel immigrants away from cities and strengthen borders, these agencies invested money and personnel to establish “work villages” and border settlements. Work villages were established in some particularly challenging settings, where difficult environmental conditions, remoteness from other Jewish settlements, and border proximity made it impractical for settlers initially to earn a living. Despite the Zionist ideological preference for self-supporting communities, the JNF initially employed settlers, paying them to develop their settlement sites, train in farming techniques, and

plant trees in nearby JNF afforestation projects (Lehn and Davis 1988). Settlers were then expected to support themselves from their villages, but many communities continued to rely on the JNF for employment. These work villages represent the juncture of two competing discourses within Zionism: an ideological commitment to fostering communities in which residents would work for themselves, on the one hand, and to territorial protection, on the other hand. In this case, Zionism's territoriality held sway. In a second type of settlement, the army was directly involved at early stages. Initial settler groups were recruited into the army as units of the "Fighting Pioneer Youth Corps" (or, by their Hebrew acronym, *Nahal*) and worked in cooperation with the JNF to prepare settlement sites in frontier zones. These sites were then handed over to civilian groups to settle and guard against "infiltration" and "theft" (villagers crossing these newly set borders to work and harvest their fields) (Lehn and Davis 1988:144-145).

Finally, development towns were formulated as a sort of compromise between Labor Zionism's preference for rural settlement and the exigencies of a rapid influx of new immigrants accustomed to urban lifestyles. Realizing that rural settlements would not meet the needs of all these new immigrants, governmental leaders established new urban centers, but they placed these in frontier regions and planned them to include elements of rural life within the urban setting, such as neighborhoods arranged in garden clusters and the provision of small plots for auxiliary farming (Kellerman 1993). A rural ideal is evident in the regional governance system, whereby these towns were subordinated to the needs of surrounding villages, and most town residents were employed in agriculture in the villages, rather than vice versa. These development towns were envisioned to serve as the frontiers' regional centers, providing for the social, economic, educational, and health needs of immigrants. But, not surprising, given their ambivalent position within Zionist priorities, they actually became neglected and marginalized areas, plagued by high unemployment and cyclical economic crises (Kellerman 1993).

Shaping Israelis

Many Zionist leaders of the early state years who guided these settlement efforts came from the *sabra* generation, born during the *Yishuv* and coming of age during and

after the 1948 war. Almog (2000) argues that these *sabras* came to value not just self-sacrificing comrades who suffered for the group, as had *chalutzim*, but also lightheartedness and a direct, straightforward style of speech. The *chevremán*, “group guy,” a term that had been used by *chalutzim* to denote a good or friendly person, came to denote for the *sabra* generation more particularly a playful and dynamic group leader who was always willing to contribute to the group (of friends, an army unit, etc) (Almog 2000). Although Zionist discourse of the *sabra* stresses Jewish solidarity, those belonging to the *sabra* generation were a relatively small and exclusive group, consisting primarily of Ashkenazi Jews. These *sabras* took leadership positions in the new government and helped to institute a multi-tiered labor market that differentiated not only between Jews and non-Jews (as was already the case during the *Yishuv* period), but also between the (mostly Mizrahi) new immigrants and the veteran settlers (Shafir and Peled 2000b; Khenin 2000).

During these early state years, in addition to directing their development efforts toward civilizing Nature (landscapes), Zionist leaders sought to civilize certain groups of Jews to become proper Israelis (Shohat 1999). In many ways, popular Zionist depictions of the new immigrants arriving to settle in *moshavim*, development towns, and border settlements resembled portraits of the *Yishuv* period *chalutzim*. They, too, were seen as bravely working to transform wilderness into Jewish land. But the discourse of suffering for land took on a new tenor for these post-'48 immigrants. In the upheaval following the 1948 war and increasingly in the 1950s, many immigrants were coming from outside of Europe and had little prior exposure to labor Zionism. Much of the most fertile lands in central Israel had already been settled, and Zionist leaders were concerned with consolidating control of land in border regions. Thus, as waves of immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa arrived in Israel, immigration agencies placed them on frontier lands in the Negev and along the Jordanian border.

These “Oriental” Jews performed much of the access maintenance work for frontier and former Palestinian lands (Weingrod 1966). They were expected to acquiesce to and participate in plans for the national good, as designated by state agencies like the JA. The settling of Mizrahi immigrants in former Arab villages demonstrates both the initial Orientalist (Said 1979) ambivalence about the social place of Mizrahim vis-a-vis a

Jewish-Arab division and efforts to move them securely to the Jewish side. Initiated in late 1948 by Levi Eshkol, head of the Settlement Department of the JA, these villages were seen as a temporary solution (Benvenisti 2000). The villages were often disparaged for their haphazard arrangement, lack of facilities like indoor plumbing, and the close proximity of human and animal dwellings in their set-up. In most places in Israel, the belief that good, modern agriculture and communities should be established using modern planning methods that dictated linear layouts, and would be uniform across all topographies led to the “eradication” of the Arab landscape as a functioning rural network of villages. Yet, the primarily Ashkenazi Zionist leadership expected “Oriental” immigrants to accept these “primitive” accommodations for the time being, until modern settlements “suitable for a Jewish settlement” could be built (Benvenisti 2000:217).

Leaders such as Ben Gurion declared that it was the state's task “to elevate these immigrants to a more suitable level of civilization” because they were arriving “without a trace of Jewish or human education” (Shohat 1988:4-5, quoting Ben Gurion). And public discussions and newspaper reports of the time spoke unblinkingly of these immigrants' disease, ignorance, and “primitiveness” (Shohat 1988:4). Thus, as these immigrants arrived in Israel, they encountered a variety of institutions, such as schools, youth movements, the military, and JA settlement advisors, striving to inculcate them in the discourses of labor Zionism. For example, the new communities established during this period for immigrants were all “administered communities.” Their social, cultural, economic, and political development was directed by external agencies, primarily the JA (Weingrod 1966).⁷⁴ External advisors from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Settlement Department of the JA chose which individuals would live in the settlements and taught residents how to farm with modern, European-inspired techniques (Weingrod 1966). Financial advisors initially directed economic decisions, and even later, when local boards took over control, government bodies (such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Settlement Department) continued to provide credit and grants when these settlements faced economic troubles (Sherman and Schwartz 1995).

Immigrants' reactions to this enlistment in nation-building were mixed.

Interviews with *moshav* and *kibbutz* residents who immigrated at this time indicate that

⁷⁴ The establishment and administration of these communities will be discussed in greater detail in the first bridge chapter.

many of these Zionist recruits did embrace the discourses that leaders attempted to instill in them. Farming, especially as part of a new rural community, was seen as a worthy deed that individuals should carry out for the good of the Jewish people. Village founders spoke of their work as contributing to the overall inversion of Jewish employment patterns that was necessary for achieving national independence (S. Lees 1995). However, not all these immigrants took on their assigned tasks of access maintenance enthusiastically. As Weingrod recounts of the Moroccan immigrants with whom he researched in their Negev *moshav*, these “reluctant pioneers” “had never dreamed the dream of 'conquering the desert,' nor did they desire to become part of a new generation of Jewish farmers. They were ill prepared for their new role and understood little of the plans and ideals that were shaping their lives” (Weingrod 1966:vii-viii). During my fieldwork, when *moshav* residents recalled their early days living in these frontiers, they emphasized the degree to which they suffered to settle this land. Some of these immigrants from North Africa and Asia argued that their treatment by Ashkenazi Zionist leaders had been unfair, while others stated that the sacrifices made by Mizrahim were unavoidable given the needs of the young country and the burdens placed on it by this sudden influx of immigrants.

Solidifying Arab-Jewish Separations

By the 1950s and 1960s, with the violent conflicts of recent years, most of the Zionist movement's ambiguity regarding Arabs had been replaced by straightforward portraits of Arab as Other. Typically, following a dual society paradigm, Zionist histories do not dwell in detail on encounters with Arabs in Israel (Almog 2000; see also Levensohn 1941). They tend to focus on Jews within Israel and discuss Arabs as external threats from surrounding countries. When Zionist accounts of the time did refer to Arabs in Israel, it was often in terms of the security threat they posed from within. For example, in contrast to his hopeful expectations upon immigrating to Israel, the ecologist Daniel Hillel recalls being shocked to find that, “[t]he Negev highlands were not peopled by benevolent ancestors but by belligerent Bedouin who regarded us as intruders, and they were abetted by saboteurs from across the hostile borders” (Hillel 1982:xviii).

Encounters such as these between settlers and prior Palestinian occupants were

guided by existing Orientalist “ethnographic discourses” (Steinmetz 2007), as during earlier periods. But the 1950s and 1960s also saw intensive production of ethnographic knowledge. In these decades, the disciplines of sociology and anthropology were taking shape in Israel, and Jewish Israelis affiliated with state institutions (such as surveillance services) focused on “others at home” (Goodman and Loss 2009), conducting ethnographic research of Mizrahim and Arabs in Israel (Rabinowitz 2002b). In part, this ethnographic research was aimed at “stabilizing” (Steinmetz 2007) the culture and activities of Arabs, consistent with other colonial endeavors (Said 1979).

But this “nation-building” anthropology (Stocking 1982) was also influential in shaping the ideal character of the New Jew. As the presence of an Arab minority within Israel and the apparent similarities between these Palestinian Arabs and Jewish immigrants arriving from Arab countries threatened the supposed opposition underlying Zionist discourse, a contrast with Palestinians became more salient to the character of the New Hebrew. The vigorous and liberated New Jew was contrasted not just with the exilic Jew, but also with the Palestinian (Biale 1992). Social science studies of Arabs helped to shape and solidify a national Israeli identity in opposition to an Arab Other that was characterized as politically weak, traditional, and with “backward” family structures (Rabinowitz 2002a). As Ben Gurion warned in the mid-sixties, “We do not want Israelis to become Arabs. We are in duty bound to fight against the spirit of the Levant, which corrupts individuals and societies, and preserve the authentic Jewish values as they crystallized in the Diaspora” (Smootha 1978:88, quoting Ben Gurion).

Ben Gurion's quote demonstrates anxiety about the integrity of Israel's “interior frontiers” (Stoler 1992), rejecting the Arabness of Mizrahim in an attempt to solidify a barrier between Palestinians and Jews. Although he refers directly to Arabs, Ben Gurion made this statement in the context of debates over curbing the immigration of Oriental Jews.⁷⁵ The treatment of both Palestinian Arabs and Mizrahim in Israel highlights Zionism's tension between European-oriented progressivism and the discourse of return to the Jews' native land. This tension exists between, on the one hand, the suppression of Mizrahi Jews' Arabness and the widespread fear of Zionist leaders that Israel could

75 Ella Shohat goes so far as to argue that the Zionist movement marked “the first time in Arab-Jewish history [that] Arabness and Jewishness were posed as antonyms” (1997:47). See also Goodman and Loss (2009).

devolve into a “levantine state” (Shohat 1997:4), and on the other hand, the narrative of historical continuity with the ancient Israelites and the celebration of *sabras* as natives of the land.

Not all individual Zionists held such confrontational attitudes toward Arabs, as some groups who had assisted Zionist forces in 1948 were identified as “good Arabs,” but this “honeymoon” quickly ended as land expropriations and military rule over Arab areas proceeded (Cohen 2010). In addition, notions of shared Semitic heritage still held some sway. In 2009, an elderly *kibbutz*nik who had served for many years as his *kibbutz*'s *mukhtar* (a manager of relations with neighboring Arab communities)⁷⁶ and remained invested in the realization of good neighborly relations, reiterated the time-bridging narrative melding ancient Hebrews and contemporary Bedouin. He described the similarities between family organization as described in the Biblical stories of the Hebrew tribes and what is known of more contemporary Bedouin practices, and he explained that understanding Bedouin lifestyles as they had been in the early years of Israeli statehood could teach them about the lives of ancient Israelites. “The Sons of Israel,” he summed up, “were a Bedouin tribe.” This discourse of shared ancestry is “allochronic” (Fabian 1983), erasing time between ancient and contemporary Bedouin tribes.

This notion of shared Semitic heritage existed, to a lesser extent, for non-Bedouin Palestinians, too. However, because Zionist ideology divided Arabs into discreet categories and assigned Bedouin the mixed compliment of “noble savage,” and because many Bedouin tribes assisted Zionist fighters in 1948 or remained neutral, Bedouin retained a romanticized image within Zionist discourse for a while longer than their more northern, *fallahin* counterparts. As Benvenisti (2000:60) notes,

The classical Zionist narrative—the war of the barbarous desert against progress and development—was able to accommodate the Bedouin, who wandered the desolate expanses with his herds. But of course only until the Zionists began 'to make the desert bloom'; then they would banish him to the barren wilderness, where he would continue to be an object of affection, though as an exotic, external element.

This narrative ignored the reality of many Bedouin who long had been living sedentary

⁷⁶ *Mukhtar* is the Arabic term for chosen or elected leader.

lifestyles in fertile areas.⁷⁷ But even more than the dismissal of settled and farming Bedouin, this discourse of the desert dweller fails to recognize Bedouin as coevals with Jewish Israelis. “The posited authenticity of the past...serves to denounce an inauthentic present” (Fabian 1983:11). Zionist discourse tended to meld the Bedouin with the desert landscape, as one more natural feature of the Negev. When the noble Bedouin did not fade into the desert, but stayed living on lands in the Negev, Zionists were faced with a reality of humans with needs, attachments, flaws, and sometimes opposition to their settlement plans.

This narrative of shared ancestry, which is marginal today, was overshadowed even during this *mukhtar*'s days of leadership by narratives of uncivilized and depraved Arab enemies or by pointed silences. The dual society paradigm had become more widely accepted and was supported by the historical narratives and contemporary descriptions of school textbooks, literature, and films (Urian 1997; Benvenisti 2000; Almog 2000; Attias and Benbassa 2003).

Reclaiming Lands

Where settlements could not be established (due to a lack of available funds or particularly impractical topography, for example), more indirect means of access control were used. This included the declaration of military zones, afforestation, and the designation of lands as nature reserves.

Afforestation activities that had begun during the *Yishuv* period were intensified after 1948.⁷⁸ Under the chairmanship of Menahem Ussishkin, during the Mandate era, the JNF had approached tree-planting primarily for its “contribution to geopolitical facts, establishing borders *de jure* under the arcane Turkish land laws as well as marking out property lines *de facto*” (Tal 2002:75). As one JNF official noted, confirming planting's utility as a tool of access control, “there was no activity that could hold land as cheaply as forests” (Tal 2002:79). Under the Israeli state, forests remained a strategic tool for

77 The difference between “Arab” and “Bedouin” was unclear during early statehood years, as it remains today. Ignoring sedentary Bedouins was one way to impose greater certainty on this uncertain and shifting distinction.

78 Whether justified by national myths of progress or economic arguments, other colonial powers have also engaged in the politics of planting to “restore” degraded lands. See Diana Davis (2005) on French colonists in Morocco.

maintaining access control over lands.

In addition, afforestation projects served a wide range of other purposes, including soil preservation, the provision of raw materials (carob, agave, etc), the commemoration of national heroes, and employment of large numbers of new immigrants (Lehn and Davis 1988). As noted earlier, afforestation projects were seen as opportunities for personal participation in the Zionist project through labor in the land. Tree-planting also took on new symbolic significance for the nation-state. Israel's first prime minister, for example, advocated the tree-planting efforts of the JNF as a way to forge lasting ties between Jews around the world and the land of Israel (Cohen 2004:209; Lehn and Davis 1988). Following the Holocaust, the JNF and other Zionist organizations promoted tree-planting in Palestine as a symbolic revival, with each tree being akin to one of the six million Jews killed (Zerubavel 1996).

Along with reclamation through afforestation, lands were reclaimed through water management. With Israel's dry climate, and given the ideological weight attributed to agriculture, controlling water has been a key element of state power. Two projects in particular, the draining of the Huleh wetlands and the channeling of billions of cubits of water from the comparatively wet north to the drier south, demonstrated the scope of the government's investment in shaping the landscape to fit Zionist visions.⁷⁹ In 1951, as its first major project following the establishment of the state, the JNF began draining what was then referred to as "Huleh swamp" to create about 50,000 *dunams* (12,500 acres) of farmland (Lehn and Davis 1988:141; Tal 2002). The Syrian government interpreted this development project, which was located in the demilitarized zone established by the 1949 Israel-Syria armistice agreement, as a violation of the agreement. Despite Syrian objections and several episodes of military retaliation between Syria and Israel, the JNF continued the project, with full governmental support (Lehn and Davis 1988). Such support indicates the importance of farmland reclamation in general, and the establishment of farming communities in this border region in particular, for the Zionist government.⁸⁰

Later, beginning in 1963, the newly established Nature Reserves Authority began

⁷⁹ This latter water management project will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

⁸⁰ About 3,100 *dunams* were reflooded during the mid-1960s, in response to environmental protests from the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) (Tal 2002:117).

establishing parks and reserves throughout Israel. Because the establishment of reserves began relatively late, after most disputed lands were already being dealt with through other means (such as legal redefinition, resettlement of “abandoned” villages, establishment of new settlements, and afforestation), these reserves have played only a supporting, rather than leading role in controlling access to land. Part of the goal in creating national parks, as in other national contexts, was to cordon off areas of “nature” as the nation's property, preventing it from becoming private property.⁸¹ In the south, although initial efforts to have the entire Negev declared a reserve failed, 30 percent of it was eventually designated as such (Tal 2002:171-172).

Military zones have also been effective in controlling access to lands. Beginning during these early state years, large swaths of land were set aside for military exercises. Now, approximately half of the territory of Israel is designated as “security territory,” which consists of training grounds, camps and installations, and buffer zones between these areas and civilian areas (Oren 2007). In practice, nature reserves and military zones overlap, as 38 percent of the lands in nature reserves throughout Israel are also used as military training grounds (Tal 2002:178). This overlapping affects land use in these areas, since the military is exempt from most of the environmental restrictions that generally apply within nature reserves (Tal 2002; Oren and Regev 2008). The dual use of these lands also holds important implications for public perception of the nature reserves, forging the association between cordoning off land for reserves and cordoning off land for military use.

“Agriculture Will Win” (1980s-present): Desperate Call of a Fading Era?

Some scholars observe what they consider to be signs of Zionism's decline or disappearance since the 1980s (Nimni 2003). Indeed, large Zionist institutions that held strong and relatively comprehensive influence over diverse areas of life, including governmental policies and practices, the shape and conduct of settlement life, youth movements, and artistic expressions (e.g., literature, films) have shrunk or shifted. The *Histadrut's* former domination over businesses, workers, and social services has been dismantled. Very few collective *kibbutzim* or agricultural *moshavim* exist, as most have

⁸¹ For examples in the United States, see Cohen (2004), in Brazil, see Hecht and Cockburn (2010), and in Tanzania, see Neumann (1998).

privatized and shifted away from farming. The JNF continues to have profound influence over access to land, but it has muted its public image as the primary procurer and manager of national lands, replacing it now with branding as an environmental organization. The universities that researched and directed key state-building endeavors now also nourish small circles of academics who challenge the legitimacy of Israeli democracy and call for a state based on secular citizenship that does not privilege Jews. These developments suggest that Zionism's role in Israeli society is changing.

However, I contend that although recent years have seen some splintering of ideologies, Zionism remains a strong influence in Israelis' lives. And underlying environmental discourses have continued to develop: a territorial imperative to control land for Jews and the maintenance and naturalization of a boundary between Jews and non-Jews. With the weakening of Labor Zionism's state institutions, trends toward liberalization and privatization have meant that state bodies have played a less direct role in shaping land, labor, and personhood during this period. This “privatization of nationalism” (Kedar 2009) demonstrates that similar environmental discourses can be propagated through different means.

Liberalization and Privatization

This splintering of Zionist ideology was driven, in part, by political-economic shifts. As Israel moved past its early years of state-building, certain economic and political demands arose that previously had been sidelined in favor of what were conceived to be national and security priorities. Labor Zionist institutions of the *Yishuv* period and early state years were founded on a centralized approach that relied on steady “unilateral capital transfers” (i.e., foreign aid from other states and diaspora Jews), large-scale immigration, and governmentally insulated markets (Shalev 2000). This economic structure facilitated the rapid development of a strong state and promoted adherence to Labor Socialism by linking certain social citizenship rights with membership in semi-governmental Labor institutions (like the *Histadrut*). But this structure also contained several vulnerabilities that contributed to Israel's shift since the mid-1980s toward “a more internationally-oriented, neo-liberal economy” (Shafir and Peled 2000b:2). First, this structure was based on a multi-tiered labor market that privileged the primarily

Ashkenazi veteran Jewish workers of the *Yishuv* period and discriminated against Mizrahim and non-Jews (Swirski 1989). This economic discrimination, along with coercive practices used to assimilate Mizrahi immigrants to Ashkenazi norms, created increasingly stark inequalities between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim that eventually challenged Labor Zionism's hegemony (Smootha 2004b; Khenin 2000). Second, because both *Yishuv* and state institutions were “rentier bodies” that depended on foreign aid to maintain both a large public sector and a balanced budget, the state was vulnerable to shifts in this aid (Shafir and Peled 2000b:6).

In the late 1960s and increasingly in the 1970s, several economic changes were challenging the need for a protectionist and state-centered economy, as well as the state's ability—financially and politically—to continue in this role. A period of rapid economic growth had led to nearly full employment and less dependence of workers on state institutions. And a slackening in immigration and foreign aid pushed government leaders to reconsider the viability of state-provided goods and services. Despite these challenges, the status quo was perpetuated for some time in the service of Israel's military-industrial complex and the territorial expansions of the 1967 War (Shalev 2000). However, underlying economic pressures continued to build. Following the Yom Kippur War of 1973, an oil embargo against countries trading with Israel contributed to a global energy crisis and marked the beginning of Israel's “lost decade” (Shafir and Peled 2000a). Rising inflation and state debts due to heavy investment in the public sector, as well as stagnating foreign aid, characterized the decade. Perhaps even more consequential, Israel captured territories during the 1967 war that greatly increased its size, but which also contained large non-Jewish populations who did not become Israeli citizens. This brought questions of territorial expansion and security to the center of Israeli politics. The imperative of securing Jewish controlled territory was not questioned, but rather, harkening back to turn-of-the-century disagreements between Zionist factions, debates arose as to what counts as Jewish territory.

Quietly at first, and more boldly in the mid-1980s, the state government began opening Israel's economy to more involvement in the world economy. The real turning point was in 1985, when a National Unity government instituted the Emergency Economic Stabilization Plan. This plan marked a dramatic shift toward liberalism by

removing many of the government's economic controls, weakening labor unions, and curtailing subsidies and bail-outs of individual firms (notably, *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*) (Shalev 2000).

This economic shift has been part of wider changes in Israeli society that some hail as the decline of Zionism. The economic problems of the “lost decade” challenged the political power of the Labor Zionists who had dominated the Israeli government since its foundation. The Knesset elections of 1977 marked the first time that Labor Zionists failed to win control of the national government. Labor Zionism had been closely associated with the socioeconomic system of collectivism and the ideal character of the *sabra*. The moves to liberalize may seem to respond primarily to economic problems in accordance with global economic trends, opening markets to more international activity (Shafir and Peled 2000a). But the liberalizing trend has also been tied to wider social changes in Israel. Not surprisingly, the decline of Labor Zionism's hegemony has coincided with the opening of debate among Israeli Jews over socioeconomic approaches and ideals of Israeli character.

An ideal of national advancement through collectivism is being challenged by support for the individual profit motive and an ideal of improvement through competition. Collectivism and self-sacrifice are no longer axiomatic elements of an ideal Israeli character. By the 1970s, for example, central legendary figures, like Joseph Trumpeldor, with his message of valiant self-sacrifice for one's country, were being challenged and reinterpreted. As one Israeli soldier summed up this critique following the Yom Kippur War, “my version, which has not had the privilege of being posted in any schools, is—IT IS GOOD TO LIVE FOR OUR COUNTRY!!!” (Zerubavel 1995, 159, emphasis in original).

The once vaunted figure of the *chalutz* is now associated in popular discussion with the shunned figure of the *freier* (Roniger and Feige 1992). Reaching Hebrew from Germanic sources (probably Yiddish), *freier* is best translated into English as “sucker,” someone who gives without concern over receiving his fair share and unquestioningly follows rules. But this English translation falls far short of the cultural resonance carried by the term in Hebrew. Referred to mockingly in jokes or defensively in verbal interactions, the *freier* is now a core value in Israel—of what not to be. Its pervasiveness

suggests to some concerned analysts that Israelis no longer value cooperation, sharing, and living simply, and instead value consumption and emulate the person who attends to his or her own needs (Bloch 2003). This departure from collectivism coincides with liberalizing economic reforms.⁸²

Similarly, agriculture, which once held such an unquestioned prioritization for the Zionist movement and subsequent governments, has been declining in status, but unevenly so. Agriculture's contribution to the Israeli economy has been subsiding steadily. As the economy was pushed toward greater interdependence with global markets and government subsidies for agriculture were removed, Israeli farmers have found it difficult to compete with producers in water-rich and low-wage countries (Schwartz et al. 1995). Meanwhile, other modes of livelihood have become more profitable. As a result, agriculture's share of the workforce dropped from 6.5 percent in the 1960s to 2.6 percent in 1996, and only 1.8 percent by 2007. (Benvenisti 2000:315). And the contribution of irrigated agriculture to Israel's gross national product has decreased from 30 percent in the 1950s to three percent in the 1990s (Tal 2002:238). Even more significant from a Zionist point of view, Jewish participation in agriculture has declined dramatically. Farms have relied increasingly on non-Jewish wage laborers, drawn initially from among Palestinians and later from foreign workers (Benvenisti 2000).

Agriculture's decline has had profound consequences for the many communities that were constructed to rely on farming for their survival. Because the locations and agricultural economy of collective settlements were based on ideological and territorial priorities more than on their environmental or economic advantages, many of these communities had remained reliant on subsidies and grants from governmental and private diaspora sources. Through periodic debt forgiveness or loan restructuring, these communities had been buffered from the economic shifts of liberalization and globalization (Sherman and Schwartz 1995). But by the mid-1980s, in the midsts of the economic crisis and an ideological shift away from collective farming, collective

82 These personas were ideals, setting expectations for good and proper lifestyles, personalities, employment, and land-use. They were by no means characteristic of a majority of *Yishuv* residents or Israelis. But they were and continue to be important for their normative power (cf Roniger and Feige 1992; Shafir 1989).

communities' requests for governmental assistance began to be refused (Sherman and Schwartz 1995). This prompted a period of crisis for *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, during which many communities were abandoned or privatized. Those collective communities that weathered this crisis instituted a variety of reforms to partially privatize and diversify their economic activities away from agriculture. Many attempted industrial and tourist ventures to stay financially afloat.

Agriculture's loss of unquestioned primacy has not occurred without a fight in Israel's political scene. The historically central place of farming in Zionist narratives, as well as the monetary and political investments that many of Israel's elites hold in agriculture have continued to shape farming's symbolic load. And these investments hold implications for practice and policy. Politicians, especially those in the Labor party, continue to announce their support of farmers. For example, water policies in a drought-prone and semi-arid country like Israel are telling of the national importance accorded to agriculture. Farmers have long received disproportionately voluminous water allocations, despite concerns over water pollution (from the heavy use of pesticides on conventional farms, as well as from non-agricultural sources) and shortages (Tal 2002). Yet, through the 1990s, the agricultural sector continued to receive 70 percent of water allocations in Israel. Only recently have these water allocations been significantly curtailed. And still, because agriculture has been a strong symbol for so long, it continues to carry rhetorical clout in politics. As recently as 1997, the national water commissioner responded to the efforts of some governmental officials to reduce agricultural use of water with accusations of “national larceny” because they would renege on Israel's national commitment to its farmers (Tal 2002:228).

Yet, the practice of agriculture has lost its vaunted status as *hagshama* (realization of Zionist goals). As Israel consolidated its control over territory, farming lost its strategic importance for building the nation-state. In addition, the presence of Arab and foreign agricultural workers has tarnished the prestige of the profession for many Jewish Israelis (Kressel 1995). Many young Jewish Israelis began, at least since the 1970s, to look down on a career in agriculture as the path of a *freier*. Agricultural labor was deemed acceptable as an interim job for youth, but, as a group of young *moshav* residents opined in 1972, “a person who respects himself... cannot remain in agriculture beyond the

age of thirty. When one is established one ought to be far, far away from it” (Kressel 1995:161). Such an opinion challenges *sabra* ideals of labor on behalf of the collective and the character-building role of agricultural work. Agriculture, and especially collective agriculture, no longer serves as a primary means of developing and instilling Zionist ideals.

This decline of collective agricultural communities is part of a larger shift in Zionist discourses of land and landscapes. The protection of national lands for the Jewish people had been one of the primary tasks for Zionist leaders of the early state years, and the collective status of Israel Lands, which could only be leased on a 49-year basis, not sold outright, was central to this effort. Yet, in 2009, land privatization reforms were passed by the Knesset allowing for the outright sale of state lands. Further legislation is being debated that would also privatize land-use planning decisions that had previously been under governmental purview, which will likely facilitate the re-zoning of agricultural lands as land for building and other development projects (Kedar 2009).

Splintering Zionisms

Now that Labor Zionism is no longer the unquestioned ideology of both state bodies and social institutions, more fundamental debates have been opened in the public sphere about the shape Zionism should take. While the social and economic changes of this period have been dramatic, Zionism remains a hegemonic force in Israeli society. This period signals a splintering of ideologies. Debate within the movement is not new, of course, but the degree of disagreement between strands of ideology has intensified. Proponents of religious Zionism, Labor Zionism, neo-Zionism, and post-Zionism vie for influence over Israeli political and social life today (Kemp et al. 2004).

To some extent, this splintering has been prompted by changing global attitudes toward ethnic nationalism. In an era when multiculturalism has become a valued quality for “modern,” “progressive” states, Zionists often find it difficult to defend a state based on ethno-nationalist privilege (for Jews over Arabs, as well as for Ashkenazim over Mizrahim). Some left-wing strands of Zionism that have grown stronger in recent decades acknowledge declining international support for ethnic nationalism by portraying Israel as a multicultural nation. For those closer to mainstream Zionism, this may mean

celebrating the Mizrahi as well as Ashkenazi origins of many Israelis. In a more radical interpretation, this multiculturalism may also include Arabs. Some Israeli NGOs aimed toward more recognition of Arabs' citizenship rights describe themselves as Zionist because they are strengthening Israel's democratic character.

Economic liberalization can serve as an apparent opening of equal opportunity that actually maintains the baseline of Jewish privilege that was built during the state's early years (Tzfadia 2008a). Because the state was established through state-centered protectionism, the economy in place at the time of liberalization reforms already privileged the Labor Zionist elite. With liberalization, this elite—Jews, and primarily Ashkenazim—was best positioned to prosper. For example, in general, the oldest *kibbutzim* are located today on land that is much more valuable than the land of the immigrant *moshavim* established in the 1950s and later. The objections of social justice groups like Adalah suggest that these reforms will not reduce the ethno-nationalist allocation of lands in Israel.⁸³ Rather, the reforms are likely to continue the concentration of lands in Jewish hands, but through privatized means. Likewise, rather than signaling the end of Zionism's territorial drive, recent land reforms allow nation-building to proceed through privatization. For example, lands eligible for sale include expropriated Palestinian lands and the disputed areas of the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem. JNF lands released for sale may be sold only to Jews, and the reforms also allow admission committees for rural communities, which have been used to screen out potential Arab residents (Knesset 2009; Bishara and Hamdan 2009).

Another way to deal with the public relations problem of ethnic nationalism is to offer environmental justifications for territorial practices. Ecological nationalism has been mobilized as a more liberal discourse than ethnic nationalism in South Asia (Cederlöf and Sivaramakrishnan 2006), Eastern Europe (Dawson 1996), and Western Europe (Hamilton 2002). The JNF, perhaps Israel's most internationally visible national institution, is also pursuing this path. The organization describes its tree-planting activities as ecological improvements to the land, creating “green lungs' around congested towns and cities, and provid[ing] recreation and respite for all Israelis,” rather

83 Adalah, “the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel” is an NGO established in 1996 that publishes press releases and opinion papers on legal matters, raises civil rights court cases, and provides legal consultation to individuals and other NGOs (Adalah 2011).

than as the defense of Jewish national lands (Jewish National Fund 2010). In this case, the familiar narrative of redemption is posed in ecological terms.

Similarly, ecological rhetoric has been used in recent years to confront perceived threats from Israel's Arab residents. For example, when government efforts to concentrate Bedouin residents of the Negev into state-planned townships were failing, the Green Patrol was initiated. Ostensibly, the Green Patrol aimed to protect government-owned lands from any illegal incursions. In practice, they have targeted most of their efforts against Bedouin grazers and residents of disputed lands (Tal 2002), and accusations of excessive harassment and use of force against Bedouin Arabs have been coded in the nickname, “Black Patrol” (Swirski 2008).⁸⁴ The mobilization of ecological rhetoric and practices such as these for ethno-nationalist goals is important for understanding associations that have developed between Zionism and environmentalism.

Conclusion

The confrontational declaration that “agriculture will win” is not new, as it has long been a rallying cry of Zionism. But the imagined opponents have changed between Zionism's early pioneering days and my conversation with Mark in 2007 about those corrugated metal letters on his *kibbutz*'s hillside. Beginning with the rhetoric and practices of early *chalutzim* and Labor Zionist leaders, a challenging environment and Arabs were once seen as the main forces challenging the Zionist agricultural vision. Palestinians in Israel and Arabs in surrounding countries continue to be depicted as threats in Zionist discourse. But this defiant statement in corrugated metal was being directed toward other Jews, those who lobby the Knesset to further reduce agricultural subsidies and water allotments, and those building high-rise apartments and shopping malls in the hills around this *kibbutz*. This shift points to a splintering of Zionist discourse that has occurred in recent years.

84 The Green Patrol (הסיירת הירוקה), established in 1977 (Tal 2002) as an enforcement branch of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, is described as “the unit for the supervision of open spaces” (Israel Nature and Parks Authority website). It should not be confused with the Green Police (המשטרה הירוקה), established in 1990 as the enforcement branch of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and “empowered to carry out inspections and investigations relating, among others, to wastewater, asbestos hazardous, hazardous waste, air pollution, illegal signposting, non-compliance with the Deposit Law on Beverage Containers, improper conditions in dairy farms and much more” (Ministry of Environmental Protection 2010).

Collective agricultural communities are no longer the ideological and practical mainstay of Zionist nation-building. Mark's *kibbutz* and others like it are not deemed crucial to Zionism's future, as new means more in line with neo-liberalism are being used to protect these interests. These communities once served important roles in controlling and maintaining access to land for Zionist projects. Thanks to Labor Zionism's hegemonic position, there was no question of supporting agricultural labor with finances and material resources, physical labor, training, and governmental policy. But livelihoods and land-uses based on high-tech and industrial production, real estate development, and tourism now overshadow agriculture and challenge its vaunted status. Many would see the persona of the pioneer farmer or the *sabra* in today's Israel as a *freier* or as a discriminatory Ashkenazi ideal.

Space for contestation between strands of Zionism has been opened. The Labor Zionism that became so dominant in shaping Israeli state institutions and guiding Israeli society was once one strand of many ideologies jostling for dominance within a fringe movement of European Jews, and today it has slipped from its nearly hegemonic position as religious Zionist, post-Zionist, and anti-Zionist ideologies jockey for influence within Israeli society. As Mark and his fellow *kibbutz* members took their stance in defense of agriculture, it was not just a mode of livelihood that they were defending, but a set of environmental and ethical discourses. They were invoking the *sabra* and the *chalutz*, and the ideals of communalism, collective sacrifice, and labor in nature that they saw disappearing in Israel. Today, land privatization and the individual profit motive have also become legitimate means for the realization of Zionist goals.

Despite these new zones of contestation, other Zionist discourses have been largely uncontested. First, a territorial imperative to settle and control Jewish land remains strong. Manual labor, tree-planting, and the establishment of collective communities were tools of this territorial drive in the past. In contemporary Israel, private ownership and independent community initiatives may also serve to Judaize areas. Second, the natural, respectable form of belonging remains the nation-state. Whereas nation-building efforts once embraced socialist and communalist means and now look to neoliberal means, the goal of establishing a progressive Jewish nation-state has been consistent. Third, assertions of a natural distinction between Jew and Arab have

grown more definitive and oppositional. Though colored throughout by Orientalism, initial notions of shared ancestry and cohabitation in Zionist discourse have been marginalized by depictions of an Arab Other as backward and dangerous. This genealogy of environmental discourses in the Zionist movement from the turn of the nineteenth century to the present shows the stabilization of a set of binary oppositions that enframe social relations in terms of Arab versus Jew, nature versus culture, and tradition versus progress.

CHAPTER II

Negotiation Alignments through Naqab Counter Narratives

“Official” Israeli historical accounts of *Eretz Israel* support the righteousness of the Zionist project by telling a story of Jewish expulsion, followed by a period of neglected or misused landscapes, and then a return of the Jewish people to revive and re-tame these landscapes (Zerubavel 1995). But critics of Zionism, both Palestinians and Jewish-Israelis, tell counter narratives that contest the meanings and moral lessons to be drawn from the past (Warren 2001). In this chapter, I examine alternative accounts of the past, told to me by residents of the Naqab's (Negev's)⁸⁵ Bedouin townships, unrecognized villages, and the city of Rahat. These narratives placed a long line of Bedouin Arabs at the center of the Naqab's history, countering the erasures of Zionist narratives. Rather than the barren desert wilderness of Zionist accounts, these reminiscences were set in sparsely peopled, yet social landscapes. Wide expanses of land were welcomed and gave residents great freedom of movement and action. In these accounts, long histories of personal and family land use were constructed as the most legitimate claims to lands. As Keith Basso writes of Western Apaches' narratives, so too through these Naqab reminiscences, “portions of a world view are constructed and made available and a [Naqab Bedouin] version of the landscape is deepened, amplified, and tacitly affirmed. With words, a massive physical presence is fashioned into a meaningful universe” (Basso 1996a:40).

Yet, these are selective narratives, telling a particular kind of story. The accounts from which I draw are not transparent windows into the past, but rather, performances of the past that have audiences and make claims and counter-claims pertinent to the present conflict (Wertsch 2002; Davis 2010). They are performances of a deeply felt nostalgia. Like Rebecca Bryant (2008:402), I view nostalgia as a longing for return that links the

⁸⁵ Because this chapter draws primarily upon Bedouin Arabs' narratives, I use the Arabic term for this region, the Naqab, throughout.

past with a particular imagination of homeland where “community and place are tied together in a sense of social belonging.” One refrain that resurfaced frequently in these accounts was the sense that something is being lost. Some of my interlocutors spoke directly of the material loss of land and the rights to live on and use it. For others, the loss was more diffuse and intangible, described as a way of life, cultural identity, sense of belonging, or connection to nature (see also Kirsch 2001).

While told of the past, these nostalgic reminiscences also speak to the future (Boym 2002), and they vary widely in their level of optimism or pessimism for a return. Some sought recognition of land ownership in the hopes of returning to the places or social belonging of an absent homeland, but most spoke of the landscapes and lifestyles of their nostalgia as lost. These narratives are about the future not just in terms of individual possibilities for return, but also in a more general sense, addressing the place of Bedouin Arabs in Israeli society. By considering these narratives alongside the more institutionalized history already discussed (and focusing in particular on what they say about landscapes and people's attachments to them), we can more fully understand what is seen as being at stake in the loss of land.

Yousef's Counter Narrative

Tel Assha‘ir is a historic village, Yousef began his narrative. He gestured across the road to the moshav where I had recently begun living as he said, they lie if they say that this village was not here until recently. Yousef is a middle-aged man living among his extended family in an unrecognized village. I had met Yousef twice before through my work with Bustan, and now he knew that I had become a neighbor. That day, I had walked out of the fence surrounding the moshav, across the busy highway, and along several deeply rutted dirt paths to reach Yousef's house. Along with a mutual friend of ours, we sat in the cinder-block *diwan* (sitting room) that serves as both a guest room for Yousef's family and a hosting room for the business he runs, lecturing to tour groups about life in the Naqab and selling weaving and embroidery done by his wife and other women in the village. The walls and seats were spread over with the rich red, burgundy, and accenting colors of these handicrafts. Several children came and went as we talked. An older daughter brought a tray of sweet tea, fruit, and store-bought cookies for us.

During this visit, Yousef had asked me how I was getting along in my new home, and I had shared with him some of the complaints I had heard there, about Bedouins coming in droves to squat on the once empty lands around the moshav. Now he wanted to set the record straight.

This oppositional stance was one very common style in which Bedouin Arabs told me their own stories and recounted a broader regional history. These are narratives of the past that must acknowledge the authoritative weight of a more widely known and accepted Zionist version and search for ways to counter that authority in order for their account of events to gain acceptance. When we first sat down for this conversation, I had explained to Yousef that I was trying to learn about the history of land use in this area of the Naqab—how people have used land in the past, how they use it today, and what might explain the changes and continuities. He directed the conversation, in relatively quick succession, through a series of oppositional stances to the dominant Zionist history of the Naqab.

First, he began by tracing a long, unbroken chain of forebears. Long ago, the land was all covered with shrubbery, he told me. His ancestors cut down these shrubs and dug furrows and farmed. This is before Ottoman times, he specified. It was before his grandparents; it was seven grandparents ago. This unbroken line of grandfathers counters Zionisms' erasure of non-Jews. It also establishes Yousef's authority as a narrator of events that may contradict "official" historical accounts. In the same breath that he establishes authority through family ties to land, he also invokes a work ethic familiar to Zionist accounts that can bolster his land ownership claims. He implies that his family's ownership of this land should be recognized because they worked the land, fulfilling the requirements for labor and suffering that Zionist thinkers such as A.D. Gordon had laid out at the start of their settlement project.

Yousef then addressed the question of land ownership more directly. Knowing that Bedouins' land claims are often denied because they do not hold documentation of legal ownership, he explained to me the way Bedouins here used to track ownership.

Everybody knew where one man's land ended and another began. There was no need to lay down markers. Nobody would claim this land if it belonged to someone else. It's a matter of honor. You can trust the word of a Bedouin; it's bound to respect for God.... We had natural borders, like the top of a hill, for

example. If you pour water on the top, all the land where water flows one way is one person's, and where it flows the other way, it's the second man's.

Yousef assigns value to this system of property recognition because of its connection to honor and its correlation with natural boundaries. This contrasts with property registration systems imposed by outside occupiers, such as the Ottoman and British Mandate governments. Bedouins didn't "make *tabos*" (deeds of ownership) under the Ottomans, he told me, because the Ottomans were an occupying empire and just came to take, so registering only helped the occupiers collect taxes. And later, he continued, the British started the *tabo* up north, but they never fully reached the south before the Mandate ended and they left.⁸⁶

These other governments are discussed as temporary waves that will come and pass. Their registration systems do not hold moral authority, as does the word of a Bedouin, nor do they hold any natural connection with the land. Then, to drive home his dismissal of these "official" means of ownership, Yousef ended his explanation by saying: And besides, even if we'd had *tabo*, they'd still have taken the land. "They," here, refers to the Zionist government that succeeded the British Mandate. Yousef claims that the calls for documented property rights are a ruse, and that in reality, the law governing land ownership in the Naqab is that might makes right.

Although Yousef counters Zionist history's insistence on documented ownership, his narrative lends support to the valorization of agriculture that is so integral to environmental discourses in Zionism.⁸⁷ When Yousef first clarified his family's ties to this area of land, he had done so with reference to the land-clearing and furrow-digging of agriculture. Then, after taking a break to go say his afternoon prayers, Yousef returned and picked up the conversation by setting the record straight regarding Bedouins and nomadism. Noting the common misconception that Bedouins of the Naqab were nomadic prior to the establishment of Israel, he explained to me that his tribe was only

⁸⁶ In this statement, Yousef continued using the Ottoman term for titleship to refer to the British Mandate's Land Registry, which was modeled on the Australian Torrens system for settling indigenous and colonial land claims. A survey of land occupation was conducted between 1920 and 1946, and a process of settling and recording land claims was initiated, but had reached only approximately 20 percent of Palestine's land area when the British Mandate ended in 1948 (Abu Hussein and McKay 2003:108-109).

⁸⁷ The privileging of agriculture in determining property rights is not unique to Israel; it was common to many other colonial contexts (see Povinelli 2002; Lines 1991; Krall 2002; Rose 1994).

“quarter-nomadic.”⁸⁸

Yousef began by describing a fully nomadic lifestyle. This means that a group lives in one place for a while, and then they all move to a new place, with nothing remaining behind. The semi-nomadic label, he told me, applies to a group that shifts from one place to another within a well-defined territory, known as their *dira*. They may not return to the first place for ten years or more, but the group's movements are all in a certain area. But, he said, the village of Tel Assha‘ir is quarter-nomadic. There are a couple of large families here, which used to grow crops like wheat and barley. They stored these crops underground by digging a well, filling it with the grain, and then covering it so it would last through the winter. If the vegetation was scarce one year, a portion of each family, such as one of a man's wives and her children, might travel with the herds of sheep and goats to graze them above the rain line, north of Beersheba (in an area recognized as part of the family's *dira*). Meanwhile the second wife and other residents would stay behind in the village. Yousef noted with emphasis that the graves were always here, along with the water well and the storage places.⁸⁹

Yousef was very careful to accentuate the more sedentary and farming aspects of his people's heritage, rather than the shepherding practices. He followed this explanation with a description of the yearly routine by which his family used to live. This routine was entirely governed by the agricultural cycle, from sowing to reaping and threshing. The seasonal movement of shepherds with their animals was not mentioned at all. At the end of the harvest in August, they would have the wedding season, putting up special tents to house guests, traveling from wedding to wedding, and listening to poetry performances.

Now, he told me, this has all changed. They don't have the land for farming or to hold big weddings anymore. They have lost their community gatherings and their

88 Alcida Rita Ramos recounts the negative stereotype of nomads that has been learned and perpetuated in scholarship and popular understandings in industrial societies. Though she contends that “Old World 'nomads enjoy a certain reputation as aloof, proud, independent peoples,” in contrast to the “moral judgment” contained in applications of the term across the Atlantic, Bedouin Arabs' experiences of negative moral judgments related to their purported nomadic nature belie this contrast (Ramos 1998:35).

89 See the chapter, “Camps and Movements,” in Marx (1967) for a very similar account of seasonal movement. However, Parizot (2001) contends that although semi-nomadic pastoralism was “still the rule” in the early 1900s, some men had begun careers of wage labor with the British Mandate government (see also Kressel, Ben David, and Abu Rabia 1991).

tradition of poetry, as every person now sits in his own home watching television. They have suffered many years of drought because God is punishing their poor behavior, Yousef asserted, and they don't get water for farming from the State as do their Jewish neighbors. Because of this, they can't make a living anymore from farming. The women, who used to be active and productive members of the agricultural family, now stay at home and gain weight from unhealthy food. “*Al badu axathu darab* (the Bedouin have taken a blow),” he said. “And the damage has spread.”

Historical narratives such as Yousef's are centrally concerned with reproducing communities tied to the land (as in Kosek 2006). Yousef lives in an unrecognized village and works at least three jobs to support his family, while still remaining on the family lands. He yearns for elements of a Bedouin lifestyle that is now gone—the remoteness of a seasonal *'izbe* (a sort of camp or retreat) and life in a tent—but he also states firmly that he wants a modern lifestyle for himself and his children. He wants access to education and services comparable with those available to Jewish Israelis.

* * *

Yousef's was one of many similar accounts I heard about the Naqab and the Bedouins' past. There was great heterogeneity of style in these performances of the past. Some narrators, like Yousef, used more oppositional tones against Zionist narratives of the Naqab's past and drew explicitly on the past to make present-day land claims, while others focused on personal descriptions of a way of life that has regretfully passed.⁹⁰ However, despite such variations, these Naqab narratives composed a shared contestation to dominant Zionist historical accounts. Remembering is a profoundly social process, particularly when the context of remembering—the places recalled and the groups of people identified—is so marked by social conflict (Bohlin 2001; Kenny 1999). Whether described as a “collective history” (Kenny 1999:437) or “social imaginary” (Taylor

⁹⁰ To some extent, of course, this difference narration style is idiosyncratic. But these narrative styles may also follow lines of gender and age. Personal and less confrontational descriptions were more common among older speakers, particularly women. Several older women commented as they told their personal stories that they didn't know anything about politics or big issues of the outside world; the men knew more (see also Bryant 2008; Sayigh 2007). But because of the shape of my social network, this comparison can be only suggestive. As a woman researcher, I interacted more, and more casually, with other women, perhaps encouraging informal, personal stories. I had met most of the men who narrated lengthy personal or regional histories to me through extended activist networks, and we more often sat in a formal interview setting. These factors may have cued them more sharply to the potential audiences of my research and prompted them to speak in more explicitly political terms in an effort to strengthen Bedouin land claims.

2004:25), this counter narrative helps individual narrators to make sense of their past and present, and to imagine their future (Bahloul 1996; Boym 2002).

Sharing a central theme of nostalgia for a lost way of life, these remembrances cohere in their opposition to key features of the Zionist narratives examined in chapter one. They consistently identify elements of the Naqab's history that are neglected or told differently in Zionist accounts. Because of this oppositional stance, I refer to them as counter narratives. However, they are not entirely contradictory to dominant state histories. As Bryant (2008) notes, “unofficial” histories refuse elements within “official” history, but also reveal how aspects of official history gain their hegemonic status. I have found that, at times, even those narratives that most forcefully oppose Zionist historical accounts on the surface actually rest on shared environmental discourses.

In addition to expressing these real senses of loss, narrating nostalgic accounts of Naqab landscapes conveys moral and social lessons (Basso 1996a). I was the audience in the most immediate sense, but so were my colleagues in the NGOs that had been my social introduction to the Naqab, as well as the imagined future readers of my texts and students in my classes. Narrators knew I was studying land conflict, and these are the reminiscences they chose to tell. These narratives respond to the pressures of dominant discourses about rooting in land and about social progress. I will trace the use of historical memories in contemporary daily practices further in subsequent chapters. In this chapter, I investigate the content of these accounts more fully to highlight the environmental discourses underlying them and consider how they fit within the complex and overlapping social contexts of Israeli residence and citizenship, Palestinian nationalism, Western property regimes, and international advocacy circuits.⁹¹

These are not the only narratives that could be told. Absent are the heroic poems and genealogical histories of sheiks, leading families, and inter-tribal disputes told by Bedouins in other places and with different audiences (Shryock 1997). Such tales are troubling to land-rights advocacy efforts in Israel that seek to portray a united Bedouin community. Missing, too, are discussions of ancestors controlling trade routes or livelihoods based on smuggling or raiding, which are more common in other sorts of narratives (Bailey 1991). Amidst widespread stereotypes of Bedouins as wild and

⁹¹ See Bryant (2008) for a comparative analysis of “official” and “unofficial” historical accounts of Turkish-Greek conflict on Cyprus.

potentially treacherous, such associations would further strain acceptance into mainstream society.⁹² Though these narrations did not comply with an enforced amnesia of the sort James Wertsch (2002) describes for Soviet citizens, the sociopolitical context in Israel compels certain absences in these Naqab narratives.

At the same time, dominant discourses of rooting in place through agriculture, of Bedouin tribalism and traditionalism, and of Israeli progressivism may sometimes be enlisted tactically. These environmental discourses are powerful, having a long history of being enlisted to make moral arguments and ethical and practical claims. Similar to the “cultural tools” of collective memory that Wertsch (2002) suggests (e.g., narrative texts and explanatory styles) or the “practical activity” of “history-making” described by Andrew Shryock (1997), these narrative choices must be understood within this sociocultural context. Particular argumentation styles and rules of evidence are valued or de-valued, as well as, for descriptions of land use, particular modes of livelihood, cultural practices, and forms of modernity. To speak of tactical narration does not declare these narratives to be false; it helps explain why particular stories are told and why others remain untold.

In the sections that follow, I will first expand outward from Yousef's narrative to lay out a historical narrative of the Naqab since the early 1900s that is widely recounted by Bedouin Arabs and those critical of Zionism.⁹³ Second, I will analyze the environmental discourses underlying these reminiscences and consider the narrative choices they imply. Specifically, these accounts present a discourse of Bedouin indigeneity, anxiety over the disrupted identities and social relations caused by ruptured connections to desert landscapes, portraits of Bedouins' innate honor, and a former association of land with freedom. Third, in denying Zionist historical accounts, narrators sometimes draw on Palestinian nationalism as an alternative authoritative source. But

92 In other contexts, where contemporary belonging in society is less precarious, celebrations of such outlaw pasts can be a main component of collective identity (Gray 1999).

93 A rich and growing body of scholarly studies discuss Palestinian collective memory (“popular memory”) (see also Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 2007; Slyomovics 1998; Swedenburg 1995; Bardenstein 1998; Collins 2006; Davis 2010). Some of the most extensive studies have been based on the memory books (also referred to as “village books”) written by former residents and descendants about destroyed Palestinian villages north of the Naqab (Slyomovics 1998; Davis 2010). The voices and memories of Naqab Bedouins have gained less attention, in part because of their minority status within the Palestinian community, and in part because an extensive oral tradition has only recently been joined by considerable written accounts. However, for a detailed study of oral poetry as a window on the lifestyles and values of Sinai and Naqab Bedouins, see Bailey (1991).

here, too, Naqab Bedouins encounter obstacles, because the Naqab desert and its residents have never been central to Palestinian nationalism. This leaves Naqab Bedouins in an awkward, in-between position—a position I will explore at the end of the chapter. Thus, this chapter traces local memories and ideologies of place and belonging that both align with and contradict Zionism and Palestinian nationalism in complex and ambivalent ways.

Toward a Collective Counter Narrative

As in Yousef's account, many Naqab narratives began with a stable lifestyle before “the war” of 1948, then marked that momentous year and described the rapidly changing circumstances that followed. Like the literary counterpart to these oral accounts, the many memory books created by refugees from northern Palestine about their former villages (Slyomovics 1998), these narratives privilege the mundane practices of everyday life. Rather than giving a linear history explanation of events, narrators attended more to the daily practices that constituted their forebears' way of life, but that no longer exist. Reminiscences included some of the same historical events as Zionist accounts, such as wars and successive regimes of government. But aside from serving as chronological markers for stages of the narrators' lives, little was said about these events themselves. Elderly men and women identified phases in their lives as being during the days of the British or of the Jews, and to designate a time period for their parents or grandparents, they described events as being during the days of the Ottoman government. Often, though, no direct indications of date were provided, giving an impression of ahistorical continuity.

Particularly during the earlier periods in these accounts, a handful of practices and material objects were often used to index a whole way of life (see also Bahloul 1993). Shryock (1997) suggests in a Jordanian context that what seem to observers from literate traditions to be evasions and a lack of clarity in Bedouin historical accounts are practices that manage social tensions in a tribal landscape. In the Naqab, they are also indications of a fading oral tradition. Storytelling and poetry reciting are no longer common, and in the absence of a written tradition to record local events and practices, many young people know only fragments of this information. Practices and material objects help to anchor

these fragments.

First, tents featured prominently, whether the narrators were elders speaking from personal memory or younger adults recounting stories they had inherited from their parents' generation. In particularly sparse accounts, “we lived in tents” was deemed sufficient to evoke a whole lifestyle, despite the variety of forms tent-dwelling could take, from seasonal mobility to spending years or decades in the same place, and from sparse, low-technology accommodations to satellite televisions powered by diesel generators. But other accounts delved into more detail, explaining how much more open their living spaces were then. For example, Ahmed, a father of three now living in a government-planned town, drew me a diagram of the cluster of permanently anchored tents and small wood-and-sheet metal structures where his family lived when he was a child. He indicated the kitchen, the bathroom, and the areas where the older and younger siblings slept. He told me fondly of how he could look out his family's tent and see the tents of a few uncles, separated by several hundred meters, but otherwise an open vista. With all this space, there was a certain freedom of action; no neighbors would complain if he decided to raise chickens or grow vegetables in a plot off to one side of the tent.

Drawing water from wells, and the distance walked to reach these wells was another common element of reminiscences. Some emphasized the difficulty of this daily routine during the Ottoman era, estimating and repeating the number of kilometers they walked daily, carrying water on their heads. Others conceded this chore as an example of the difficulties of the past, but also insisted that it was a healthier way of life. The distances walked kept people healthy. And that well water was pure, many told me, not like the polluted tap water of today.

Similarly, growing one's own food was a labor-intensive, but wholesome practice of the past. Sitting on cushions in the entryway of a house in Rahat, sipping soda from plastic cups and glimpsing the tower of speakers being set up in the courtyard for that evening's wedding party, several elderly women and I discussed life in the Naqab. The women recounted their former agricultural and eating habits, contrasting them with the present. They used to grow cucumbers, tomatoes, okra, and other vegetables, grind their wheat and barley flour, and make their bread. “Now,” they said regretfully, “we eat out of the refrigerator.” Eating out of the refrigerator, it became clear as our conversation

continued, was metonymic for a whole range of dietary habits, including relying on pre-packaged foods, eating pesticide-laden produce, and consuming too much sugar. The women told me how they used to use the same well-drawn water to drink and water vegetable plots. In contrast, between the pesticides on produce and the gray water (filtered and recycled water) used for irrigation, the women told me, “today, we eat illness.”⁹⁴

Tent life and provisioning food as an extended family also marked a time of close family ties. Nostalgic accounts of the past depicted families as warmer and more dependable. Wafiq, who was 17 years old when he and his family moved from their tent into a house in a new, government-built township in the late 1980s, spoke longingly of his past lifestyle:

we used to... gather all the family together and to be in the same place, to have meals together, to eat together, and to sleep in the same place, one next to the other, like a domino [chuckle]. It was a special thing that really connected us together. We were really well-communicated and caring one for each other. We were warm and loving. And supporting each other. This is the lifestyle that we had.

Food preparation and eating were more social events. All the labor required to turn stalks of wheat into bread drew the women of the family together for preparation, and people ate in large groups when the freshly prepared meal was ready. Now, the women told me, each person eats by himself. This phrase, like eating from the refrigerator, did not encompass the complexity of contemporary practices (such as the many large family meals I ate at while living with Bedouin families), but the contrast drawn with the past regretfully asserts a trend toward less cohesive family life.

Another common refrain was the absence of money. At times, this was mentioned as an indication of hardship, but more often, it marked the greater self-sufficiency of the past. The same group of women explained to me that they used to make the things they needed, not just growing food, but making clothes and weaving the family's tent, too. Some then delighted in describing the practices of farming, cooking, and weaving that they had performed on a daily basis. Two women, Um Khalid and Um Rashid, took the

⁹⁴ Aref al-Aref's 1944 account of life in the Naqab suggests a less rosy picture of health. “In spite of a hardiness engendered by a rugged life in desert, plain and wilderness, mortality is higher than it should be and higher than it would be but for insolation [sic], ignorance and stress of economic conditions. Most illnesses spring from cold, damp and mosquitos” (1974:154). On the other hand, al-Aref reports that the Bedouin ate a healthy diet full of roughage and fresh foods “they draw from the soil” (158).

lead in reminiscing about making their winter tents from black goat hair. They demonstrated with hand motions how to gather goat hair on a special brush, then twist these hairs into threads using a spindle and gather these threads into yarn. Um Rashid then left the room and returned eagerly holding out one of these spindles. She showed me how she used to roll it against her hip to twist the threads. These skills no longer hold value in Rahat, and her eagerness to demonstrate them indicated how irrelevant she and other women feel in today's economy (Dinero 1997; see also Jolly 1992). This is “work that doesn't bring money,” Um Khalid told me, and today, money is needed for everything. In an agropastoral economy, there was much less need for cash, and if a sudden need did arise, a family's herd served as a reserve fund. An animal could be sold, converting it into cash (Abu-Rabia 1994).

The year 1948 was the watershed year in these accounts. More than being simply a chronological marker, the war of 1948 signaled a sharp discontinuity in people's lives. Unlike in many Palestinian nationalist tellings, my interlocutors in the desert did not usually refer to this war as “the *Nakba*,” the Arabic term for catastrophe. Instead, narrators simply referred to “the war,” leaving it to be understood by context which war was meant, or “when the Jews came into the country.”⁹⁵ Most narrators described 1948 as the beginning of a drastic change in lifestyle and accompanied this change with a shift to more specificity and linear narration. They had been dwelling in tents and living “from the land.” Then, as war reached the Naqab, families left their lands to escape the fighting, thinking that they would soon return to resume their lives. But instead, the war marked the beginning of many permanent dislocations. Some families fled to areas that happened to fall outside the newly established borders of Israel, in the West Bank, Sinai, and Jordan, and they could not return home. Others, who had sought refuge by foot or donkey-driven cart in remote areas such as the southern Hebron hills, did return to their old homes after the fighting. But in the 1950s, the Israeli government designated a restricted area of residence for Bedouins, known as the *siyag* (“fence”).⁹⁶

95 Diana Allen (2007:253) and Sa'di and Abu-Lughod (2007:14-15) report that directly following the war, “*Nakba*” was not widely used among Palestinians elsewhere, either, because of its connotation of permanence. Instead, until the 1950s or 1960s, many Palestinians referred to the events of 1948 as *sanat al-hujayl* (“the year of escape”) or *sanat al-hijra* (“the year of migration”), with an open connotation of possible return.

96 The Arabic word سياج is pronounced *siyaj* in Modern Standard Arabic, but *siyag* in the dialect of Naqab Bedouins. In Hebrew, the word *siyag* (סג) also means “restriction” or “fence.”

The *siyag* and its implications are often absent from Zionist histories of the Naqab, but they hold a central position in Bedouins' tellings. The *siyag* is an area in the northeastern Naqab that consists of approximately 1,100 square kilometers, or ten percent of the lands formerly controlled by the Bedouin (Falah 1985a:38; Marx 1967:14). The area is less fertile than the lands just to the west, and it is close to, but not including B'ir as-Sab' (Beersheba), which under Ottoman and British governments had been an increasingly important administrative center for the region's Arab residents.⁹⁷ Once the *siyag* was established, any Bedouins living outside it were compelled to leave their lands again and move into this restricted area. From the 1950s until 1966, the *siyag* was administered under strict military rule (Abu Hussein and McKay 2003).⁹⁸

Because the term is commonly used, narrators rarely explained the *siyag* as a policy. Instead, they focused on the restrictions it brought to their lives. Military permission was required for Bedouin Arabs to move about within the *siyag* area, as well as for any trips outside. Restrictions included concerted attempts to prevent Bedouin Arabs' agropastoral practices. As one woman now living in Rahat explained to me, "the Jews had sheep and goats, and they could move around. But for the Arabs, it was forbidden." Families lived in increasingly crowded conditions and with insecure or nonexistent land-use rights. The government granted some families from favored tribes rights to farm and herd on lands in the *siyag*, but oftentimes these were already claimed by other Bedouin Arabs. Such families faced the choice of violating fellow Bedouins' land claims or ceasing agropastoralism themselves. For example, Nuri, a man whose family was forcibly moved to the Hura area, told me proudly about his father's refusal to use such lands:

In the first year, we farmed the lands. And then the owners of the land began to come to us. Each one came after a period of time and said this is our land that you're farming. And my father...said, 'you say this is your land? Okay, you take it. We aren't going to take someone's land. We don't want to settle on anyone else's land.'"

Nuri was proud of his father's response because he saw it as more honorable than the Israeli government's behavior.

97 For further discussion of the *siyag* as a policy and an area, see (Abu Hussein and McKay 2003; Abu-Saad 2005; Meir 1998).

98 Though the *siyag* refers to a specific area of military administration in the Naqab, Arabs throughout Israel lived under military rule during this period.

In addition, the government imposed new laws that progressively restricted herding. The Black Goat Law of 1950 specifically targeted the goats commonly herded by Bedouins and from which they had traditionally made their winter tents.⁹⁹ Sliman, the man who shared his observations on land conflict with me from the *kibbutz* rooftop, provided his political analysis of this law. The immediate reason for the law, he said, was to prevent these goats, which were particularly fond of nibbling young trees and shrubs, from eating the new trees that the JNF was planting in their effort to “reclaim” the desert. We stood in the foyer of an observation tower at the kibbutz where he works and looked at two poster-size photographs displayed side by side. One showed the landscape visible from the rooftop sixty years ago, when the hills and *wadi* (dry stream bed) look smooth and undulating, without any large vegetation. The other showed the same vista after the JNF plantings had begun, an orderly grid of saplings now covering the low areas of the *wadi* and sides of the hills. Sliman saw this new vegetation brought by the JNF as an ecological improvement to the northern Naqab, making for a more beautiful landscape. But, he pointed out, this landscape leaves no place for the Bedouin.

Viewed along with all the other restrictions on Bedouins' herding and farming, Sliman explained, the Black Goat Law and tree-plantings were efforts to end traditional modes of livelihood so that Bedouins would leave their lands, settle in towns, and take up wage labor.¹⁰⁰ Wafiq, who had referred to similar restrictions in his narrative, summarized these measures as transforming Bedouins from producers to consumers. Though the language of “producers” and “consumers” may be specific to younger, more activist interlocutors, the same idea is evident in older women's lamentations about having once provided so many of their families' needs, and now needing money for everything. Not only had women lost their role as producers within the family and with it a sense of autonomous interest and efficacy (Jolly 1992), but with the rise of a cash economy and the decline of agropastoralism, the family as an economic unit lost some of

⁹⁹ The law limits the number of goats allowed per *dunam* of land and prohibits grazing on lands designated as “closed forests” (Ministry of Environmental Protection 2010). Researchers have addressed the political and ecological causes and effects of the 1950 law and similar legislation from a number of directions. Some argue that grazing harms the local ecology and contributes to desertification (Portnov and Safriel 2004), while others claim the opposite (Olsvig-Whittaker et al. 2006). Still other researchers argue that the most salient motivations and consequences of such legislation are sociopolitical, to restrain Bedouin nomadism and protect land for Jewish use (Falah 1985a).

¹⁰⁰ Davis (2000) recounts very similar strategies during French colonial control of North Africa.

its autonomy and social efficacy. Unmoored from their former homes and cut off from the means to subsist as agriculturalists, the fathers of many families went in search of wage labor, sometimes on their own, and sometimes moving their families with them. Many narrators described such mobility as imposed dislocation, unlike the freedom of movement they recounted in earlier times.

The next major event that many narrators marked was their families' moving into government-planned townships. They did not discuss the construction of townships. Rather, the townships simply appeared in the landscapes through an opaque process in which Bedouin residents were not involved. In the context of repeated relocations, the possibility of being granted a permanent plot in a government-recognized township was initially appealing to many. Tel Sheva, the first of these townships, was opened to residents in 1969. The second, Rahat, was established in 1972, and five others followed during the 1970s and 1980s. Adults moved into these settlements for many practical reasons, such as the promise of secure property rights for their houses, proximity to schools and health clinics, and the promise of more “modern” amenities like running water and electricity. Some who were children at the time recalled being excited to live in a “modern house,” to be well shielded from the heavy winter rains, and for some, to have a room of their own. But many narrators now living in one of these townships also reported that they simply felt they had no choice but to move in.¹⁰¹

In one notable case of relocation, initial government attempts to evacuate residents unilaterally met staunch resistance that eventually gained more favorable compensation for residents. In 1979, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty, and the Israeli military needed to remove its military facilities from Sinai. An area in the northeast Naqab, within the area of the siyag, was chosen as the site for the military airport, but approximately 5,000 Bedouin residents were living in the area during the late 1970s (Swirski and Hasson 2006). Tribal sheiks protested and enlisted the help of a sympathetic government official to negotiate with other officials in the Ministry of

¹⁰¹Nation-states around the world consolidating their power have pressured nomadic or formally nomadic peoples to settle (Nelson 1973; Ginat and Khazanov 1998). Sedentarization controls “roving” populations, making them easier to monitor (and tax), and it arranges land to be more profitably used for agriculture or industrial development (Ramos 1998). Examples are plentiful in North and South America, Australia, and Africa, as well as Arab countries of the Middle East (Meir 1986; Chatty 2006, 1996; Abu-Lughod 1986; Davis 2000; Cole 2003). The pressures applied have varied widely from coercion to incentives.

Agriculture. Eventually, a deal granted monetary compensation and plots in government townships to evacuees, and the townships of Kseife and Ar‘ara were established as part of this relocation.¹⁰² Though none of my interlocutors had been among the families relocated for this airport, many included it in their own remembrances as a particularly large-scale case of government land seizure from Arabs, but also as an example of partially successful resistance. Some Bedouins now living in unrecognized villages viewed this compensation deal as a model they would be satisfied with for their own relocation. But others were critical, saying that although the families received money, they sacrificed a whole way of life by moving into the planned townships.¹⁰³

When I spoke with them in 2008-2009, narrators accorded great significance to the decisions they had made between staying on their land or complying with orders to move to state-planned townships. This choice determined much about a person's life from the 1970s onward. Some residents of government townships continued to appreciate their amenities. They compared the material circumstances of their former, more rural lifestyles with those in the houses where we sat and recorded interviews and explained how life had grown more comfortable. For Um Yunus, for example, “the days of the English,” “before the Jews entered the country,” were times of hardship. Um Yunus is an elderly woman who estimated that she was about 20 years old when the war of 1948 occurred. She sat with me in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, one of the government-planned towns, and described the former difficulties of hauling water, losing livestock to disease, and women dying in childbirth. She also recounted the injustices of 1948, but did so succinctly and impassively. When I asked her to describe what it was like to move from her family's former lands, to tell me what happened, she said simply, “We moved from there to here [‘Ayn al-‘Azm] on a donkey. There wasn't any car. On a donkey, or on a cow. And we put our things on them and came here.” She later expanded her description slightly, telling me that everyone left their lands because they feared the Jews would shoot them, and they came to the area around ‘Ayn al-‘Azm as newly homeless people.

102 Compensation rates were considerably lower for Bedouin evacuees than for Jews evacuated from the Sinai during this same period: about 245 million shekels (at 2005 values) versus about 3.4 billion shekels (at 2004 values) for approximately the same number of evacuees in each case (Swirski and Hasson 2006).

103 Minority and indigenous claimants for land rights or reparations in many contexts have found the property-based frameworks of legal proceedings to be inadequate for compensating the many cultural losses involved in land loss (Kirsch 2001).

But, she averred, life is much easier now than before the Jews arrived.

However, others came to regret settling in these townships. Many rued the loss of their former lifestyle, saying that life was hard, but good: healthier, more respectful, and most of all, more free. Open spaces and long distances between settlements were not threatening vacuums or wasted potential for productivity, as they were often depicted in Zionist narratives. Rather, the wide open spaces of a rural desert lifestyle meant freedom from oppressive authority and a secure sense of Bedouin identity. Ahmed viewed his own move to ‘Ayn al-‘Azim with ambivalence, since it brought greater physical comfort, but also increased daily social strife because the townships were not designed with Bedouin culture in mind. Neighbors quarreled over the livestock that had to be kept close to houses because no grazing space was allocated. Different families, sometimes with long-lasting disputes, were placed in adjoining plots. Residents felt compelled to build high walls around their plots to protect the privacy of the women, but then felt confined in comparison to the wide-open spaces they enjoyed before moving into the towns. As Ahmed explained:

Okay, the country wants the Bedouin to live [in towns]. Okay, build them towns, but according to their culture. Give them an area for agriculture, give them an area for grazing.... Give them spaces. For example, I'm given one *dunam*. One *dunam* is not enough for a family. More space is necessary. The solution must be with the culture. It's useless to come and build a Western city and tell this community, come, live in it. Like it wouldn't be suitable, going to a Westerner and telling him to live in a tent.

Ahmed and others told me of how government-planned townships became plagued with high unemployment trafficking in drugs and other shady pursuits, overcrowding, and pollution.

Although many Bedouins moved to the recognized towns, many others stayed on the lands where they had been relocated within the *siyag*.¹⁰⁴ Together, these relocated families and the families who had settled in the area before Israeli statehood lived in villages of their own making.¹⁰⁵ Legislative measures (in particular, the 1965 Israeli

104 Estimates vary widely, and governmental figures tend to place more residents in planned townships, but disparate scholarly sources agree that roughly half of the Bedouin residents of the Naqab live in unrecognized villages, and half in townships (Swirski and Hasson 2006; Israel Land Administration 2007).

105 The appropriate terminology for these villages is hotly debated. For many residents, the place-names of individual villages, which have been erased from Israeli maps, remained meaningful. But many who

Planning and Building Law that designated as illegal all buildings outside approved government plans) established the villages' unofficial status, making them vulnerable to evacuation and demolition until today (Abu Hussein and McKay 2003).¹⁰⁶ Yet, none of the Bedouin narrators I spoke with referred to this law, and few discussed other Israeli laws or policies with specificity. Their reminiscences and the land claims they contained, whether implicit or explicit, rested on more diffuse concepts such as fairness, loyalty, and practical survival, rather than legal precedents (see also Kirsch 2001).

For decades following the opening of planned townships, residents of unrecognized villages have lived in limbo, many having been issued demolition notices on their homes but not knowing whether or when they would be carried out. Some times were calm, and residents were even allowed to build homes and tap state administered water pipes. But changing state leadership often shifted those unofficial allowances. While residents watched neighboring Jewish towns grow and gain amenities, they saw little practical progress, such as paved roads, access to the electric grid, or building permits in their villages. At the same time, home demolition and crop destruction continued.

Many narrators reported that these punitive measures against residents of unrecognized villages, along with restrictions on agropastoralism, have succeeded in concentrating Bedouins in the townships. Sliman told me sadly that the younger generation has no interest in raising herds. They want a more urban way of life, seeking homes in townships and cities, becoming avid consumers rather than directly producing their own food and subsistence needs, and generally abandoning Bedouin traditions. Others agreed with this description of an urban transition and identified assimilation into Israeli society as the cause. This assimilation occasionally held positive implications, such as becoming more technologically savvy. It also held many negative implications, such as greater promiscuity, lack of respect for elders, and drug use. Regardless of the cause, many narrators told me, today's young and middle-aged Bedouins are now

had moved to government-planned townships referred to the villages as an unspecified *barra*, meaning “outside” in Arabic. This is similar to the term typically used in government circles, *hapzura* (“the dispersal/diaspora,” הפזורה). Among politically active land rights advocates, the term *guraa gheyr ma'ataruf biha* (“unrecognized villages,” قري غير معترف بها) has gained sway, and the Hebrew translation, *kfarim bilti mukarim* (כפרים בלתי מוכרים), has also gained some governmental use.
106 This law was passed in tandem with the initiation of planning for the Bedouin townships.

accustomed to the lifestyle conveniences of townships and cities, such as running water in every house, consistent electricity without relying on generators, a sewage system, roads, and nearby schools. Even those living in unrecognized villages who appreciate their continued, though precarious connection to their families' lands, noted wanting the comforts available in Jewish cities and to a lesser extent, in the Bedouin townships.

But the question of trends among the younger generation is a controversial one, and I received widely divergent descriptions of the present and predictions for the future. A vocal minority insisted that young people were increasingly realizing their parents' mistakes and re-prioritizing a connection with land. These people told me of increasing numbers of young people returning to farming, and of a general trend of Bedouins moving out of towns, back to unrecognized villages. In fact, one man, a resident of 'Ayn al-'Azm and director of a children's after-school activities program, turned the conventional urbanization argument on its head. He argued that the technological savvy of the younger generation does not tie them to cities, but rather, makes them more mobile. Cell phones, wireless internet, solar panels, and the like make living *barra* ("outside" the planned townships) much more comfortable, even without the aid of state services (McKee 2010).

Environmental Discourses

As noted above, these accounts are oppositional to Zionist histories in their style of narration and the particular events, practices and people they include. Running through these narratives are also certain environmental discourses that counter those fundamental to Zionism, which I will parse out here. However, these reminiscences are not a form of pure resistance to Zionism's hegemony; power and resistance are intertwined and build from each other. "Where there is power, there is resistance, ... [which] is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1990:95). As is the case in many relationships between a subaltern and a more powerful group, these subaltern narratives "are filtered through, and effectively reproduce" the powerful group's hegemonic narrative (Shryock 1997:190). Such is the case in the Naqab, where narrators stitch together discursive elements regarding landscapes and human natures that both contest and comply with Zionist environmental discourses. They tell selective stories of

the past that respond to the expectations of imagined audiences and make claims about land attachments and social belonging.

Sometimes, elements of Zionist discourse are taken up pointedly, as by the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages in the Naqab (RCUV), which is discussed at the end of this chapter. RCUV representatives take on some of the legal language of the state when narrating the development of Bedouin villages and using these accounts to argue for contemporary state recognition of their legitimacy. At other times, these discursive elements appear to be truly hegemonic, as narrators take them for granted or, if they discuss them, deem these environmental discourses to be authoritative.

From Indigenous Equilibrium to Upheaval

In these reminiscences, Bedouins establish a discourse of indigeneity, depicting themselves as native to the Naqab desert and others as outsiders. This is apparent in the structure of the narratives, which often begin with a description of life before 1948 that brackets out historical change. Descriptions of the yearly cycle of agropastoral practices emphasized how attuned the people were with the local ecosystem. They moved their herds in accordance with the fluctuating availability of vegetation. Their crops depended on the rains each year, and the rains depended in part on the people's just and generous behavior, as God withholds rain as punishment for misdeeds like selfishness. The people worked hard, ate foods without added sugar and fat, and stayed healthy.

This depiction of cyclical continuity coincides with popular conceptions of Bedouins “as if they were separate from the rest of the population and somehow outside of, or beyond, history” (Cole 2003:238). This baseline of cyclical agricultural and herding activities conducted in tandem with the passing seasons and through symbiotic co-dependence between Bedouins and their flocks also accords with much of the classic literature on Bedouin ecology (Cole 2003; Marx 1977; Swidler 1973; Abu-Rabia 2002) and relates to classic ecological models that stress equilibrium. Bedouin pastoralists, their herds and crops, and the seasons all move in synchrony, with the implication that changing any element of this system would throw the other elements out of balance. The narrative posits Bedouins as internal to the local ecology. In contrast, waves of external governments, including the Ottomans and the British, pass over the region, but do not

deeply affect the local ecology. Faced with Zionism's drive to root Jews in the land of Israel, this emphasis on Bedouin in particular ecosystems implies a claim of prior rootedness.

A natural connection between Bedouins and the Naqab also comes through in discussions of boundaries and naming places. In these counter histories, “natural” boundaries matter. Yousef described how the crest of a hill would be designated as a property line. Others indicated the borders of named areas running along *wadis*. Though invoking “natural” markers not generally acknowledged under Israeli property law, these narrators were careful to specify that their lands had well-defined boundaries.¹⁰⁷ Narrators justified a family's migrations and the reach of a tribe's grazing lands based on trends in rainfall. The names of territories also indicate a genealogical connection between Bedouins and landscapes. Areas of land are often named for the family or tribe living there, and people are placed by their family's area of origin. Until very recently, a tradition of post-marital patrilocality has kept sons close to their parents' homes, strengthening these ties of family and place.¹⁰⁸ In all these ways, narrators described the establishment of boundaries as being either based on or attuned to both nature and lineage.

These narratives mark the end of a socially and ecologically harmonious cycle in 1948 and become more explicitly historical thereafter. War and the creation of the Jewish state set in motion a series of upheavals that threw the Bedouin out of balance with their natural environment. From this point on, narrators spoke of Bedouins losing their connection to land, and consequently their identity as Bedouin (see Cole 2003). Following this upheaval, politically imposed boundaries contrast with formerly natural boundaries. Narrators spoke pointedly of the recent imposition of political boundaries, such as those between Israel and Egypt or the Naqab and the West Bank and Gaza, with mixtures of exasperation, anger, and dismissal. For example, as one woman was preparing to travel to see family in Jordan, she told me pointedly that the town where her

107 Cole (2003) suggests that indirect control of territory by controlling water wells has been more common among Bedouin groups.

108 Patrilocality is still the preference for many Bedouins, but I was told over and over again how the scarcity of land in recognized townships often makes it impossible for sons to build homes next to their families. In unrecognized villages, patrilocality is similarly difficult to realize, though for different reasons. Recently built structures are the most likely to receive demolition orders, so sons from these villages have difficulty building homes anywhere in their parents' villages.

family lives is actually quite close. They used to go back and forth all the time, and it would take only an hour or two to go directly. But now, she said, they must drive all the way up to Jerusalem, cross the border there, and then drive back south. With her exaggerated hand motions tracing the journey and the roll of her eyes, she indicated her dismissal of these political boundaries. Beyond simply the imposition of new borders, 1948 brought a whole array of disturbances in these reminiscences. Governance, family structures, economic relations, and food habits all began to change.

The romanticism in this narrative is apparent and could be challenged from many directions. Well established traditions of historiography stress the importance of genealogies, migrations, battles, and trade relations for Bedouins in the past (Shryock 1997). Newer ecological models challenge the notion of stable equilibrium as the basis for relationships between organisms, climatic patterns, and landscapes (Scoones 1999). Anthropological models from around the world deny the possibility of such a strictly bounded and unchanging culture prior to 1948. And ethnographic and historical accounts from this region counter such a narrative with evidence of continuous change and adaptation, and interactions of trade, technologies, and people (e.g., through marriages) long before 1948 (Abu-Rabia 2001; el-Aref 1974; Marx 1967; Parizot 2008; Rosen 2008). Marx and Shmueli note, too, “the pastoral nomads of the Middle East have always been competitive producers and also developed some types of conspicuous consumption, such as keeping horses and the exercise of lavish hospitality. In this sense their outlook has always been “modern” (1984:4). But rather than simply dismissing this notion of native equilibrium as counterfactual, I am interested in how this environmental discourse in counter narratives compares with those in dominant histories and what implications it carries for contemporary land conflict.

The pivotal importance accorded to the immigration of Jews to the Naqab (and the 1948 war in particular) by this discourse challenges the dual society paradigm that is so basic to Zionism. Rather than affirming the development of parallel and independent Jewish and Arab societies, these narratives demonstrate the profound impact that these groups-in-the-making had on each other. However, the narratives concentrate on only one vector of the relationship, namely, the impact of Jews and the Israeli government on Bedouins. In these accounts, Bedouin society was vibrant and fulfilling prior to Jewish

immigration. Then, both by coercive means of dislocation and more subtle pressures of conformity, the Zionist immigrant society caused profound changes to the existing Bedouin society.

While this discourse of indigeneity counters the dual society paradigm, it also coincides with key elements of Zionist discourse. Both discourses associate Arabs with nature and blend them, and Bedouins in particular, with the desert landscape. In contrast, both discourses associate culture, modernity, and progress with Jewish society. This corresponds with the myth of a civilizing mandate that helped propel the Zionist movement. Many narrators spoke of Jewish progressivism with some ambivalence, noting for instance that Western medicine became more widely available, but that residents also started suffering from more chronic illnesses linked to poor diet, like diabetes and heart disease. But some, like Um Yunus, spoke of improvement under the Jewish government without reservations.

Disrupted Land Connections, Disrupted Identities

If this discourse of indigeneity lends support to Bedouins' land claims by asserting a native connection between the desert landscape and Bedouin identities and culture, it also reveals the vulnerabilities of this connection. In these reminiscences, landscapes are the material basis for lifestyles and identities (see also Kirsch 2001). As residents' connection to landscapes was disrupted, so too was the *bedaawa* (Bedouinness) of their identities. This disruption is magnified because the meaning and importance of Bedouin identity is manipulated within Israel's context of intense and mercurial identity politics. While some proudly embrace the label of *bedu* ("Bedouin"), others distrust this label as something imposed by Jewish Israeli society in order to divide and more easily control the Palestinian Arab population. According to this view, the Zionist movement differentiated between categories such as Druze, Bedouins, and Palestinians in order to exacerbate hostilities between groups and form alliances with some. Beginning in the 1950s, official governmental forms began using categories of "Bedouin," "Moslem," "Druze," "Christian," and "Circassian," and though not initially mutually exclusive categories, these divisions have been reinforced by bureaucratic measures and widespread

use in speech (Parizot 2001).¹⁰⁹ This gives Arab residents of the Naqab further cause for ambivalence in embracing a Bedouin identity.

Ahmed highlighted the growing uncertainty and inter-generational conflict over a definition of Bedouin identity. “I don't like to use the term, 'Bedouin;' I try not to use it,” he told me when I asked him how he defines his own identity in relation to labels such as “Israeli,” “Bedouin,” “Palestinian,” and “Arab.”

Emily: “Is that because there's no meaning in it, or because...?”

Ahmed: “For two things. One is they try to divide us with it. Divisions. The second is that it has stopped being... It's impossible now; the real Bedouin was someone who lived in the *badiya* and moved from place to place. Today, I live the same life as someone living in New York. The same streets, and... the same way of life: electricity and house and bathroom... This isn't Bedouin life. Why would I keep using the word 'Bedouin?’”

Emily: “So *bedaawa* is just lifestyle, not a personal thing?”

Ahmed: “Just a way of life, that's not present today.”

Ahmed then proceeded to describe the proliferation of new customs that have been taken up, such as in wedding celebrations and modes of dress, replacing a more limited and cohesive set of traditional customs that used to be shared widely among Bedouins. This confusing array of new customs is indicative of a wider social change. “Today, I say that there is a conflict, a culture conflict. We don't know what we are. Are we Bedouins or strangers or Europeans or...,” Ahmed trailed off.

This change is particularly stark between generations, he told me, and has triggered great alienation between parents and their children. He worries for his children's generation because they are multiply alienated. They are disconnected from an agropastoral lifestyle and do not have a sense of Bedouin identity, but they are also excluded from Israeli society because they are seen as different from Jews. Furthermore, they are excluded from a wider Arab society by what he considers to be a falsely imposed Zionist classification.

Though there are many contemporary sociopolitical implications in the term

¹⁰⁹ Military service is one commonly referenced domain exhibiting this differential treatment. Those Israeli citizens labeled as Druze are required to serve in the military, citizens labeled as Bedouin are encouraged to volunteer, and citizens labeled as Palestinian are discouraged from joining the military (Kanaanah 2009). However, Parizot reports that the number of Bedouins volunteering for service has been low and warns that “the stereotyped image of Bedouins as eager volunteers for military duty is more of a myth than a reality” (2001:103).

“Bedouin,” the residents I spoke with all told me the same thing about its origin: “Bedouin” comes from the Arabic word *baadya* (بادية), which means desert. Thus, they said, Bedouin identity is inherently attached to life in the desert, and to be Bedouin means to live in the desert and move from place to place. It is a lifestyle, not an ethnicity, many informants told me, or clarified that one is ethnically Arab and culturally Bedouin.¹¹⁰ But in contemporary Israel, what is at stake in the label when such a desert lifestyle is impossible to follow?

Fatma, a 55-year-old woman living in ‘Ayn al-‘Azam, defined *bedaawa* in the same way as Ahmed, but she felt much less uncertainty about Bedouin identity today. She asserted a hybrid definition of *bedaawa*, seeing it as something that can be attained either through the experience of living a particular lifestyle, or being passed on from one's parents.

What does *bedaawa* mean?, I asked Fatma.

Bedawi [a Bedouin] means someone who *byirhal* [بیرحل], she told me very simply, and then waited for the next question. Still unclear about this term, I asked her to clarify.

What do you mean by *byirhal*?

Someone who moves from place to place, she said. You know, like with his flocks.

So, for you, it means a way of life, I responded. Does that mean that you're no longer *bedawiya* [feminine form of *bedawi*]?

Of course I still am, she replied with what seemed to be a mixture of shock and amusement. Didn't I move from over there [pointing in the direction of her distant childhood home] to the *kibbutz* [where she and her husband worked after they were married], and then to here?

Ah, I continued, so your sons and your grandsons, are they *beduwi*?

Of course they are, she responded, with even more amusement. Didn't they come from their father and me, how can they not be *bedu*?

These debates about what constitutes Bedouinness are being negotiated throughout the Middle East, as nomadic desert lifestyles become difficult or impossible to maintain (Cole 2003). But, in the Naqab there are particular social and political stakes in asserting an innate Bedouin—desert connection. Some see Bedouinness as a strong rallying point for achieving social change through activist means. For example, Wafiq is an

¹¹⁰ Muhsam (1966) writes that prior to 1948, Bedouins themselves used the term “*arab*” to refer to themselves, and settled farmers used the term “*bedu*” to refer to them as inhabitants of the desert.

environmental justice activist who looks to a Bedouin lifestyle of desert survival as a source of lessons for today's environmental sustainability activists. Alternatively, Khalil, a member of the RCUV, described indigenous ties to particular places as a strong argument for gaining official recognition of property rights.

While on one level, the connection between Bedouins and the desert strengthens their claims to land rights in the Naqab by establishing them as an indigenous population that was rooted firmly in the landscape before Zionist immigration, it also limits these claims by tying Bedouinness, and any corresponding group rights, to a particular lifestyle of desert dwelling. This is a lifestyle that is no longer accessible, and one that is also no longer desirable for a great number of Naqab Bedouin. Many Bedouins seek both land rights and acceptance within Israeli society as coevals with Jews; they are not willing to accept “the savage slot” as their path toward realizing land rights (Trouillot 2003).

Embracing or denying a Bedouin identity holds implications vis-a-vis other Arabs. As Ahmed articulated, the Bedouin label is controversial because it is tied to the Israeli state's history of divide-and-conquer tactics. This tension is evident in today's debates over the use of the term “indigenous” among land rights advocates in Israel-Palestine. Some argue in favor of applying the term to Bedouins and enlisting the international legal precedents that accompany this designation (Yiftachel 2009a). Others object that the term divides Palestinians, weakening their campaigns for land-rights recognition. Whether for tactical reasons such as this or out of resentment over Israel's divisive approach to Arabs, some narrators refused the Bedouin label entirely. Like the tactical choice not to engage a genealogical narrative of tribal specificity, but opening to a larger scale, this refusal of indigenous privilege or “ethnic” specificity presents a portrait of Arab unity.

Disrupted Social Relations

Beyond the question of identity politics and labels, these narrators shared a common concern over the social strife among Naqab Arabs that they saw as having ensued from disrupted land relations. These remembrances told of a social order of tribes and families in the Naqab upended as the Zionist movement blocked people's access to their landscapes. The political borders that suddenly became much less porous after 1948

sliced through kin networks, leaving aunts, uncles, siblings, and cousins spread across Israel, Gaza, the Sinai, and Jordan. The internal dislocations caused by imposition of the *siyag* and the various measures used by the Israeli government to pressure Bedouins to move to planned townships splintered families. Severing ties to customary *diwa'ir* (plural of *dira*) also severed ties between the smaller units of an extended family that had once relied on these lands for home and livelihood (Meir 1998; Kressel 2003).

In addition to these direct measures, narrators spoke of more indirect ways that families have been divided. Because a lack of land in planned townships and insecure land rights in unrecognized villages prohibited patrilocality, narrators told me, families had grown less cohesive. When sons did not settle in homes by their parents, grandparents were less involved in raising their grandchildren and cousins were less likely to be raised as siblings. Isolated nuclear families had gained influence in Bedouin society at the expense of extended families, I was told. Bedouins' greater dependence on a capitalist economy as wage laborers exacerbated this splintering tendency, as well, by requiring frequent relocations (Meir 1998). Such relocations involved mobile individuals, or at most, nuclear families, rather than entire tribes or lineages.

According to some narrators, social strife between tribes and lineages had increased as a result of the era of the *siyag* and the government-planned townships that followed. Intertribal conflicts were not new to the Naqab (el-Aref 1974), and to some extent, this historical period pushed disparate families and tribes closer through their shared experiences of seeking out wage labor and attending schools together. But the era of military rule and greater crowding also exacerbated tensions within Bedouin society. Many residents of government townships described these places as more violent and stressful than their formerly dispersed settlements. The planned townships crowded members of different, and sometimes feuding, families into tight quarters. As families settled in the townships, they maintained many of their cultural ideals such as those involving honor and a firm division between men's and women's spaces. But they no longer had the mobility and independence to use traditional means of conflict resolution, so disputes escalated quickly and lingering feuds were liable to flare up repeatedly (Ginat 1997).

At first, when narrators spoke to me of land conflict, they focused dejectedly on

divisions between Bedouin Arabs and Jews, noting these acute flare-ups between Bedouin tribal factions as circumstantial. As I stayed in the area longer and the people with whom I lived became confident that I understood the more pressing division between Jews and Arabs, some began explaining to me deeper divisions within Bedouin society, as well. One of these was a distinction between people of Bedouin origin and those who were from families that were more recently *fallahin*. This distinction was delineated most thoroughly by Isma‘il, a man recommended to me as an expert in Naqab history. As he explained, descent lines for the first group, which he referred to as *aslan arabi* (“original Bedouin”) or *el-bedu el-qudama* (“the ancient Bedouins”), were traced back to tribes that migrated from the Arabian Peninsula to the Naqab long ago. The latter group, *el-bedu el-jedida* (“the new Bedouins”) or *bedu fallahi* (“peasant Bedouin”), descended from tribes of farmers, mostly from Egypt, who moved north to the Naqab more recently and became sharecroppers on Bedouin tribes' lands. The significance of this distinction for land claims was that when Israeli government officials began pushing Bedouins to relocate to townships, *aslan arabi* were more likely to resist these pressures and remain living on their family lands. Through multi-generational histories of living in these places, Isma‘il explained, *aslan arabi* had developed “almost spiritual” connections with the lands. However, *bedu fallahi* did not have such deep connections, making them much more likely to accept early government offers for small plots of land in townships. This distinction between *bedu fallahi* and *aslan arabi* was often discussed more obliquely, by reference to lineage and tribal affiliation, rather than with these labels.

The related division between those living in unrecognized villages and those in government-planned townships mattered in terms of the different lifestyles fostered in each type of settlement and the symbolic importance attributed to these lifestyles. Similar to the attitudes noted among Bedouins in Saudi Arabia, where newly urban families thought their relatives living on the range to be “noble but slightly mad” (Cole 2003:248), many narrators from government-planned townships viewed those living *barra* as brave stalwarts making sacrifices in the ongoing struggle for Bedouin land rights. However, those living in unrecognized villages and townships held very different practical priorities. Whereas residents of unrecognized villages focus their political energies on gaining recognition and basic services from the state, those in townships look

to local councils as well as state authorities to improve the living conditions in their towns. This division should not be overstated, though, because many narrators also spoke of having family members in both types of settlements.

Divisions between “black” and “white” Bedouins are also related to family histories and land relations, but they were spoken of less than differences between *bedu fallahi* and *aslan arabi*. A few narrators who were themselves black Bedouins spoke pointedly of current problems of discrimination. During the height of the slave trade through Zanzibar, many Africans were sold to the Arab tribes that came to inhabit the Naqab.¹¹¹ Slavery continued into the twentieth century. Slaves were associated with the tribe for which they worked, and as slavery ended, the former slaves and their descendants were incorporated into these tribes. The incorporation has been partial, however. Marriages between black and white Bedouins are rare and very controversial, and few black Bedouins had the opportunity to become landholders before Israel's land regime was instituted. Many of these black Bedouin families were among the first to settle in the government-planned township of Rahat, which has since grown into a city of more than 40,000 residents. In private discussions, Rahat residents acknowledged the black-white segregation that continues to characterize their city, but public discussions of the division are still rare.¹¹²

Land and Honor

Speaking as subalterns, Bedouins try to claim a position of greater power by pointing out the honor in their land connections, and the dishonor in Zionist claims over land. For generations, I was told, Bedouins maintained order and recognized ownership rights through their own legal system and without the need for written land deeds (See also el-Aref 1974). As Yousef explained to me, a Bedouin did not need documents like land deeds to back up his statement of ownership or pledge of payment. His word was enough. Personal honor was of the highest importance; it was a social good to be protected and a characteristic that Bedouin narrators noted as differentiating themselves

¹¹¹ Very little research has been done regarding these events, and it is not known what proportion of Africans reaching the Naqab arrived as workers, indentured servants, or slaves. However, those few who did speak of this sensitive issue generally spoke of all black Bedouins as the descendants of slaves.

¹¹² One notable exception is *Film Class*, the recent documentary film produced in collaboration between a class of black Bedouin women and their teacher, a Jewish Israeli filmmaker (Rosenwaks 2006).

from others.

In contrast to these honorable land relations among Bedouins, a common refrain in narratives about land relations under Israeli rule was that of betrayed loyalties. Elderly Bedouins told me that they had not been involved in the fighting of the 1948 war and were led to believe that by staying in Israel and gaining citizenship, they would be allowed to continue living peacefully on their lands. Then, when this promise was not kept, and the military government rounded up tribes from the western and central Naqab for transfer into the *siyag* in the northeast, many remembered being promised that the move would be temporary. Younger narrators recounted the histories they had been told by their parents, often using the first person as if they, themselves had borne witness. Others, who had been young children at the time, relied on a combination of personal recollection and family recountings.

Nuri was a young child living in the northeastern Naqab in 1948. He told me proudly that his father was a sheik who had long been an adjudicator of tribal matters. Following the war, he continued in his role as a tribal judge, sanctioned by the Israeli government, by holding semi-weekly court sessions at his home for Naqab Bedouin residents. In 1951, when Nuri's father received the military orders for Bedouin tribes to evacuate their lands, he went as a representative of his tribe to speak with an Arab Knesset member, Emil Habibi. Nuri recalled his father's words at the time: "Why does Israel want to take away from us our lands and houses, while at the same time, we had arrived at an agreement that we protect the security and the borders, and the state should protect over our land and our houses, so we can plow and farm?" In reply, his father was told that the army "only wanted the area for six months in order for the army to do exercises on it, and then you can return." However, the transfers were permanent, and tribes were never allowed to return to their lands.

As a nine-year-old, Nuri recalled the particular day in November 1951, when he was in school and the army cars came and took him and his family to their allocation in the *siyag*. This land seizure and transfer went against the rhetoric of democracy and citizenship that Nuri had learned as he grew up, attending Israeli schools and participating in a youth program at a *kibbutz* for many years. For Nuri, removing non-Jewish people from lands in order to make room for Jewish people to move in was "a

racist idea of the first degree.” He started publishing articles denouncing the military government's seizure of lands and treatment of Arabs, beginning a lifelong path of activism and social organizing. As a result of his convictions, and in honor of his father, who died before being able to move back to his former lands, Nuri returned to these lands in 2006. He took up residence there, living in a tent and his car. State agencies consider this to be illegal squatting, and Nuri has been embroiled in legal battles ever since, having been evacuated repeatedly and fined more than 200,000 shekels. He continues in his struggle, he told me, because Israel's treatment of Arabs is such a fundamental discrimination, and his father always taught him to stand up to injustice. Nuri holds documents supporting his ownership claims, such as tax records, old maps, and aerial photographs. He showed me several of these during our interview, but he focused less on this documentary evidence and more on principals like honor, respect, and loyalty that Bedouins have upheld, but the state has forsaken.

This connection between land rights, honor, and loyalty to the state is even more pronounced in connection with military service. The sense of betrayed loyalties that Nuri described was expressed forcefully by Bedouin Arabs service members and their families. In 1948, about 90 percent of the Bedouin Arabs who had been living in the Naqab left or were forced out of Israel. Most of those who remained in Israel, I was told, came from tribes whose leaders had reached agreements with Zionist leaders, either to actively aid them in the 1948 war or to remain neutral (Cohen 2010). Later, particularly from the 1960s, Bedouin Arabs were accepted into the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) for military service on a volunteer basis. Consistently, Bedouin volunteers were assigned as trackers because they were deemed to have the “natural ability” and “instinct” for this job (Kanaaneh 2009:52).

This “natural ability” for tracking has been a double-edged sword. When explaining the legitimacy of their claims to land rights, narrators frequently noted this shared history of military service. Military service is one of the most significant socially recognized measures of loyalty to the State (Sheffer and Barak 2010). Those among the (Jewish) Israeli public who identify the Bedouin as a loyal subset of Israeli Arabs, similar to the Druze, frequently cite their military service as evidence. These Bedouin servicemen's deep knowledge of their landscape was viewed as an asset by the military

commanders who relied on them as trackers. However, in popular discussion, this intimate desert knowledge necessary to track is often recast as the ability and inclination to be lawless nomads and sly smugglers (Kabha 2007), feeding into globally circulated Orientalist images of Bedouins (Shaheen 2009).

Among my Bedouin interlocutors in the Naqab, attitudes toward military service and its status as the overriding mark of state loyalty in Israeli society were mixed. Some proudly listed their family members who had served in the military, while others spoke of these men as foolish, since they remained second-class citizens despite their military service. Narrators with both viewpoints spoke of their disappointment that the State had not behaved honorably toward these Bedouin military volunteers. A frequently circulated story captures this sense of betrayed loyalty. It recounts the ironic discovery of one young Bedouin man who had volunteered for the IDF. One day, he returned to his home to find two notices from the government waiting for him. One was a summons to report for reserve duty with the IDF. The other was a citation warning him that his house, built without a legal permit because it was in an unrecognized village, would be demolished.¹¹³

One day in 2008, while visiting the newly constructed mosque in an unrecognized village that had received a demolition order, I witnessed an even more pointed declaration of betrayal. Several police officers had arrived that day to begin carrying out the demolition order, as well as several news reporters who had been notified by the mosque builder of the potential demolition. As these reporters interviewed ‘Abd, the elderly brother of the younger man who had built the mosque, he raised an angry voice. This country has broken a *brit*, a covenant, between Bedouins and Jews, he said loudly enough for the officers to hear. We're part of this state, and I and many others in my family have served in the army, but now the government comes to tear down this mosque. ‘Abd had shouted from a small rise beside the mosque and after the interview, remained watching from his high point as his brother attempted to negotiate with the officers.

By recounting a long pre-Israeli history of honorable land relations and frequently highlighting Bedouins' military service in juxtaposition with the state's dishonesty,

¹¹³ Similar cases have been reported in newspaper articles and the literature of groups advocating for Bedouin land rights, as those decrying government demolitions of Bedouin homes often use a family's history of military service as moral ammunition against the dishonorable actions of the State. See also Kanaaneh (2003).

narrators depicted themselves as wise and honest and the state's actions as unjust. This discourse of land and honor counters the discourse of law and order often used against Bedouins. Legal measures such as the Black Goat Law and the Planning and Building Law of 1965, and the implementation of national development plans have had a profound impact on Bedouin residents. These measures are a form of “lawfare” (Braverman 2009) that outlaws many Bedouin tasks and taskscapes by defining legitimate land use for farming, grazing, and construction in the Naqab according to Zionist priorities (asserting state control over lands and spreading Jews across rural lands while concentrating Bedouins). In addition, these legal measures have been part of a wider discourse of law and order that casts Bedouins as roving law-breakers (Shamir 1996).

This discourse of law and order is one of the most powerful elements of the Naqab's sociocultural context that constrains these narrators' choices, and it operates primarily through the language of property possession. Rose (1994a) describes property possession as a form of communication. Her argument is based on a reading of American law, but because of shared standards for determining ownership across these legal systems, her analysis is also illuminating in the Israeli case. These standards may include labor or suitable use, as underlies Israeli laws regarding agriculture as a means of establishing ownership; a “clear act” asserting ownership, which is a key component in the seizure of lands declared “Absentee Property;” or possession, which most often applies to determinations of ownership over new kinds of property or things that are newly introduced to a property regime. Establishing ownership depends on the clear communication of one or more of these standards of ownership between a possessor and an audience with the power to recognize that possession. As Rose notes, though, “this must be in a language that is understood, and the acts of 'possession' that communicate a claim will vary according to the audience” (1994a:16).

The Israeli system of land tenure does not “hear” Bedouin claims to land that are spoken in the language of communal tribal rights, periodic use, undocumented (oral) ownership agreements, or long-term family occupation that does not involve agriculture or building. Shamir (1996) describes the language of the Israeli land tenure system as “conceptualist,” which is similar to James Scott's more visual label, the “high modernist optic” (1998:347). As in other legal notions of property, Israeli law attempts to impose a

conceptual grid on space, time, and people, that establishes order through isolation and the division of pure categories, and fixity in time and space. “The attraction of conceptualism stretches back to the Platonic and Aristotelian belief that fixity is a nobler and worthier thing than change,” (Shamir 1996:233) and relates to contemporary concern across states to establish legibility in its management of citizens (Scott 1998; Hull 2008).

Because Bedouins' land claims do not fit within these strict boundaries, they, like indigenous land claims elsewhere (Tully 1993; Nadasdy 2002; Biggs 1989), are rendered inaudible. Occupation that did not leave clear traces of “suitable use” according to the suitability standards of an agrarian, commercial audience, such as houses and fenced fields, was not recognized. At times, narrators attempt to argue within these strict boundaries, such as when Nuri provides documentation to prove that his family consistently paid taxes for the disputed lands during the critical early years of Israeli statehood when lands were being declared abandoned. But another tactic for dealing with this restrictive language of property rights was to eschew legal arguments and make moral claims instead. Thus, running pervasively through these narratives was an underlying discourse that counters this conceptualist legal discourse by asserting instead the importance of fairness and honor in land claims.

Land was Freedom: The Changing Status of Mobility

For Bedouins in the past, mobility has been associated with freedom. Land—or more precisely, access to vast expanses of land—has supported that mobility and freedom. But, in the current context of competition over land rights, this association now appears in counter narratives with some ambivalence. Narrators spoke to me nostalgically of wide, open spaces and their former freedom to do as they wished. Yet, nomadism itself was downplayed in most of these reminiscences. Most Bedouin families farmed *and* migrated within the stable territory of a *dira*, but these narrators focused more on farming and a family's physical labor in a landscape (e.g., building wells and storage pits or stone houses). Narrators seemed to realize that in the Israeli context, roots, not wandering, are valorized in relation to land claims.

We know from poetry and historical and ethnographic accounts that mobility has long been prized in Bedouin culture, both in the Naqab and beyond (Meir 1998; Marx

1967; el-Aref 1974; Bailey 1991). Bedouins of the Naqab, who raised fat-tailed sheep and black goats that could not travel very fast and far, had smaller circuits of movement than groups in more arid regions of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Jordan who raised only camels (a difference of fifty kilometers in a year, compared to hundreds of kilometers), but this migration was still an important feature of their lifestyle (Bailey 1991). Mobility, strength, and freedom have been associated with nomadic lifestyles, whereas dependence and vulnerability have been linked to sedentary lifestyles.

Historically, nomadic tribes used their mobility to leverage power over sedentary communities and trading routes through raids and the exacting of payments (Kressel et al. 1991; Bailey 2009). This powerful mobility has evoked both respect and fear in sedentary communities since at least the time of Ibn Khaldun's (1377) writings. Many Middle Eastern states have attempted to exert centralizing power by limiting tribes' movements, and nomads have resisted the state's centripetal force by extending their range of movement (Meir 1998). Of course, a great many other factors have always been involved in these power relations between sedentary states and nomadic tribes, and the relative strength of each has waxed and waned across time and space (Ibn Khaldun 1377), but mobility itself has generally been deemed to hold a powerful advantage. Mobility allowed tribes to escape taxation and conscription for army service, and states were often forced to grant concessions to tribes to ensure their assistance or non-interference in state affairs. The relative advantage of nomadism over sedentism was already changing in the Naqab during the era of Ottoman rule, and more so during the British Mandate. Participation in the regional economy developing around Beer Sheva began making more consistent residence nearby preferable to wide-ranging yearly migrations (el-Aref 1974). Elite sheiks began sending their sons to boarding schools (Abu-Rabia 2001), indicating that education and incorporation into government were gaining sway as paths toward status and power within Bedouin society.

These associations of mobility with freedom and strength underwent a more severe upheaval after the creation of the state of Israel, when the rules of access to land changed so suddenly and dramatically. The Zionist government worked to root Jews in the land, both physically (e.g., by establishing property laws favoring Jews), and symbolically (e.g., by highlighting the nomadism of Bedouins and the ancient ties of

Jews to Israel). Today in Israel, mobility is a liability for land claims. Given the dominant discourse of rootedness that drives the settling of land claims in Israel, celebrating one's family's proud nomadic past would further separate a narrator from powerful Zionist norms of land use. Instead, narrators like Yousef stressed the relatively sedentary lives of their forebears and downplayed the importance of nomadism. Specifically, narrators referenced and often described in detail the agricultural practices of their families. This holds the potential to tap into the high status accorded to farming in Zionist discourse, lending moral weight to narrator's ownership claims. But since farming has lost its unquestioned supremacy within Zionism in recent years and actually prompts scorn in some circles, Bedouin narrators who enlist the discourse of land ties through physical labor may not actually be gaining much strength for their claims.

By identifying particular, clearly bounded lands upon which their families were settled before the state of Israel was established, narrators also made claims to access land in the dominant discourse of formal property rights. This type of narrative represents a move away from the discourse of land as freedom. Instead, submitting to the Israeli land regime of formal property rights requires submitting to the conceptualist logic of law that recognizes only limited types of evidence and arguments. This logic introduces a double bind (Fortun 2001) for narrators because it renders the Bedouin, as a cultural group, invisible, such that “the individual plight of any particular Bedouin may still be acknowledged, but the validity of a collective counternarrative is flatly denied” (Shamir 1996:252). The systematic inequalities faced by Bedouins as a cultural group in contemporary Israel are ignored. In the context of this logic, narrators must negotiate between individual particularity and collectivity. If they choose to emphasize family territories and evidence of private property rather than the use of a wider *dira* to strengthen their particular ownership claims to a specific place, they risk delegitimizing the collective call of Arab rights advocates to broaden the recognized language of land claims beyond private property. If they emphasize the importance of migration across a *dira* and downplay more recent trading in land as private property, they may strengthen Arab unity, but gain no support for their particular land disputes.

Naqab Narratives and Palestinian Nationalism

In the desert landscapes they evoked, the cultural practices they elaborated, and the tribal structures to which they sometimes referred, these narratives were clearly focused on Bedouins and the Naqab. Yet, they also raised themes common to Palestinian Arabs across religious or ethnic lines. And narrators were often careful to state explicitly that although they practiced some Bedouin traditions or had Bedouin heritage, they also saw themselves as Palestinian Arabs, members of a single people. Described by some Negev activists as a “national awakening,” political mobilization through association with Palestinians in northern Israel and the Occupied Territories gained popularity after the First Intifada, but has been dampened by the fractious collapse of peace-brokering efforts in the late 1990s and ongoing Israeli state efforts to “ethnicize” intra-Arab categories (Jakubowska 1992; Parizot 2001).

At times, this question of belonging was very emotional. For example, Ahmed recounted his participation in a discussion circle workshop that brought together Jewish and Arab primary school teachers. Ahmed reported the comments of a religious Jewish man regarding the actions of Arab citizens of Israel during the Intifada in 2000: “What's the connection between the Arabs in Israel who live inside and those in the West Bank... What do they have to do with them? Why do they make problems? I don't accept these things, I don't understand.” Ahmed told me, “I was so...I became... I sat maybe ten or fifteen minutes. And inside, I began to boil.” Then Ahmed's turn came in the discussion. He told the group that a shared language, religion, customs, and even family connections bound him together with Arabs living in Gaza, Hebron, and Nablus. With controlled anger, he pointed to the divisive impact of Zionism: “And wasn't it you that came and put a fence between us and said, 'you are here and you are here?' So you all are the reason.” It was this frustration and anger over Zionist interventions that prompted Ahmed's suspicion of the identity label “Bedouin.” Because Ahmed and many other narrators shared this anxiety over inclusion as Palestinians, it is important to consider these Naqab narratives in relation to the central environmental discourses of dominant Palestinian nationalist narratives.

Because of the historical development of Palestinian nationalism, much of its imagery, metaphor, and metonymy reflects a focus on the landscapes and taskscapes of central Palestine (the areas around Jaffa and Jerusalem) and the Galilee in the north.

Most early Palestinian nationalist leaders came from urban centers, and rural opposition to land dispossession first arose among *fallahin* from the north and center (Swedenburg 1995a; Khalidi 1997).¹¹⁴ As a result, the desert generally has not been present in the images of Palestine circulated through nationalist and diaspora milieus via literature, poetry, and arts since 1948. Instead, the orange trees of Jaffa and the olive trees of the Galilee and the West Bank have predominated (Bardenstein 1998). The brush-stubbed slopes of these regions, and their valleys dotted with agricultural fields, orchards, and villages provide the landscapes for countless pieces of Palestinian literature.

Beginning in the poetry of Palestinian poets living under military rule within Israel in the 1950s, the *fallah* became a common symbol of *sumud* (Swedenburg 1990). *Sumud*, or steadfastness, signifies an unbroken connection to the land, both as soil and as residential place, often despite the great hardships incurred by remaining (Bardenstein 1999; Swedenburg 1990). It became central to Palestinian national narratives after 1948, and Palestinian nationalists quickly took up the *fallah* as its prime symbol. In addition to the *fallah's* closeness to the soil, the *fallah* has not been perceived as a product of Israeli colonialism (as the worker has been perceived), and through its status as a “cultural expression,” it has escaped the Israeli censorship imposed on more overtly political symbols (like the Palestinian flag) (Swedenburg 1990).

In more northern regions of Palestine, the long history of agricultural settlement made the *fallah* a deeply cultural and multiply resonant symbol. Yet, as is clear from the previous chapter's examination of Zionist history, the farmer's cultural resonance extends beyond Palestinian nationalism; this figure is meaningful for Jewish Israelis, too. There are certainly significant differences between the *fallah* and the pioneer farmer, but both conjure up similar images of plowing and harvesting. And both are tied to ideals of physical labor, closeness to nature, and long-term attachment to particular places.

Like the *fallah*, trees in the region have been charged with multiple and conflicting purposes. Symbolically, Palestinians are rooted in the land by association with these trees. A literary tradition links *sumud* with the olive tree, in particular, as well as orange and fig trees and the prickly pear cactus, as symbols of the Palestinian nation

114 Unlike common narratives pointing to urban leadership, Khalidi claims that farming peasants first realized and reacted against land dispossession, and then urban intellectuals picked up and led the cause.

(Bardenstein 1998). These literary invocations of northern landscapes have been pivotal in the development of Palestinian nationalism (Bardenstein 1999), but odes to desert landscapes and their flora have not had a similar role.¹¹⁵

Trees have also played practical roles beyond the page. Palestinians have taken up tree-planting as a tool to counter Zionist afforestation projects, pitting the olive tree against the pine tree along contested border regions between Jewish and Arab settlements (Cohen 1993; Braverman 2009). The olive tree has also been leveraged economically, as olive oil is produced for local consumption and marketed abroad as a national product of Palestine. Yet, these trees and cacti are not solely associated with Palestinian nationalism. Despite, or perhaps because of the olive's symbolic importance for Palestinians, Zionists have also taken up the olive tree as a national symbol and natural link to the lands of Israel (Bardenstein 1998; Braverman 2009). And the prickly pear cactus bears symbolic attachment to both Palestinians and *Sabras* (Almog 2000).

These symbols of Palestinian nationalism are complicated in the Naqab because nomadic and settled communities there have had a long history of conflict. Accompanying stereotypes and hierarchies have been used to differentiate between Bedouins and *fallahin*. This is evident, for example, in Bedouin poetry, which contrasts the noble and generous Bedouins with the *fallahin* who have “no lineage of note” and “spice spoiled meat” (rather than serving coffee and fresh meat, which are signs of generosity) (Bailey 1991:281, 362). Many Naqab interlocutors felt that social differences between Bedouins and *fallahin* remain salient today. Some of the women who married into Bedouin families and moved to ‘Ayn al-‘Azam told me that they continue to feel like outsiders, looked down upon and never fully integrated by their neighbors.¹¹⁶ Sliman summarized a common contemporary comparison about hospitality when he told me that if you arrive at a Bedouin's home, even if he is very poor and has only one sheep, he will slaughter that sheep to serve to you. *Fallahin*, on the other hand, are materialistic, he told me as he held up a clenched fist to clarify his meaning. This example shows a sense of pride in Bedouin culture. But many narrators, especially among those who espoused

¹¹⁵ It may be that because oral poetry has been so much more central to Bedouin traditions than written forms, few Bedouin writers have contributed to this nationalist literature.

¹¹⁶ Though *fellahin* often became daughters-in-law, I did not meet any Bedouin families whose daughters had married non-Bedouin. This, families told me, was not acceptable.

Palestinian nationalism, reversed this hierarchy. They admired a Palestinian nationalist movement whose centers of power and action lie outside the Naqab, in the Galilee, Gaza, and the West Bank. They spoke of Arabs of the Naqab as lagging behind their brethren to the north.

Through environmental imagery, these Naqab narrators negotiate between inclusion in and exclusion from mainstream Palestinian nationalism. Just as desert imagery is largely absent from dominant Palestinian narratives, so too, the symbols of nature common to Palestinian nationalism are not central to these Naqab narratives. The olive tree, so ubiquitous in northern Palestine, also grew in the Negev, but was not as common. Other significant plants, like the prickly pear and the orange tree were only more recently introduced to the region. Narrators did not have personal access to these symbols, and they were nearly absent in these reminiscences. Their nature imagery involved open plateaus, flocks of sheep and goats, and fields of barley, instead. Similarly, the environmental discourse of land as freedom and the nostalgia for life in tents that marked accounts of pre-1948 land relations contrasts with the rootedness of *sumud*.

However, Arabs of the Naqab have taken up some of Palestinian nationalism's environmental imagery, such as the figure of the *fallah*, but ambivalently so. In part, this ambivalence may be traced to the complex relationships of incorporation and separation between Bedouins and *fallahin*. But, this complexity is also magnified because both Palestinian and Zionist nationalisms valorize the figure of the farmer. Thus, a Naqab Bedouin's fond emphasis of his family's farming past, in addition to voicing a sense of personal nostalgia, can be associated with the dominant discourses of both nationalisms simultaneously, regardless of the speaker's intentions.

Formalizing Counter Narratives

In this chapter, I have been concerned with reminiscences of the Naqab's past that counter aspects of a dominant Zionist history. Most of these narratives were recounted to me by Bedouin residents of the Naqab as memories in bits and pieces, in the *shig* (a tent or room for hosting guests) of a family elder, speeding along the highway on a bus, or in

a parlor over a cup of tea. They are more fragmented than the Zionist history they counter, gleaned in pieces from many lives and many conversations, and not always conveniently sign-posted with calendrical dates. They contain few specificities of tribal movements and conflicts that might lend their accounts historical authority, but also mar the story of harmonious and rooted land ties prior to 1948 that could strengthen their position in contemporary land disputes.

However, I did not ask these narrators for “the history” of the Naqab, but rather, sought descriptions of past lifestyles and land uses. Thus, I was not seeking out, and most respondents did not refer me to, “proper sources” for oral histories (Shryock 1997). Several older women commented that they didn't know anything about politics, history, or big issues of the outside world; the men knew more (see also Bryant 2008; Sayigh 2007). But because I was requesting information about lifestyles in the past, rather than asking for “the history,” most women were comfortable serving as authoritative narrators. Further, I approached these narrators through a variety of social connections, many of which radiated out of NGO settings dealing with citizenship rights, environmental activism, and resolution of land conflict. Narrators knew of my interest in land conflict and of my plans to write and teach about my research findings. Audience matters for acts of remembering (Wertsch 2002), and the audience I brought with me to these conversations through my NGO connections and future scholarship were known to have particular concerns. Unlike oral historians or gatherings of tribal elders, many of the members of this audience could easily be understood to be more interested in authenticating narratives and moral arguments than exact dates and genealogies.

Despite my focus not being specifically historical, throughout this chapter, I have placed the images and events recounted to me into a roughly chronological trajectory in order to highlight certain shared environmental narratives. This reconstruction is part and parcel of applying textual methodologies to oral practices, but it is also a politically loaded undertaking (Shryock 1997). And I, as ethnographer, have been by no means the only one to realize its political significance. Because accounts that conform to the standards of Western historiography can convey authoritative power in the legal and political venues that decide land rights in Israel, I also witnessed efforts to consolidate and standardize these reminiscences accordingly. Some interlocutors employed more

linear narratives, calendrical dates, and references to “big history” events. Faced with the deafness of the Israeli legal system to traditional Bedouin standards of land ownership, such standardization offered the hope of chipping away at the hegemonic power of Zionist narratives by shaping these stories of Bedouin land attachment to fit Israeli legal norms of communication.

Nuri's narrative provides one example of this standardization. For many years, Nuri has been testifying before courts and writing newspaper articles in his campaign for equal treatment of Arab citizens and recognition of his family's land rights. As we sat in the small office of the Bedouin rights advocacy NGO he co-founded 29 years ago, I was struck by how his narrative of family history differed from most others that I'd heard. From his first sentence, “I was born in 1942,” he made use of calendrical dates. Without pausing to reflect, he listed off the day, month, and year when the military removed his family from their lands, when he held his first protest conference, and when he returned to live on his family's lands. From birth through his adult life of social activism, he traced a smooth trajectory with causes and effects identified and few tangents distracting him from the linear story. It was clear that he had recounted this narrative many times before, and that he had done so in formal settings that privilege this narrative style.

The Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages in the Naqab (RCUV) also formalizes the counter narrative it tells of the Naqab. The RCUV, was founded in 1997 to advocate for the residents of the Naqab's unrecognized villages. The organization is structured as a local governing body, but it is not recognized by the Israeli government. In formalizing their counter narrative, the RCUV representatives who spoke with me presented a unified history of Naqab Bedouins' encounters with the Zionist movement, presented facts and figures of population numbers and areas of land held by Bedouin tribes. Even the structure of their organization was designed to fit Israeli political norms of authority. The RCUV consists of a committee in each village and a regional council whose head is elected by these village committees. As their spokesperson outlined the process for selecting leadership, she pointedly contrasted the RCUV's democratic structure with the Israeli state's failure to treat Bedouins as equal citizens. Like Nuri, the two representatives of the RCUV whom I interviewed gave polished and linear narratives. Furthermore, certain terminology was chosen tactically to coincide with

Zionist discourse. For instance, the RCUV defines a village as a settlement of 500 or more individuals because this is the minimum number for that designation according to Israeli law. In choosing the same definition as the state, the RCUV is able to highlight the hypocrisy of recognizing small Jewish settlements as villages, but not recognizing Bedouin villages. Modeling themselves from official governing bodies and speaking in a conceptualist legal discourse, the RCUV spoke in the language of power.

Conclusion: Negotiating Alignments in Narratives

The relationship between this chapter, which is primarily reliant on informal reminiscences, and the previous chapter, which drew from many textual citations, highlights the unequal footing of these accounts. Zionist account of settlement and nation-building enjoy more official status, being fixed in books and archives and supported by Israeli institutions such as schools, powerful political parties, and transnational organizations like the Jewish National Fund. Thus, engaging in this juxtaposition of accounts risks delegitimizing Naqab narratives. But I do so precisely to highlight the sociopolitical context that places constraints on how Bedouin Arabs can represent their connections to land.

In all of these counter narratives, whether formalized or not, contesting history is not simply a matter of resistance, but of negotiating alignments. Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) shows us how young Bedouin women of the Awlad ‘Ali in Egypt resist the kin-based power structures of their elders, but in so doing, submit themselves to the authority of consumer culture and the state. Similarly, Bedouin Arab narrators of the past submit themselves to certain power structures as they are contesting others.

This is the case vis-à-vis Zionist history, as the counter narratives they tell simultaneously challenge and correspond with elements of Zionist environmental discourses. As these reminiscences counter the erasure of Arabs from the Naqab's social and political past, they often try to bolster the authority of their claims by drawing on the very discourses they contest.¹¹⁷ A discourse of Bedouin indigeneity makes powerful claims of first presence and legitimates land claims, but it also risks stripping Bedouins of social and political sophistication by melding them with the desert landscape. Similarly,

¹¹⁷ Shryock (1997), drawing on Foucault (1990), notes this dynamic between dominant and subaltern tribes living together and telling histories in the Balga region of Jordan.

speaking in conceptualist terms to bolster legal claims also narrows the scope of allowable evidence, which erases Bedouin lifestyles and collective land attachments. Faced with standards of land ownership that demand continuous occupation and standards of societal belonging that stress progress, these narrators tell a tale that both roots them in the Negev through a long-standing traditional desert lifestyle, and depicts them as modernizing citizens who have changed radically since 1948.

This simultaneous resistance and submission is also evident vis-à-vis discourses of Palestinian or pan-Arab unity. Narrators must negotiate between a discourse of Bedouin indigeneity that emphasizes Bedouin connections to particular desert lands and lifestyles, and a discourse of Arab solidarity, which emphasizes shared cultural traditions and downplays Bedouin specificities. Palestinian nationalism offers Bedouins a group with which to align in refuting Zionist claims, but it also positions them in an uncomfortably subordinate position to a wider Palestinian Arab imagined community. To align with Palestinian national narratives, Naqab Arabs must tell their own pasts in ways that skew towards settled life and farming and veer away from a proud past of mobility and freedom. Thus, narrators of these counter narratives must grapple with multiple discourses that carry deep implications of loyalty and belonging. These narratives of past connection to land, and the affiliations they assert or imply, possess great social power because they continue to inform daily practices (Kosek 2006).

CHAPTER III

A Bridge Chapter: Segregating Citizens in the Negev

It was 8:00 am as I left the house, bundled in long pants, thick socks, and a warm fleece. A headscarf was tucked into my backpack for later. It was February, and the Negev desert morning was cold and dry. A breeze blew through, but this was gentler than the whipping gustiness that came most afternoons. I had been living in Moshav Dganim for about two months, and that day I had decided to go back to ‘Ayn al-‘Azm for a visit with the families I used to lived with there. As the bird flies, these two towns are only two kilometers apart. But socially, the two communities—one of Jewish Israelis and the other of Bedouin Arabs—are much further distanced than that. This social distance is reflected in the landscape. No direct roads exist between them, and to travel from one to the other by car requires a trip seven times as long as the bird's flight. Because I had no car of my own, I journeyed that day via public and shared means, illuminating the geographical, infrastructural, and social features of the segregated landscape within which these two communities lie.

I began walking up the road, past pretty houses with well-tended front gardens. The yards and street were quiet, as I had missed the rush hour when most of Dganim's residents left in private cars to drive to work in other towns and cities. Taking a shortcut through the now-abandoned fields of this formerly agricultural community, I reached the main gate. Part of a double-layer fence with barbed wire and an electrified outer layer, this fence ran the perimeter of the *moshav*. For most visitors, the gate may have been barely noticeable, as it was raised during the day. A nod and smile to the guard was usually all that was required to pass. However, Bedouin Arab friends who occasionally drove to Dganim to drop me off were reluctant to approach the gate, reading it as a strict barrier in their social landscape.



Image 2: The edges of 'Ayn al-'Azm (left) and Dganim (right) [GoogleEarth image].

Nehemiah, a friendly man my father's age, was the guard on duty that day. He greeted me and pulled up a chair so I could wait and flag down a car to hitchhike into Beersheba, the largest city in the area. As the region's hub of industry, education, government, and transportation, it was my gateway to 'Ayn al-'Azm. Almost immediately, a sedan rounded the corner. Nehemiah knew all the residents of this small community, and he waved to this driver, Yaron, who pulled over and opened the door. I climbed in and told Yaron I was heading to the *shuk*, the market. Riding for fifteen minutes into Beersheba, we introduced ourselves, and Yaron asked the usual questions I received from new acquaintances: what am I doing here, am I Jewish, and why did I learn Hebrew if I'm not Jewish. As we talked about my research, I asked to interview him, and he invited me to stop by his house in a couple of evenings.

Leaving Dganim behind, we passed a stretch of gas stations and large stores, and then pulled onto the main road of Beersheba. At the busy intersection by the market, Yaron pulled over, and I stepped out. To my right was the central bus station, the public transportation portal between the north of Israel and the Negev. Public transportation has been considered a high priority since the pre-state waves of immigration, and increasingly so after the state's formation in 1948, as a means of supporting Jewish communities throughout Israel and strengthening frontier settlements. Buses come and go regularly from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and the main towns and cities in the Negev. Despite increasing privatization and fragmentation of the national Egged bus system,

vestiges remain of the ideological commitment to taming frontiers, and every tiny *kibbutz* or *moshav* has a bus stopping through at least twice each day.

But to reach 'Ayn al-'Azm, I did not enter this bus station. Instead, I crossed the road to the left and entered the market's maze of covered stalls where merchants sell everything from fruits and vegetables to cell phones and radios. In the middle of these densely packed stalls is an intersection where delivery trucks and private cars serving as shared taxis compete for space. This is the Bedouin Arab public transportation hub of the Negev. None of the Bedouin Arab communities are included in Israel's public bus network. Instead, a grey economy of shared taxis, *sayaarat*, has emerged to serve the six recognized Bedouin Arab towns, the one Bedouin Arab city of Rahat, and many of the surrounding unrecognized villages.¹¹⁸

In this market of both Jewish and Arab merchants, serving Jewish and Arab customers, Hebrew is the language of default. But in the taxi intersection, Arabic dominates, as it is rare for Jewish Israelis to travel in the *sayaarat*. As I walked in, it was the height of morning shopping. In a raucous swirl of older women and couples heavily laden with children and plastic bags of produce, young men called out the names of the towns for which their taxis were bound. I responded to a call for 'Ayn al-'Azm and was ushered over to a white sedan with tinted windows where one other woman sat quietly in the back seat. I joined her, and we waited together for the rest of the seats to fill up. It being a busy market time, other passengers soon squeezed into the remaining seats, and the driver eased his way through the honking mass of cars, out of the market's alleyways.

As we sped down the highway toward 'Ayn al-'Azm, I draped the scarf over my hair, wrapping and tucking it under my chin as my friend, Sarah, had taught me. Though many residents I met in 'Ayn al-'Azm were not concerned with such things when I visited their homes, I had found that wearing the garment allowed me to move more freely, with less attention, through the streets. Fifteen minutes later, after passing the malls and factories of Beersheba's southern industrial ring, the *sayaara* pulled off the main road. We passed the side entrance to the Jewish town of Meren, one of the wealthiest towns in

¹¹⁸ During my last month of fieldwork, the long-promised plans for bus service to Bedouin Arab towns were finally initiated. This bus system is still separated from the main national system, with Rahat serving as the hub and providing bus service into Beersheba and several of the recognized Bedouin Arab towns (though non of the unrecognized villages). But, many Rahat residents noted the bus service as a great improvement over the *sayaarat*.

Israel, and rounded the corner into ‘Ayn al-‘Azm.

The driver turned to the three of us in the back seat to confirm our destinations. We did not reference the town's official system of numbered street addresses. Instead, the driver needed only the name of a household head to guide him through the neighborhoods arranged into family clusters.

Winding through several neighborhoods, the driver dropped off other passengers and their bulging bags of produce. From the street, only the tops of concrete or stone-faced houses were visible above the high walls abutting the sidewalk. Trees poked their heads up over some of the property walls, but on the streets themselves, little grew, and trash fluttered in the wind. As the driver crossed back over the main street and toward my destination, he struck up a conversation with me, but our conversation was cut short as we went over the final speed bump before the Abu Assa's home. I handed him ten shekels and stepped out of the car. Walking into the family's courtyard, I was greeted with kisses and exclamations of *ahlan w-sahlan!* and *keef al-hal?*¹¹⁹ On the return trip that afternoon, I would reverse the process, crossing from *sayaara* to central bus station to inter-city bus, and then through the *moshav* to my apartment. But for the time being, I relaxed into a day of visiting, making the rounds among several households to catch up on family news, conducting an interview, and giving an English lesson.

* * *

This journey contained encounters with many meaningful boundaries in the Negev's landscapes, which were signs in the social order (Stoller 1982) of the Negev and part of a discursive field that divides and orders people. Some were material barriers, like Dganim's fence. Others were embodied social markers, like long sleeves and a carefully draped scarf, or the use of one language or another. More systemic means of boundary-formation were evident, as well, such as the separate public transportation systems for Jewish and Bedouin Arab communities and the informal knowledge of families required to navigate through the streets of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm.

How has this pervasive segregation come to be? Part of the answer lies in the Negev's status as a “remote area” (Ardener 1989) within Israel's nation-building project. All over Israel, government projects have relocated people, designated areas of land for

119 “Welcome!” and “How are you?”

particular uses, and drawn up laws to foster certain cultural practices and stifle others. But Zionist leaders' image of the Negev as wilderness, or *sof ha'olam* (“the end of the world”), has led them to treat it as a particularly blank slate to be filled in according to Zionist priorities. At times, this remoteness was understood as a frontier, and at other times a periphery. In this bridge chapter, I examine the role that state projects of territorial consolidation and development have played in carving the Negev into different kinds of settlements, which divides Bedouins from Jews and applies different environmental logics to each group. This description serves as background for the chapters that follow, which investigate how residents encounter these segregated landscapes, and the part they play in shaping landscapes through their dwelling practices.

The Negev as Frontier and Periphery

During different historical periods, Zionist rhetoric and material resources were focused on different geographical areas. In the 1940s, with farming and settlement projects already underway in areas further north, the frontier of focus shifted south to the Negev. This semi-desert region made up approximately 60 percent of Israel's territory at the time of statehood and contained two percent of its population (Lithwick, Gradus, and Lithwick 1996). As the environmental region furthest removed from Zionism's ideal verdant, agrarian landscape, and as Israel's most sparsely populated large expanse of land, the Negev was a challenge and a tempting frontier.

As a remote frontier, the Negev embodied both threat and promise; it was “Shangri La but also the home of purported smugglers and spies” (Ardener 1989:216). Perhaps the loudest and most persuasive voice calling for a national focus on developing the Negev was David Ben Gurion's. He had begun calling for Negev settlement in 1939, and in the ten years that followed, twenty-five *kibbutzim* were built, including eleven established in one night in 1946 (the “Eleven Points of the Negev” campaign) (Kellerman 1996). In the 1950s, as the former head of the *Histadrut* and then Israel's first prime minister, Ben Gurion was one of the most authoritative voices in Labor Zionism. He was interested in the Negev for its geopolitical advantages. It was critical as a buffer zone and a vast area of potential for absorbing Jewish immigrants, Ben Gurion maintained, and without it, Tel Aviv and the narrow coastal strip that was more densely settled during the

Yishuv would be like a small and vulnerable city-state (Kellerman 1993:245).

The Negev also held symbolic importance for Ben Gurion and other Zionist leaders. They voiced, in journals and private conversations, as well as public speeches, their nostalgic longing for the wilderness and a Biblical connection with the ancient Israelites (Hillel 1982). And settling and modernizing the desert frontier was seen as a test of Israel's legitimacy as a nation. Ben Gurion asserted,

It is in the Negev that the Israeli people and its state will be tested—because only through a united effort of a volunteering people and a well planned and implemented state will we be capable of the great mission of making the desert bloom and settling it. This struggle will determine Israel's fate and the status of our people in the history of mankind.¹²⁰ [Ben Gurion 1955]



Image 3: Engraved Ben Gurion quote at the Ben Gurion Heritage Institute of the Negev.

This struggle would be against the harsh desert environment, but also against the sociopolitical threat of Arab opposition. The presence of a large Arab population and a small Jewish population in the relatively vast area of the Negev, and the Negev's position between the Arab states of Egypt to the west and Jordan to the east made the settling and taming of the wilderness seem essential: “If the state does not eliminate the desert, the desert is liable to destroy the country” (Ben Gurion 1955).¹²¹

¹²⁰ בנגב יבחן העם בישראל ומדינתו - כי רק במאמץ מלוכד של עם מתנדב ומדינה מתכננת ומבצעת נוכל למשימה הגדולה של “הפרחת השממה ויישובה. מאמץ זה יקבע גורלה של מדינת ישראל ומעמדו של עמנו בתולדות המין האנושי.”

¹²¹ In Hebrew, the quote reads, “אם המדינה לא תחסל את המדבר, עלול המדבר לחסל את המדינה.” The verb “to eliminate” also holds the connotation of settling or finalizing, as in “settle accounts” (חסיל חשבונות).

For Zionism, as for other colonial projects, establishing control over territories entailed extensive transformation of landscapes (Lines 1991) through high modernist interventions (Scott 1998). The particular kind of control that Ben Gurion and fellow Zionist leaders strove for in the Negev was agrarian. But the arid climate of the Negev was not conducive to large-scale farming, and to realize this agrarian vision, vast quantities of water would be needed. Work began in 1953, under Ben Gurion's leadership, on the redistribution of Israel's water supply through the National Water Carrier (Tal 2002). Like land, water has been managed as a collective resource in Israel since its founding, with one entity, Mekorot, serving as the primary provider.¹²² Completed in 1964 and still in operation, the National Water Carrier's system of pipelines, reservoirs, and canals pumps water out of Lake Kinneret in the north of Israel and carries hundreds of millions of cubic meters to the more arid southern regions. The project entailed great costs. It required the investment of significant financial resources from a young and cash-strapped state, its implementation escalated border disputes with neighboring countries that nearly led to war, and the long-term ecological impacts of re-routed streams, depleted aquifers, and a shrinking Dead Sea are still being realized (Tal 2002; Lehn and Davis 1988). Yet, bringing water to the desert was worth the diplomatic and monetary costs for the Labor Zionist government because it enabled agriculture and Jewish settlement throughout the country, bringing access maintenance to enforce formal sovereignty claims. Twenty-six new *moshavim* and eight development towns were established in the region during the 1950s.

By the end of the 1950s, Israel's frontier of focus was shifting again, and the Negev fell into neglect. Most Israelis now refer to the region as a periphery, and residents often complain of disregard from politicians and fellow Israelis living in “the center” (i.e., the area around and including Tel Aviv and Jerusalem). Low socioeconomic indicators, high unemployment figures, and few governmentally initiated economic development plans further indicate its peripheral status (Kellerman 1993; Teschner, Garb, and Tal 2010). Those economic initiatives, both governmentally and privately led, that have been aimed at the south in recent decades have tended to respond to and perpetuate the Negev's image as a wasteland or periphery. They have aimed to extract the Negev's

¹²² Mekorot, a *Yishuv*-wide cooperative organization for managing water, was designated as the official water utility following statehood (Tal 2002).

natural resources or take advantage of its “empty” spaces (i.e., few Jewish residents). Mining facilities, a nuclear reactor, and the country's only hazardous waste processing facility were built in the Negev. Following the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, Israel withdrew its civilians and military from the Sinai. Subsequently, the military bases and training zones were relocated to the Negev, where they now hold jurisdiction over more than 60 percent of the region's territory (Teschner et al. 2010).

Changing perceptions of the Negev as a priority frontier or neglected periphery support Edward Ardener's observation that, for the designation of a space as remote, “the actual geography is not the over-riding feature—it is obviously necessary that ‘remoteness’ has a position in topographical space, but it is defined within a topological space whose features are expressed in a cultural vocabulary” (1989:214). Aharon Kellerman (1993) describes the cultural vocabulary of the Negev's remoteness in terms of frontier and periphery. He explains a settlement frontier as a socially defined region that is not integrated with the core, but holds a superior status position to the core because it is viewed as being at a nation-state's forefront; and a periphery, though similarly not integrated with the core, as holding an inferior status, often because it has fallen from its previous vanguard status as a frontier. For the Negev, this status change was due partly to geopolitical changes. For a period in the mid-1960s, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol served a similar role for the Galilee in Israel's north as Ben Gurion had played for the Negev. He redirected governmental resources from the Negev to this northern frontier region (Kellerman 1993). Then, when Israel occupied Gaza, the West Bank, and the Sinai Peninsula during the 1967 war, these territories became the most critical frontiers.

The Negev's peripheral status has also arisen from the national trends of economic liberalization and the concomitant reordering of national priorities that reduced funding for the high modernist innovations which had previously made it a frontier. As Ardener notes of remote areas, they “cry out for development, but they are the continuous victims of visions of development” (1989:218). Indeed, Zionist leaders remain concerned with “Judaizing” Negev lands and linking the region more directly to Israel's core. Successive national governments have proposed ambitious development plans to raise standards of living to a level more comparable with the core, secure Jewish control over lands, and

especially in more recent plans, ameliorate the severe pollution problems of the region.¹²³ But there has been little implementation of these contemporary development plans (Teschner 2007).

Settlements as Institutions

As a remote area and former frontier, the Negev has been the site of many “innovations” (Ardener 1989) like the National Water Carrier. For the social segregation so palpable in the contemporary Negev, the construction of new sorts of settlements has been key. There are a variety of settlement types in the Negev, but I focus on four in this dissertation—*moshavim*, Bedouin Arab townships, unrecognized villages, and single-family farmsteads—that encompass an array of relationships between state agencies and a variety of kinds of citizens. These four demonstrate the intersections of strategies and tactics (de Certeau 1984), and of mainstream and countervailing ideologies of territory, that have constructed such a complex landscape of conflict in the Negev. The former two types, addressed in this bridge chapter, were established through government-initiated plans, while the latter two formed in ways that challenge the government's spatial plans.

Since 1948, a series of centralized national land-use and population plans have guided the development and zoning of state lands (Yiftachel 1992). It is important to emphasize that although a Marxist influenced tradition of geographical analysis contrasts the abstract and homogenizing space of such modernist plans with the socially produced places of habitation (e.g., Lefebvre 1974), the former are just as socially produced as the latter. Because planners must shape such spaces according to socially and historically specific priorities, “abstract, empty, and exchangeable space is a historical product, not an essence. It only *appears* inert, fixed, and dead” (Moore 2005:20). Through the carving of the Negev into separately mapped spaces for Jewish and Arab residence, and through the application of different innovations in government planning to Jews and to Arabs, government planning has contributed greatly to the normalization of social segregation.

Within these plans, the administrative organization of the Negev region, known as the Southern District, is divided into regional councils. Until several years ago, there

123 These plans include “The Southern Project” (1975), the “National Industrial- Zone in the Negev” (1972), the “Southern District Outline Plan” (1981), “The Negev in 2000,” (1986), “Kidmat HaNegev” (1991), and most recently, “Negev 2015” (Teschner 2007).

were eleven regional councils, all of which governed Jewish residents via the *moshavim* and *kibbutzim*, development towns, and cities that fell within their borders (each community having its own local council), as well as the areas between settlements designated as agricultural or open areas. Through the imposition of the *siyag* until 1966 and the passage of the 1965 Planning and Building Law that outlawed Bedouin residence on their tribal lands, landscapes were “de-Bedouinnized” and opened for Judaization. As discussed in chapter one, these Jewish settlements met governmental priorities of protecting borders and establishing ties to Jewish land.

Bedouin Arab residents had no regional councils until 2004. Instead, responsibility for Bedouin affairs in both recognized and unrecognized locales, such as the provision of health and education services, water infrastructure, and land use regulations, has been taken up by a series of bodies, from the Supreme Bedouin Committee established in 1965 to the Bedouin Advancement Authority (“Bedouin Authority”) established in 1986 under the direction of the Israel Land Administration (ILA). Bedouin Arab residents have not held leadership positions in these administrative bodies, as all are run by Jewish Israeli governmental officials. On a more local level, the seven government-planned Bedouin townships are run by local councils, each of which has jurisdiction over a circumscribed area of land that consists primarily of places of habitation and does not include agricultural lands. Each council was initially run by state-appointed Jewish officials. After many years (between six and fifteen years in different townships), control shifted to locally elected councils.

Many of the areas of land between these towns and villages, particularly in the northern regional councils, contain unrecognized Bedouin Arab settlements. The residents of these settlements cannot vote within the regional councils where they live, but they may vote in national elections. In 2004, a twelfth regional council, Abu Basma, was created. It was designed to govern some of the formerly unrecognized Bedouin Arab villages, which are now in the process of gaining formal governmental recognition and municipal services. For the past seven years, it has been run by an appointed, rather than elected council.¹²⁴

124 The jurisdiction of Abu Basma is highly segmented, as the council governs the areas within the newly recognized boundary lines of these settlements, but not the lands connecting them (Swirski and Hasson 2006). When it was established in 2004, the Interior Ministry appointed a panel of officials to lead the

In addition to shaping Negev landscapes by designating separate Jewish and Bedouin spaces, these different types of settlements differentially govern persons (Foucault 1991). *Moshavim* and *kibbutzim* were initially intended to foster farmers by habituating residents to manual labor in the land. New immigrants were expected to move into these settlements and continue building them. Their organization and management encouraged cooperative practices, identification with Zionism, and belonging within the Israeli state.

Moshvei olim (“immigrants' *moshavim*”) were initiated in the 1950s, modeled on the older and more independent pre-existing *moshavim*, but with the more direct guidance deemed necessary for the “Oriental” (Mizrahi) immigrants then arriving in Israel.¹²⁵ The primarily Ashkenazi government officials of the time perceived these immigrants to be more primitive and in need of Zionist education. Thus, the more neoliberal forms of governance deemed appropriate for earlier, Ashkenazi settlers, were seen as inappropriate for these Mizrahi settlers. Instead, the Land Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency undertook more intimate governmental intervention, like the “pastoral care” Michel Foucault (1991) describes. The Agency took responsible for shaping the *moshvei olim* and their residents as “administered communities.” As such, the *moshav olim* was molded not just by initial plans for village layout and infrastructure, but through the intense involvement of agricultural *madrichim*, accountants, social workers, and instructors in home economics and childcare, sent directly by the Settlement Department or coming from veteran *moshvim*, in residents' daily affairs.¹²⁶ Residents were trained to be agriculturalists and live in cooperative communities, with the stated policy goal that they would eventually become self-governing (Kushner 1973; Weingrod 1966).¹²⁷

new council for its first four years, at which point local elections would be held to fill the council seats. However, these elections were postponed, and a law passed by the Knesset in 2009 “gives the government the power to postpone elections to the regional council...until the interior ministry deems the local Bedouin ready to run their own affairs” (Cook 2009).

125 More than 80 percent of immigrants arriving to the Negev during these years were from the Middle East (Weingrod 1966:50).

126 “Guides,” or “advisors” (singular, *madrich/madricha*). The *madrich* has been a central figure in Labor Zionism, a lay expert whose expertise derives mainly from direct, physical experience, and not simply “book learning.” *Madrichim* guided lessons in *yediat ha'arretz* (knowing the land), the establishment of agricultural settlements throughout the *Yishuv* and Israel, and continue to guide nature hikes and tour groups.

127 For further discussion of the administered community model of settlement and ethnographic accounts of two such communities, see Weingrod (1966) and Kushner (1973).

In the intervening decades, *moshavim* in the Negev have been subjected to the same political and economic liberalization that precipitated the privatization, restructuring, or closure of collective settlements throughout Israel (Shafir and Peled 2000a). In the Negev, the difficulty of these changes was heightened by the region's shift from frontier to periphery. Public sector employment and protectionist labor policies for Jewish workers had previously served as a way to indirectly subsidize Jewish settlement in the remote areas prioritized by Zionist nation-building objectives. But with liberalization, public sector jobs were cut, and Jewish workers (especially in agriculture) were exposed more directly to wage competition from Arab and foreign guest workers. As in other regions, government subsidies for collective agricultural communities were curtailed. This was particularly disorienting for *moshvei olim*, because they had been established on paternalist terms of “administration” that instituted patterns of dependence on governmental assistance (Weingrod 1966).

In contrast to Jewish collective settlements, the planning of Bedouin townships sought to distance Bedouin Arabs from an agricultural lifestyle. The policy of *Iyur HaBedowim* (“Urbanization of the Bedouin”) began in the 1960s, after military rule in the region ended, aiming to relocate Bedouins from rural communities into towns and cities. In 1963, while he was Minister of Agriculture for Mapai, a leftist Israeli political party, Moshe Dayan expressed the dominant ideology among government leaders regarding the need for more directed governance of Bedouins:

We must turn the Bedouin into urban laborers... It is true that this is a sharp transition. It means that the Bedouin will no longer live on his land with his flocks, but will become an urbanite who comes home in the afternoon and puts his slippers on. His children will get used to a father who wears pants, without dagger, and who does not pick out their nits in public. They will go to school, their hair combed and parted. This will be a revolution, but it can be achieved in two generations. Not by coercion, but with direction by the state. This reality that is known as the Bedouin will disappear. [Dayan, *Ha'aretz* interview, July 31, 1963]

This call for pastoral care exhibits some similarities with discriminatory attitudes toward Mizrahi immigrants at the time. Yet, this call for adaptation was not a call for assimilation, as it depended on simultaneous efforts to distance Arabs from Jews through separate school systems and governance under different ministries and regional councils. This revolutionary change was to be carried out through residential segregation.

Further, divorcing Bedouin Arabs from their lands and flocks was seen as an integral part of transforming their norms to coincide more smoothly with Israeli business and government priorities (i.e., putting more Jews “on the land” and concentrating Bedouin Arabs in towns). From Dayan's perspective, to achieve this orderly and progressive urban living, Bedouin Arabs must lose their fundamental Bedouinness. States across the Middle East have adopted a variety of measures to sedentarize Bedouin tribes. However, in many Arab states where Bedouin culture is valued as part of the national heritage, rather than demanding acultural accommodation from Bedouins, these measures have involved attempts to accommodate aspects of Bedouin culture, such as shepherding, within sedentarization plans (Chatty 1996; Gardner 2005).

Settlements as Landscapes

The government institutions that make up this residential planning apparatus, such as the Israeli courts, government ministries, and schools, play a significant role in enframing Negev social relations in terms of binary oppositions. These institutions can powerfully shape the landscapes within which people dwell by determining the legality of land ownership claims, constructing medical clinics, allocating living areas to families, laying down roads and determining if and what sort of public transit will be available, designing school curricula and building schools. As James Scott wrote of the high modernist perspective, which corresponds to programs for urbanizing Bedouins as well as efforts to modernize Mizrahim, planners believed that “those who through retrograde ignorance refuse to yield to the scientific plan need to be educated to its benefits or else swept aside” (1998:94). Indeed, those who did not follow the plans of *Iyur HaBedowim*, who did not cease to be Bedouin, were tacitly allowed to exist in unrecognized villages for many decades (though recent years have seen an escalation of governmental efforts to eliminate these villages), but swept aside from developments in education, health care, and infrastructure and identified as lesser citizens, not fully participating in Israeli society. Much of the literature on Bedouin Arabs in Israel focuses on changes that are imposed by governmental projects and policies, such as the cessation of pastoralism, forced relocation (Meir 1998), and manipulation of ethnic identities (Jakubowska 1992; Yonah, Abu-Saad, and Kaplan 2004). These accounts show the shaping force of state

institutions and are important warnings of the often divisive impact of such institutions.

Yet, these institutions are not fully determinative. Many residents who moved to government-planned settlements—including both *moshvei olim* and Bedouin townships—did not simply “yield to the scientific plan” or purely refuse it. They have engaged with these segregating plans as part of their landscapes, and through their dwelling practices, they can alter the landscapes that these institutions aim to control. When Michel de Certeau (1984) suggests his distinction between *strategies*, as modes of management that delimit proper places for institutions and control the conduct in those places, and *tactics*, as calculated actions by actors without the power to organize and control their own spaces, he is writing of cities. He asserts that residents’ “singular and plural practices which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress,” proliferate and interact with these planned urban structures (de Certeau 1984:96). These practices become “everyday regulations and surreptitious creativities,” neither fully cooperative nor fully rebellious (de Certeau 1984:96). However, de Certeau’s analysis of planning strategies and residential tactics need not be limited to the crowded concrete blocks of a high-rise city, but is equally applicable to the small towns or agricultural fields of the Negev. These places, too, are subject to the control of planners, and residents’ dwelling practices there are undertaken within the context of governmental strategies to shape the Negev in particular ways.

In contrast to de Certeau’s urban focus, Tim Ingold (1993, 2000) formulated his dwelling perspective largely through the study of small-scale herding societies, from which the impact of state strategies may have seemed remote. Thus, though landscapes are recognized as the materialization of taskscapes, the tasks of more diffuse actors such as state governments, international politics, and business development projects, are missing from his analyses. However, applying a dwelling perspective to the Negev makes clear how intimately these powerful actors participate in local taskscapes.

Whether as deliberate as the tactics de Certeau describes or not, residents’ dwelling practices may contradict governmental plans to separate and demarcate Jews and Arabs and regulate the use of different areas (for agriculture, residence, nature preservation, etc.). For example, ‘Ayn al-‘Azm residents’ dwelling practices often challenged the planned divorce from agriculture, transition to wage labor, and elimination

of Bedouin cultural practices. But residents may also willingly participate in these state strategies, acting as conduits of capillary power (Foucault 1990) to cooperate with and even proactively move these governmental plans forward. For instance, some residents of Dganim screened potential renters to prevent Bedouins from joining the moshav, erected perimeter fencing, and used guards to police their perimeter. What prompts these different responses?

A dwelling perspective aims analytic attention to the ways people perceive their landscapes (Ingold 2000; Basso 1996b). When encountering the contributions of state planning to their local landscapes, residents may perceive these institutional creations as impositions in which they played no role or as, in part, products of their own actions. These perceptions reveal residents' feelings of belonging to or exclusion from their local communities and the imagined national community of Israel. Equally important, these perceptions guide their ongoing dwelling practices, including how they facilitate or counter government plans. The widespread alienation Bedouin Arabs feel from both the state and Israeli community (Jakubowska 1992; Abu-Rabia 2010; Abu-Saad 2008b) profoundly influences the way they dwell in Negev landscapes. In contrast, most residents of Dganim, despite their history of treatment as members of a minority Jewish ethnicity in need of modernization, have perceived their work and residence in the *moshav* to be key contributions to Israeli nation-building.

Perceptions of “the State” are important in understanding residents' treatment of the participation of governmental actors in their landscapes. Often, Bedouin Arab residents spoke of these institutions as if they are separate from everyday life, and of “the State” as a single bounded entity that is separate from residents, and often in opposition to minority groups. Many Jewish residents shared a conception of the State as a distinctly bounded entity. Popular discussions, for example, often identified land conflict in the Negev as being “between Bedouins and the State.” Yet, it was also common to hear Jewish interlocutors make more intricate distinctions between offices and personalities within state government and to speak of themselves as part of this state.

In the following chapters, I focus specifically on how residents of four different settlement types in the Negev shaped and were shaped by the landscapes within which they dwelt. Some scholars have looked to Bedouin Arabs' responses to these institutional

projects and policies in terms of formal political protests (Yiftachel 1997) and “insurgent planning” that uses alternative urban plans as tools to counter state plans (Meir 2005). However, similar to Merlan's critique of research on Aboriginal Australians, most accounts of Israel leave Bedouin Arabs' “contemporary spatial practices, ways of living in place that are vitally relevant to its ongoing construction, insufficiently examined” (1998:77). Similarly, ethnographic studies of Jewish collective settlements were once a mainstay of Israeli anthropology and sociology, as the senses of communal belonging forged in these communities were viewed critical to Israel's development (e.g., Baldwin 1972; Talmon 1972; Shepher 1983; Fishman 1992; Kliot 1993; Zusman 1988). Yet, little scholarly attention has been given to the lived experiences and land-use practices of the residents of these settlements in recent years.¹²⁸ Examining dwelling practices across this array of settlement types, provides a more complete picture of the interwoven forces of environmental discourses, institutional planning, and dwelling practices.

¹²⁸ Schwartz et al (1995) provide a collection of primarily economic and sociological analyses of *moshavim* in the 1990s, and a recent dissertation by Eitan Shahar (2008) examines the perceptions of multiple generations of residents in one moshav about their immigration and moshav-building experiences.

CHAPTER IV

Ambivalent Attachments: Dwelling in a Bedouin Arab Township

In the previous two chapters, I traced the complex and often contradictory environmental discourses that are evident in accounts of the Naqab/Negev, as well as the wider region of Israel-Palestine. Within these discourses, particular environments and people were rendered normal or abnormal, included or excluded by reference to their “natural” qualities. Certain lifestyles and kinds of people, such as the *kibbutz* and the *sabra*, became valuable. Yet, as discussed in chapter two, these norms have not gone uncontested, and alternative narratives of the past challenge elements of these dominant environmental discourses. How do these competing discourses become important in the lives of those living in the Negev, and how are they contested?

This chapter discusses the lived experiences of residents in one government-planned Bedouin township, ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. To some extent, Moshe Dayan and the government planners of *Iyur HaBedowim* would likely be pleased with what they would witness on visiting ‘Ayn al-‘Azm today. Children attend schools with nationally coordinated curricula, and many fathers dress as Dayan had hoped and work as wage laborers in the nearby city of Beersheba. Already in 1994, Aref Abu-Rabia found that, “without a doubt, the economic centre of gravity has moved from livestock rearing towards wage labour in towns and villages” (1994:17). Many residents also express concern about the disappearance of *bedaawa*, an essential Bedouinness, as they adjust to urban living. The “state simplifications” of planners striving for easy legibility and governability (Scott 1998), such as a grid of right-angle streets and restrictions on agricultural practices and the size of residential plots, have been implemented and confront residents as part of their everyday landscapes.

But rather than treating these planned landscapes as impositions of power and searching for small places of rebellion outside power, as preoccupies James Scott's (1998,

2009) analysis of state modernization schemes, I take up Tania Li's (2005) suggested focus on positioning. Examining the dwelling practices of individuals with an eye to their positioning in terms of marginal or central geographic location, social standing, and political stance focuses on “how” questions (Li 2005; Dean 1999). How are lines of difference drawn and policed in these landscapes, designating particular kinds of places and people? How do some actors work with these lines to improve their living conditions, while others are disempowered? Many residents participate in the processes of their own urbanization, sometimes willingly, often feeling that they have little choice. But they also incrementally re-shape elements of the landscape (de Certeau 1984; Ingold 2000), even some of those that they feel to be the most unilaterally imposed, such as the township's grid of streets.

A Portrait of Two Households

Residents throughout ‘Ayn al-‘Azm encountered the same planned township and, contrary to common depictions in popular media and scholarship, adjusted in very different ways. Some acceded to the designs of urban planners, seeking out wage labor outside of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm and treating the township as a bedroom community. Others resisted such plans, and they did so in a variety of ways that ranged from deliberate campaigns for cultural revival to the persistence of habits. Because my research aimed, in part, to explore new possibilities for escaping the Negev region's divisive strife over land, I sought out people taking a proactive role in thinking and action regarding their relationships with(in) the Negev's landscapes. As I conducted fieldwork in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, I lived for several months in each of two rather different households. Their physical layouts and the taskscapes they embodied offer an illustrative comparison of the ways residents dwelled within a government-planned township, sometimes in quite creative ways.

The first household I joined was in the Al-‘Uwaydi neighborhood, part of a large ‘*ashira* (tribe or extended family) within ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. They lived on one side of town, in a neighborhood dominated by their ‘*ashira*. Sarah, an unmarried adult daughter whom I had met during work with environmental NGOs the previous year, first invited me in. Sarah ran community projects to educate the children and women of her neighborhood

and had started a business both to further these aims and to provide for herself. She made soaps, creams, and oils derived from desert herbs and used to cure skin ailments; and she hosted tour groups at her herb garden and shop, speaking on Bedouin culture to visitors. Before starting these projects, she had studied abroad in England. Then, to build both projects, she had collaborated with NGOs outside ‘Ayn al-‘Azm to bring in volunteer gardeners and tutors and tour buses of visitors. She was, it became clear to me, a “culture worker” (Shryock 2004a) whose influence in promoting the revival of certain Bedouin traditions derived both from her position within a lineage that was large, cohesive, and well-known within the township, and her skill in linking into NGO and media networks that reached beyond the township.

On one warm September day early during my second period of fieldwork in the Negev, Sarah offered to meet me after running errands in the city of Beersheba, where I was staying. She and her brother would drive me to ‘Ayn al-‘Azm so that we could talk about my living with her family and discuss how we could help each other on our respective projects. As we sat in her brother's car, she saw my bare arms showing below my short-sleeve shirt and chastised herself gently for not reminding me to wear long sleeves. I was surprised since I had often worn short sleeves on previous visits to her home, and since Sarah and her sisters so often interacted with visitors who did not conform to community norms of dress. But now, as a potential member of the household whose behavior would reflect on the other members, I was expected to conform in ways that would not be asked of a guest. When I moved in the following week, I was incorporated into gendered spatial norms. The family maintained separate spaces for men and women with vigilance, and I was asked to cover my hair with a *mandil* (headscarf) and remain in the women's spaces, as well.

The family's property, like most in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, was surrounded by a high wall, so that the goings-on inside were not visible from the street. Inside, two two-story houses stood with an open courtyard between, and small pens and cages for livestock ran along the back edges of the property. In one house, Sarah's brother and his family lived on the top floor. The ground floor was a mixed-use space that included Sarah's workshop, where she and her sisters made skin-care products, as well as an occasional classroom for lessons with the neighborhood children. In the other house lived Sarah, her mother Um

Fareed, and her three unmarried sisters. Several married sisters lived in the Al-‘Uwaydi neighborhood, having found husbands within the extended family, and visited often. Although the house was built with bedrooms for all the sisters, they preferred the intimacy of sleeping together in one large room downstairs. Each night, thin mattresses and blankets were laid out, and each morning they were stacked against the wall so the room could be used for TV-watching, food preparation, and innumerable other daily activities.

Sarah's father, Abu Fareed split his time between this house and his other wife's house down the street. The formal *shig*, where Abu Fareed hosted male guests, was at the front of the house. The *shig* also served as a sleeping room for the occasional international volunteers who came to work in Sarah's herb garden. Accommodating multiple aesthetics, the L-shaped room had both a traditional Bedouin seating area laid out with hand-made carpet pillows in brilliant hues of red, pink, and orange, and a Western-style nook of brown and tan upholstered chairs and sofas.

In the back of the compound, between the two houses, was the *‘arisha*, a gathering space for the women of the household and their visitors. A fire-pit was cut into the concrete floor for making tea and coffee and toasting bread. Each morning, woven mats, mattresses, and pillows were laid around the fire pit. At most times of the day, this space was full of family members, whether using the *‘arisha* as a supplement to the indoor kitchen for food preparation, serving tea to guests, or just relaxing. This made it convenient to run a small neighborhood store from the back storage room. Neighborhood children ran in at all hours of the day and evening with pocket money for candy or to pick up a container of cheese or milk for their mothers.¹²⁹ While I lived with the family, they began remodeling this space, replacing the wooden slats with concrete walls and a metal roof. The two older sisters were disappointed because they liked the warm feel that wood lent to the space, but both mother and father saw the renovations as an upgrade.

Each morning, Abu Fareed and his son left for work, often staying away until late

129 Engaging in a “multiresource economy” (Salzman 1980) has been a common strategy for Bedouin Arab groups across the Middle East since long before city-dwelling became a norm for many (Marx 1984). In urban settings, many groups, including Bedouin Arabs throughout Israel, have adopted new economic ventures (like this neighborhood store) that fit into similarly diversified strategies that continue to rely heavily on family cooperation (Marx 1984; Parizot 2008; Kressel 1984; Marx 1980; Rowe 1999).

in the evening, leaving the compound to the women and pre-school-age children. Household chores occupied most of the morning hours before the older children came home from school in the afternoon. The family also had an *'izbe* on the outskirts of town. Though “*'izbe*” usually refers to a remote seasonal camp, the family used the term for the small plot of land where Sarah hosted tour groups. Often, Sarah and one or two sisters walked from the house to the *'izbe* to work for the afternoon before returning home for dinner. Most evenings, women from the extended family, including Sarah's married sisters, aunts, and cousins, gathered in the *'arisha*, young children in tow, to talk and sip tea.

My second host family lived on the other side of town. Members of a smaller *'ashira* in town, the Abu Assas lived in a neighborhood containing segments of several different families. I initially met Wafiq Abu Assa through the environmental campaigns in which he had been a leader for the last several years. He, too, was a culture worker, though his environmentalist vision of Bedouin traditions held less sway in *'Ayn al-‘Azm* than in the transnational activist networks in which he worked. When he invited me to live with his family, I joined his mother and four unmarried siblings, who lived together in the concrete and stone house that the older brothers and their father had constructed together.

Ahmed, Wafiq's oldest brother and the father of three whose ambivalent views of “leaving the tent” were discussed in chapter two, was initially one of the most eager members of his family to move into the township. Because no adequate high school was available for Bedouin Arab students in the south when Ahmed was young, he had gone to live in northern Israel for four years. He grew accustomed to the furniture and stone houses of the north, and he was happy when, several year after he had finished high school and returned to his family's tent, discussion began about moving to *'Ayn al-‘Azm*. He described with pride the attentive planning that had gone into each room of this house. The small house was separated into space for family relaxation in the rear and a separate living room for receiving guests in front. Two bathrooms, one with a more traditional pit toilet and open shower, and one with a flush-toilet, lay at opposite ends of the house. Not having enough money at the time to fully construct their planned house, they laid in stairs to a second floor, which, fifteen years later, remained unbuilt.

This sturdy stone house shared the family compound with two smaller and more hastily assembled structures where two married brothers and their families lived. Different family members had moved into and out of these two temporary homes as marital status and other living circumstances had changed. With seven sons hoping to continue living near their widowed mother, space was tight in this small plot, and the family had begun building a two-story structure that would hold apartments for several of the brothers. But money was also tight, so the large, cement skeleton of the house stood waiting for the funds to complete it. Other unfinished houses lay scattered throughout ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, as throughout other Bedouin Arab townships, a visible index of economic vulnerability (Melly 2010). Eager for housing, but not waiting for the money necessary for conventional construction, another brother, Mufid, and his wife were building a unique, mud-brick-and-tire house, which they completed after I had moved out. The compound was under construction for the several months I lived there, moving from active construction when weather and funding permitted, to periods of waiting.

Each household within the compound functioned independently to some degree, usually preparing meals and doing chores separately, but also mingling in the courtyard to have coffee and enjoy some afternoon sun or work together on the mud house. In the evenings, siblings and cousins often squeezed together in the living room of the main house to watch television while chatting, entertaining the youngest children, and preparing a late-night snack. About once a week, everyone gathered for a large meal, as well. In this extended household of six brothers and two sisters, no spaces were specifically set aside for men and women. Though I maintained my habit of wearing a *mandil* while walking around town, I was not expected to wear it at home or keep my distance from the men.

The adult family members held a variety of jobs. Luna, Ahmed's wife, walked to work each day at a daycare center. Three of the older brothers left to work in and around Beersheba, driving deliveries for a large store and working for an NGO. One brother was self-employed, doing graphic designing from home, and another worked part-time for the ‘Ayn al-‘Azm schools. Um Ahmed, her daughters, and daughters-in-law stayed at home most days, except when traveling to Beersheba by taxi to buy food. Much like Sarah's household, this family's compound primarily became the domain of women and young

children for much of the day. However, unlike the spatially and socially dense relations of village life that had been maintained in the Al-‘Uwaydi's neighborhood, there was little interaction with neighbors. Rather, for this family without a large *‘ashira* in town and living in a neighborhood of unrelated lineages, evening gatherings were among the smaller circle of immediate family members living in the compound. Wafiq and his family did not visit many neighbors or host nightly gatherings of tea-drinking and chatting with extended family members.

Encountering Absences

‘Ayn al-‘Azm was established in 1970 and, by 2008, had reached a population of about 15,000. During the first several years, fewer than thirty families had moved into the township, and the number of new families began to increase significantly only when, several years later, the state government adopted a strict policy of refusing services to unrecognized villages. Because of the recency of its founding and inhabitation, most adult residents could recall some period of their lives before the township, and the parents of all these adults had spent most of their lives in landscapes other than ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. As discussed in chapter two, many residents remembered their moves from rural lifestyles in more dispersed settlements to the planned townships as a shift from freedom to restriction, intra-family closeness to inter-family friction, and self-sufficiency to dependence. These remembered taskscapes, whether or not they had been rose-tinted with nostalgia, influenced residents' encounters with the urban landscapes of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, as the past became imminent to landscapes in the present (Ingold 2000). Sharing a collective nostalgia for these past taskscapes, residents perceived a heavy presence of loss and absence in their township.

When describing their family history to me, many ‘Ayn al-‘Azm residents would look into the horizon and gesture in the direction of their former homes. They described how far in that direction their lands were, often giving the name of their tribe, but also using contemporary Israeli towns to orient me. Sitting within the township, they recalled these absent homes, asserting their family identity and claim to the place (Bahloul 1996). Other residents whose families had lived on the lands that were subsequently requisitioned to build ‘Ayn al-‘Azm saw the past in much more direct and present ways in

the landscapes they traveled on a daily basis. One man pointed in the direction of his grandfather's land, saying, "He bought it during British rule, and then the Jews came and...seized it." The land had then been zoned as an industrial sector, but it still lay undeveloped near what is now the entrance to the township. He used to visit the place often with his father, who got very angry upon seeing it in its present state, with the crumbled remnants of the grandfather's house still evident. Another relative, who consistently foreswore political discussions, described this same landscape less darkly. But he, too, saw the past in the present. "I will explain to you everybody, where they were living then," he told me. Surprised and wanting to be certain I understood, I asked, "You still remember where everyone was?" "Every tent....Even the sheep!" he exclaimed with a laugh.

Whether with a light-hearted demeanor or more dourly, when discussing the township with me and how they felt about their daily lives, residents were much more likely to cite problems related to absences than to praise the place. Similarly, researchers describe the Bedouin Arab townships as examples of "planning for failure." They note that since the townships' initiation they have suffered from structural discrimination in the form of insufficient land allocations, restrictive planning regulations for land-use, small local government budgets, the lack of a viable local economic base, a lack of local autonomy through elected councils or employment in government jobs, and inadequate provision of education, health, and recreation services (Abu-Saad and Lithwick 2000:11). For residents, the sense of inadequacy was immediate and personal. Unlike the Orientalist scholars of Muslim cities (Marcais 1928; Sauvaget 1934) who characterized these places primarily in terms of what they lacked in relation to Western cities (Raymond 2008), residents repeatedly explained to me how their township was lacking in comparison both to their family's own former "tent life" and neighboring Jewish towns.

Though not explained explicitly in terms of taskscapes, residents understood the landscapes of 'Ayn al-'Azm to be mutual constructions between people and place, as evidenced by the ways they read sociality in the landscapes. That is, they described landscapes shaping people's characters and behaviors, and used the state of local landscapes to make judgments about relations between people. For example, many counter narratives of the past spoke of parallels between the warm and open relations

based on freedom and respect that were fostered in the wide, open landscapes of life *barra* (“outside” the townships). They contrasted these relations with the claustrophobic and conflict-ridden relationships with neighbors in town who lived close together, separated only by tall metal or concrete walls. As the past was present in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm's landscapes through people's interpretations, so too was the future. Many parents, especially those with multiple sons, looked at the one-*dunam* plots of their homes, densely surrounded by neighbors, and sadly saw a future without room for their children to build houses nearby. This imagined future landscape of scattered children and grandchildren had urged some who could afford it to buy extra adjacent plots when they moved into ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. But by 2008, with few empty plots available for purchase, most faced this future landscape with a mixture of resentment and resignation.

Residents often complained of the poor planning that had gone into the township, noting that its neighborhood layout, original housing design, and the size of its schools were all incompatible with elements of Bedouin lifestyles and culture. When ‘Ayn al-‘Azm was first planned, the housing units were small—just 70-square-meter houses set on 400-square-meter plots (0.4 *dunam*)—and designed according to what western builders thought suitable for Bedouins (Falah 1983:314; Horner 1982). The planning of these townships resembled authoritarian modernization schemes elsewhere, influenced by an aesthetic assumption of what an ordered settlement should look like as much as by empirical research to determine the plan's suitability and chance for success (Scott 1998). This was a commonly cited source of contention.¹³⁰ Jaber, a Bedouin Arab social worker described with an ironic smile how the planners had initially proposed houses without roofs over large sections because “Bedouins like to see the sky.” Later, because many of these government-built houses failed to attract Bedouin Arab families, a “build-it-yourself” policy was implemented throughout the townships, whereby planners allocated settlement sites to families, who then built houses according to their own desires and financial means.

The small plots (which grew from one half-*dunam* in the initial allotments to one

130 Horner (1982:168) reports that “a number of Bedouin” were consulted about the design of these houses, but gives no other indication of how extensive this consultation was, nor how suggestions were implemented. Falah (1983), like most residents with whom I spoke, argues that potential residents were not adequately consulted during the government's planning process.

dunam per plot) and the limited neighborhood area assigned to each extended family were often noted as problems because of the importance Bedouins placed in having many children and maintaining patrilineal solidarity (Kressel 1991). Many township residents worried about the effects of scattering families and raising children in an *usra* (“nuclear family”) without significant involvement from the uncles, aunts, and cousins of an *‘ashira*.

The lack of jobs available within the township troubled people, as well. Employment opportunities in the formal labor market within ‘Ayn al-‘Azm are limited to a handful of small businesses operating along the main street and a few positions in the health clinic, community center, and local schools.¹³¹ Some residents found work outside ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, an opportunity open primarily to men. But unemployment rates have always been disproportionately high in the Bedouin Arab townships, in comparison with neighboring Jewish towns.¹³² An industrial zone that briefly had supported several factories producing building materials was closed down ten years ago. This, too, was attributed to negligent planning by authorities who were not guided by the best interests of Bedouin Arab citizens. As one former town council member told me, authorities had planned the industrial zone on lands claimed by a Bedouin Arab family. In compensation, alternative lands had been granted for this family's use on the other side of town, but then this area had been taken for the industrial zone of a neighboring Jewish town. As a result, the dispossessed family returned to claim their original lands, and the property dispute forced the factories to close. Some individuals, including women, ran various small businesses from their homes. Sarah's business, which will be discussed in more detail below, is an example of one of these creative ventures. Such innovative ventures blended spaces designed to remain separate (e.g., commercial and residential, agricultural and urban), and to some small degree, reclaimed the self-sufficiency that many residents identified as part of a traditional Bedouin lifestyle.

‘Ayn al-‘Azm was not a safe place, residents told me, and much of the problem lay in the township's planning. Families from different, sometimes disputing, tribes were

131 Though one of the members of my host family had worked in the local school system, he told me that most teachers were still Palestinian Arabs hired from outside the Naqab.

132 Swirski and Hasson (2006:95) report a 2003 jobless rate of 34.7% among Bedouin men of “recognized” towns and 11.6% among Jewish men in the Beersheba subdistrict.

located close together. Individuals, especially women, tended to avoid spending time in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm's few truly public spaces, such as playgrounds, the main street, and the open market lot. The wide, empty lot was only occupied as a market on Friday, when it was filled with collapsable shade tents and folding tables piled with produce, household supplies, and factory-made clothing. On other days, it was mostly deserted, only a few young men hanging out there. These public spaces, outside the protection of family, evoked little sense of belonging and were often described as dangerous. After dark, I was admonished not to walk between neighborhoods alone, and the men in my host families insisted on driving me if I needed to visit other families. Residents perceived the landscapes within which they were living in a bifurcated manner; home, and perhaps the neighborhood, were seen as safe and welcoming spaces, but from the township as a whole, residents felt alienated. In the sections that follow, I will discuss how residents experienced this alienation, where they found respite from it, and how they conducted their lives within these landscapes to which they felt ambivalently attached.

Comfort and Conflict: Place and Families in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm

Officially, the address of each house in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm consists of two numbers, one designating the neighborhood and one designating the particular house (or family plot, if there are multiple houses). But as I learned during *sayaara* rides into the township, residents organized themselves socially and spatially around the family. It was not a set of numbers that the driver requested for directions, but the name of a family, and perhaps the head of the household. ‘Ayn al-‘Azm was not “imageable” primarily in terms of the edges, paths, and landmarks that Kevin Lynch (1960) emphasizes in the sense of place that residents form of their cities. Whenever possible, members of an extended family or *‘ashira* procured plots together, and it was in terms of these social units that residents understood the township's space (see also Gulick 1963). Walking directions would be given, for example, as, “go to the second street in the Abu Gweider neighborhood and turn left; it's the fourth house on the street.” The street layout of the township, which was planned before these family clusters developed, gave no indication of separate family enclaves. These boundary lines were not marked by any signs, so they were visible to those who were quite familiar with the social make-up of the township,

but less so to socially external government officials or visitors.

The streets had been designed to aid smooth traffic flow across the township, but this flow conflicted with other priorities of the residents. At many places in town, streets were blockaded by oil drums filled with concrete, lengths of concrete sidewalk curb, or piles of rock and dirt. When I moved to ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, I was initially puzzled by these blockades, until Wafiq explained that families made them to carve private space out of these towns that combined so many different tribes into one public space. For state planners, a grid of numbered streets made the township legible and thus, easier to control without the mediation of local elites (Scott 1998; see also Rose 1994). However, the roads designed by state planners without consideration for the importance of ‘*ashira*’ affiliations allowed strange men to pass routinely through the clustered homes of an ‘*ashira*, bringing the women of the family into public view. Standards of modesty dictated against this exposure (Abu-Lughod 1987). Thus, in some places throughout town, individuals reshaped the planning of public officials, turning public space into defended private space with these blockades. Similarly, the high walls surrounding most family compounds created visual barriers to separate private, family space from public space, protecting the family's *hurma* (“sanctity,” also “women”).¹³³

Other aspects of urban planning against which residents chafed were more difficult for them to change. The “problem of land,” usually meaning a lack of land areas available to one's family, bothered ‘Ayn al-‘Azm residents. Some spoke of this lack in terms of agricultural lands, as will be discussed below. But residents from all professions felt constrained by a lack of family lands on which their sons could build homes. As Ahmed, a former school administrator, told me, it used to be “unacceptable” to Bedouins for sons to settle away from their parents (Meir 1998; Ginat 1997). But now, “they are forced to because there's no other place.” I asked Ahmed if people have become accustomed to this change. He paused and gazed thoughtfully for some time before responding that yes, it is now acceptable, but it is still very hard. Sarah shared Ahmed's perspective, and she expanded with an explicit comparison to “Jewish places” (Jewish municipalities), where “they have several thousand *dunams* set aside to expand in future generations. But in Bedouin places, there is only this much.” She brought her hands

¹³³ Often translated as “sanctity” or “sanctuary” in formal Arabic, I generally heard the term used colloquially to refer to the women of a family.

very close together, peering into the narrow gap pensively. “So, the people can only build more floors; there is no space for people to have land.” Cultural expectations have shifted to accommodate limited access to residential land, but for many residents, the scattering of family members to distant neighborhoods or towns serves as a constant reminder of land seizure and unfair government regulations, evidence of the taskscapes of state planning.

The importance of spatially consolidated lineages was of particular concern for men and for women with sons. Some young brides were pleased by the prospect of the greater independence they could enjoy with distance from parents-in-law. Yet, because most neighborhoods were still socially organized by family, such young women often felt isolated in their new neighborhoods. Scholars of urbanization and family trends in Arab communities throughout the world have noted the growing independence of nuclear family units (Abu-Lughod 1986; Joseph 1999; Hopkins 2003). In ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, although nuclear family households may have been more common, affiliation with the *‘ashira* remained largely unchallenged in certain arenas. As one young woman explained, the *‘ashira* had grown weaker in the sense of providing comfort and support on an intimate level, but in wider power struggles, it remained strong.¹³⁴ When discussing problems in town, my interlocutors complained of *waasta* (literally, “intercession,” meaning “family corruption” or “family connections”) eating into budgets and preventing the best people from being hired for local government jobs. Yet, during ‘Ayn al-‘Azm's local elections, almost everyone I spoke to had voted along family (i.e., *‘ashira*) lines. For fear of losing out when those who gained political power continued operating through *waasta*, there was reluctance to be the first to break with this system of family affiliation.

In this context of troubled inter-family politics, ‘Ayn al-‘Azm's densely packed

134 The strength or decline of extended kinship networks among sedentary Bedouin groups has been a topic of much debate in the literature. Salzman (1980:106) writes of “the decline of lineage corporateness and solidarity” with sedentarization, “manifested in a decline among lineage mates of coresidence, of mutual economic and political support, of identification with the lineage, and of feelings of solidarity.” Yet, Marx (1980), in the same volume, describes both individualization and continued economic cooperation within Bedouin lineages after sedentarization. Ginat's (1997) analysis of blood disputes among Bedouin in the Negev proposes the weakening of lineage co-liability in many respects, but its continued force in interpersonal relations in settled towns. Parizot writes that “the tribe (*‘ashira*) has only symbolic relevance,” and that “lineages (*‘ilât*)...at best[,]...form frameworks for mobilizing people during national elections” (2001:102).

residential space posed challenges not just for maintaining privacy and gendered space, but for inter-family relations, as well. No doubt, in the vast majority of cases, interactions between unrelated neighbors were smooth. But, conflicts drew great attention, and almost every resident I spoke with characterized township life as involving greater strife with neighbors than living *barra* in the unrecognized villages. Prior to Israeli statehood, when Bedouin Arabs had access to vast areas of land in the Naqab, distance between different family clusters helped avoid direct confrontation when disputes arose (el-Aref 1974). However, in the dense township, residents used physical barriers—both street barricades and high walls around family properties—to create enough separation to avoid confrontations.



Image 4: A street with high-walled family plots in 'Ayn al-'Azm.

Despite these measures, violence did sometimes occur, and residents reported that it generally fell along family cleavages. One day after I had moved away from 'Ayn al-'Azm, I returned on a visit and learned that two men had been killed earlier that week. I was having tea with a woman not related to any of the men involved, and she described the sequence of attack, retaliation, and further threats. A “blood revenge” (*taar*, تآر) had been carried out between the Al-'Uwaydis and Al Jibalis, she told me. The shooters were taken to jail, but young men from both families continued to make threats, saying the blood debt had not been settled, and my host was worried that more killings would occur. Killings between disputing families were rare (Ginat 1997), but a fear of them pervaded,

adding to residents' feelings of threat and alienation.

In other, less deadly confrontations divisions between disputing parties were also defined by *'ashira*, and there was considerable disagreement over when and to what extent the police should be involved in such disputes. For example, one night, a case of arson occurred in the neighborhood where I was living. A van had been set on fire, and the family immediately suspected their neighbors, with whom they had been involved in a long-running dispute that had previously consisted of throwing insults, sending threatening letters, and building higher fences. In this case, one of the older brothers in the family called the police, who came to investigate. While the police were interviewing other family members, I sat waiting with one of the daughters-in-law. She shook her head, upset that her husband and his brothers would call in the police for “every little thing.” “Are they grown men?” she asked rhetorically. She then asserted that the men should take responsibility for defending the family. Though some residents reacted to events like the blood revenge and this arson with anxiety and sorrow, others, like this daughter-in-law, accepted such violence as unavoidable and an expected part of life (Scheper-Hughes 1993). The outbreak of such violence and its channeling along *'ashira* lines reflects both the social turmoil in 'Ayn al-'Azm (and in its relation to the state) and efforts to re-order relations (Abu-Lughod 1987; Ginat 1997).

This daughter-in-law and the other residents who grappled with issues of family cohesion, privacy, and protection in 'Ayn al-'Azm struggled to reconcile the imposition and possible protection of state institutions, like the police, with their own desires for self-governance and respect within their community. As many older residents lamented, young people did not respect the authority of elders anymore. Urbanization had turned authority structures upside down, as the decline of agriculture in everyday life and the more prominent role of state bureaucracies and Hebrew-language interactions had rendered the kind of knowledge youth gained from formal education and social interactions more valuable than the knowledge of their elders (Meir 1998; Marx and Shmueli 1984). Traditions such as taking refuge, mediation led by a tribal judge (*qaadi*), or reliance on a third-party guarantor (*kafil*) of judgments (el-Aref 1974) had once been used to settle disputes. However, because of the overturning of a past authority structure, and because physically distancing parties was more difficult for township residents, such

methods of resolution were impractical. Yet, the principle of family solidarity and defense remained influential (Ginat 1997), leading to violent outbreaks such as these.

Residents were aware of the stereotypes of lawlessness and danger that non-Bedouin Israelis hold against Bedouin Arabs (Ginat 1997; Kabha 2007), and they were troubled that their township's reputation could contribute to these stereotypes. The woman who first told me about the blood revenge had also noted earlier that people (i.e., non-residents) were afraid to come to 'Ayn al-'Azm because they thought of it as a dangerous place. Children sometimes threw rocks at the cars, she told me, but she also carefully clarified that this was only a problem in the Al-'Uwaydi neighborhood. They had the wildest, most poorly raised kids, she said. Similarly, an elderly woman named Um Yunis, who traveled frequently to Dganim, explained that the moshav had erected their perimeter fence because Bedouins were stealing from them, sometimes even violently. But, she quickly assured me, those in Dganim trusted her and her family completely. Distancing themselves from other, more dangerous 'Ayn al-'Azm residents and emphasizing the family as a unit of belonging, these speakers managed the ambivalent connections they held to the township as a social place.

Sensing Neglect

When I first visited 'Ayn al-'Azm, I had been struck by the omnipresent litter and rundown feel of public areas—the open space used for weekly markets, the main streets, and the *wadi* that runs through the center of town—though these parts of town were all fifty years old or younger. I wondered: Were these trash-strewn areas signs of disrespect (for one's neighbors), ignorance (of ecological and health consequences), or neglect (from governmental authorities)? Initially, I kept these tentative interpretations to myself, interested instead to learn how residents read these spaces.

There is much at stake in reading these disheveled landscapes, because claims of Bedouin Arabs' environmental stewardship, or lack thereof, have often been used as evidence in debates over land rights. Opponents of land rights for Bedouin Arabs often argue that they do not take good care of the places they live in, so why should they be allowed to spread over more areas? On the other hand, advocates of Bedouin Arabs' land rights often propose one of two different interpretations of this litter—one a critique of

sociopolitical discrimination and the other an affirmation of multiculturalism that respects Bedouin Arabs' otherness. According to the first of these two, the litter results from poor municipal services, like garbage collection and street cleaning, which ultimately stem from discriminatory state funding for Arab versus Jewish municipalities. From the second viewpoint, the litter exists because Bedouins simply do not notice it as much as Western visitors, and it should be ignored politely in political discussions. Litter is clearly only one element of a place's environmental quality, but, because it is highly visible and politically meaningful, it serves as a striking example of how people interpret their surroundings, reading moral statements in the landscapes.

I found that litter and signs of disrepair were a source of consternation and debate among township residents. Many contributed to it, many noted it as a problem, and responsibility was assigned in many directions. One morning in January, I visited Sahr, who lives on the edge of town. Feeling cramped in a house full of four boisterous children on vacation from school, Sahr suggested going for a walk along the *wadi* that ran behind her house. We strolled with her three youngest children along a dirt path to the *wadi*, where we were faced with a thin stream of white-gray water, edged with foam. Looking at the dirty water, Sahr told me that this flows from the *mustawtaniin*, “settlements,” a term used to refer to Jewish settlements in the West Bank. I asked if some of the pollution doesn't also come from places within Israel, and she agreed, making a sweeping motion of our surroundings as we rounded a curve in the path and began walking between piles of garbage. Building materials, household waste, and a bloated sheep carcass lay along the path. Our nostrils were filled with the stench of rotting flesh and burnt metal and plastic. Sahr shook her head and told me that all this dumping is a disgrace. We walked for a few minutes, but then turned back to the house. I recalled our interview, when she had described how she reused and recycled items, but said with disappointment that most people she knew did not concern themselves with environmental issues. “They don't have this culture,” she explained.

Sahr was not the only one concerned about such matters, though. Many other residents were also uncomfortable with their ramshackle surroundings, but felt powerless to change them or preoccupied with what they considered to be greater problems. According to Hussein, a newly elected member of the ‘Ayn al-‘Azm local council, many

residents went before the council prior to the latest elections to call for a better town environment. Hussein noted, though, that these concerned residents came as individuals, not in organized groups, and that their calls for better environmental protection were voiced along with other concerns, such as their children's education and struggles with poor health and unemployment.

When faced with the trash-strewn streets and *wadi*, residents assigned responsibility among a number of groups and individuals. Most often, the littered landscapes were read as a sign of neglect from *al-hukuma* (the government). *Al-hukuma* was an unspecified level of authority that could include the national government and the local council. If pressed for more specificity, residents usually spoke of the local council's failure to provide adequate garbage collection. In so doing, they located responsibility with the local actors over whom they might possibly exert some influence (Scott 1985). As Hussein noted, until that year, the council had no legal external dump site, and so whatever refuse was collected in 'Ayn al-'Azm was simply deposited in the *wadi* that runs through its center. In recent months, the local council had since begun transports to a regulated regional dump. Some residents interpreted a wider net of responsibility that included the national government, as well, making the argument that budgetary discrimination against Arab municipalities was at the root of the problem. In the face of very small local council budgets, these residents argued, other tasks, such as fixing the crumbling and overcrowded schools, providing water and electricity reliably, and finishing the pavement and sewage connections for neighborhoods that were still waiting, took priority.

Some spoke of residents' personal responsibility not to litter and invoked the need for better "education." However, perhaps because of the popular discourse of lazy and irresponsible Bedouins, such statements were often qualified or elaborated upon. For instance, when I asked one man whether environmental issues like litter and pollution were prioritized by 'Ayn al-'Azm residents, he replied defensively, "Yes, it's a priority. But the whole world needs to work on it." After contextualizing the problem within global environmentalism, he then averred that, "Of course, from the house, we should also work on it." Others invoked the argument of cultural difference, speaking of litter as a product of "traditional Bedouin culture" meeting "modern" products. Jaber, a social

worker who grew up in a village of tents and had since moved to a nearby Bedouin township, and whose work included ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, pointed to two causes for the littered appearance of Bedouin townships: a “traditional state of mind” and the lack of proper infrastructure for handling waste. He described a radical transformation, similar to that of other Naqab counter narratives, from “the Bedouin community that was here until recently and the Western Bedouin community that we're looking at right now.”

And what I was saying is it's a matter of education. The behavior changed, the needs changed, the [consumer] means changed, but the state of mind remained traditional. Now, that's not because Bedouins are a threat to the environment.... But people don't see it in the concept of harming, because their waste, until probably 20 years ago, was organic waste. It wasn't plastic bags. It wasn't, it wasn't their way of thinking. When I throw away the remains of a tent, this is organic material that will dissolve. So that wasn't a threat. I remember as a young person, even as a child, you know when you would go around a tribe, you wouldn't see rubbish. There was no garbage, you know. Because everything was natural.

As consumption patterns changed, Jaber explained, inorganic waste proliferated, and he began to see more and more litter.

Many other people, from inside and outside ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, invoked some form of this “traditional state of mind” explanation. But the consternation that many residents expressed with the state of their surroundings points beyond a simple inability to learn how to deal with inorganic waste. Such practices were deeply influenced by the experience of dwelling within neglected, remote landscapes. ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, like other remote areas, was full of the remnants of experiments in social planning (Ardener 1989). Whether because projects were started but never fully carried through, like the sidewalks that ended several blocks before the edge of township neighborhoods or the trash that was picked up by the local municipality but then dumped in the central *wadi*, or because residents' use of space did not match planners' expectations, such as women's avoidance of public parks, the ruins of failed social planning accumulated in the township.

Litter was one element of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm's landscapes about which residents complained. When describing their discomfort in the township, they often listed it along with crumbling school buildings, inadequate recreational facilities for the children, and high rates of theft. These flaws were contrasted with depictions of Jewish towns, where, residents told me, the government spent money building and maintaining parks, schools,

and playgrounds. Yet, other residents pointed out, there were actually playgrounds in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, but they were not used, so they quickly accumulated trash and became abandoned lots. Trees had been planted along one neighborhood's sidewalks, but many died as they were not properly watered, and some were even vandalized.

This was part of the dilemma of dwelling within ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. David Harvey notes that places can empower people through their “common investment” in making those places. But the township was not a place that had been “built up through social struggles and strivings” (1996a:326). Most residents had neither the investment of “building of affection through working to build the tangible product of place” or of “the discursive construction of affective loyalties” (1996a:323). There was no widely shared history of dwelling that would make these planned public spaces into places for which residents shared personal responsibility. In such a setting, these development projects had been tried but failed. In its social remoteness, however, ‘Ayn al-‘Azm also continued to “cry out for development” (Ardener 1989:218). Playgrounds and manicured streets were signs of a place that belonged within Israel, that had left behind its social remoteness and “developed.” Residents wanted this for their township, too.



Image 5: A public playground becomes a neglected landscape.

Ardener suggests that “remote areas are the home of rubbish, because rubbish is not a category there. What appears remarkable is that people elsewhere expect to tidy up the formless universe” (1989:219). In ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, though, where the remoteness of

the Bedouin township is physically so close to the socially integrated Jewish towns on either side, rubbish did have a category. It was a sign of neglect. The heaps of trash were read as the physical record of abandonment and discrimination. These trash-filled places were to be avoided, not to be cared for and cleaned up.

These landscapes of neglect made people feel great ambivalence about calling ‘Ayn al-‘Azm home. I had many conversations with residents about attachments to land and place. None of them expressed a sense of attachment to the township as a place or group of people. For example, during one conversation, I asked her to identify something good about living in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, since she had only mentioned shortcomings. She liked living near all her extended family, she said, but added no other redeeming features of life in the township. My interlocutors could easily imagine moving elsewhere, so long as their family was with them. A number insisted that they could not move away from the Naqab, but none expressed a fondness for the landscapes of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm.

My walk with Sahr produced one particularly strong sensory demonstration of a landscape of neglect. Sahr enjoyed walking in nature, searching for wildflowers, and teaching her children about native flora, but there were no places for her to do this in or around ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. As a result, when she spoke to me of nature, the change of seasons, or her feelings about the land, she spoke in reference to the landscapes of her parents' home in a nearby unrecognized village. There, she could name every hill and *wadi*, identify the plants, and simply enjoy wandering outside. But in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, she was confined to her small house and the trash-laden *wadi* in back. ‘Ayn al-‘Azm was not really home, but her house happened to be located there.

Urban Agropastoral Practices

In the bifurcated landscape of the township, those neglected areas heaped with rubbish were striking, but many residents were busy making place in areas closer to home, often through agropastoral taskscapes. ‘Ayn al-‘Azm was planned as a township that would shift Bedouin Arabs from a semi-nomadic agropastoral lifestyle to a settled life of wage labor. According to the simplifications of state planners (Scott 1998), there was no room for agriculture or animal husbandry, yet these practices have not disappeared.

Before the government's initiation of townships, Bedouin Arabs throughout the Naqab had earned their living through a “multiresource economy” (Salzman 1980), whereby each *beit* (household unit) combined considerable engagement in wage labor with farming and raising herds of sheep and goats. The rain-fed farming of wheat and barley could yield approximately twenty to thirty kilograms of grains per *dunam* in a drought and 120 to 150 kilograms per *dunam* in a year of good rain (Abu-Rabia 1994). In addition, farmers built terraced dams in valleys with gradual slopes. These dams collected water and the eroded soil from hillsides, creating fertile enough conditions to grow vegetables, tomatoes, vine crops, and fruit trees such as olives, pomegranates, and figs (Marx 1967). Before imposition of the *siyag*, most families had engaged in nomadic livestock rearing, moving throughout a wide, tribally held *dira*. But this was curtailed by the *siyag*'s limited boundaries, prompting many families to engage in sedentary livestock rearing, housing the animals in one place and bringing feed to them, rather than taking them out to pasture (Abu-Rabia 1994). After the *siyag* was lifted, some families returned to mobile shepherding, but registration requirements and restrictions introduced by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1978 limited the ability of many families to do so.

Persisting Taskscapes

By 2008 in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, a handful of families still made a living from raising sheep and goats, housing the herds in plots outside the township. Most families, though, did not have access to the means of making a living off agriculture—especially land-use rights and water. Instead, many continued to pursue some elements of their former agropastoral lives by adapting the practices to township life. A comparison between the Al-‘Uwaydi and Abu Assa households demonstrates the breadth of these adaptations.

The Al-‘Uwaydis raised several sheep and goats in their family compound, along with a small flock of chickens and pigeons. After each meal, our leftovers were salvaged, and one of the children or women parceled out the appropriate scraps for each animal. This small collection of animals was far from sufficient to feed the large family, but they did supplement their diet. Several of the sheep were slaughtered for the Islamic holiday of sacrifice, Eid Al-Adha, and the chicken eggs and pigeon meat reduced the amount of food that needed to be purchased at the market. In addition, a small kitchen garden lay

next to the *'arisha*, where the women grew herbs year-round and rotated a handful of vegetables throughout the year. Lemon and pomegranate trees lined one side of the house and shaded a patch of the garden, and one large fig tree dominated the front of the compound, spreading high between the two houses.

In this neighborhood, where everyone was connected by family relations, resources were often shared between nuclear family households. Some items were given or traded, while others were bought. A relative just up the road kept a camel, and occasionally the family would get milk from her as a special treat, which they heated and added to the sweet morning tea. Another relative raised a pair of dairy cows. Usually, Sarah's family bought milk from the grocery store. However, when an investigative report broke in the national media that Tnuva, Israel's largest dairy producer, was using silicon in its milk production, Um Fareed heard this and began buying fresh milk from her relative. The Al-'Uwaydis family connection with food producers allowed them to make this switch easily.

The family also used the *'izbe* plot on the outskirts of town for a variety of agropastoral purposes. Owned by Abu Fareed, the *'izbe* had passed through several uses, including as a modest site for planting crops and then for his son's auto repair garage. The garage had closed years ago and had since become Sarah's store and hosting site for guests. Abu Fareed also continued to farm a small plot of wheat at the *'izbe—baladi* wheat (i.e., heritage varieties of wheat grown without chemical fertilizers or pesticides), the sisters had stressed to me—and a cluster of fruit trees.

The *'izbe* existed in an uncertain legal status, a gray area that was not fully licensed for the extant buildings of Sarah's business, but to which township authorities turned a blind eye. Because of this gray legal status, as well as financial limitations, Sarah renovated her brother's former garage, primarily using materials she found nearby, like mud and stone. In addition, adjoining one side of the converted garage, she had erected a woven tent, which, she always stressed to her visitors, was an authentic Bedouin tent that she had bought from an old woman in Jordan. "I was born in a tent," she would tell visitors. "But, we are forgetting.... These days, one can only find a goat-hair tent like this in Jordan." To the other side of the shop was a large herb garden, planted in concentric circles and snaked with black irrigation piping. It was built with

help from an Israeli NGO, which provided financial assistance and recruited international volunteers. Sarah continued to cultivate more international contacts, and she and her family occasionally hosted other volunteers who weeded and hauled rocks for the garden paths. She used this garden to educate visitors about desert herbs and Bedouin culture and planned to bring groups of school children from ‘Ayn al-‘Azm to learn about their own heritage and experience putting their hands in the soil.

Fawzia, Sarah's younger sister, was also attracted to what she considered to be authentic Bedouin traditions, but she did not possess the same business aspirations as her sister. Instead, she worked frequently in the herb garden, went on desert walks to gather plants, and more ambitiously, was in the process of building a small mud-brick (*bayka*) house on the plot. She took pride in constructing the house in the traditional style, the way Bedouins used to build, rather than more “modern” techniques, such as strawbale or the use of a frame of recycled tires, which were then starting to gain popularity in Israel among “green builders.” She was building the house because she loved looking out over the desert, as she could do from the *‘izbe*, but could not do from her family's neighborhood. She chose to build with *bayka* to carry forward Bedouin traditions, and the mud, as opposed to conventional concrete construction, was unlikely to draw the regulatory attention of planning authorities.

In the Abu Assa family, on the other hand, very little food production took place at home. The family bought all of their food from the markets. The Abu Assas had embraced urbanization earlier and more fully than the Al-‘Uwaydis, and this was reflected in the physical layout of their property. They had built up most of their small family plot with housing. There were just a few fruit trees beside the house, which had dried up mysteriously in the past year or so. Nobody knew why, exactly, and they had not pursued any remedy. An olive tree grew in the back of the property, giving shade and a small yearly crop of fruit.

In part, the dense coverage of their family plot with housing was a response to the practical needs of a family of seven sons attempting to house all of them next to the first family home where Um Ahmed still lived with the unmarried children. But, the family's departure from agricultural practices was also due to the sons' enthusiasm for “modern living” when they moved to ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. The three eldest, all of whom were teenagers

or older at the time, embraced formal education and gained degrees in graphic design, education, and communication studies.

More recently, though, the family had begun adding some agricultural elements to their urban landscape. The small courtyard between the houses was in a state of flux when I lived there. What had begun as an open space shaded by one large tree was being transformed into a permaculture project.¹³⁵ Planning for the project was done as a collaboration between family members and a group of international students completing a service learning project. Together, they dug and re-shaped the ground into low footpaths and made raised garden beds ready to be planted with vegetables. A pit in the middle waited to be filled with water as a fish pond. When I went away for a week and returned, the family had also built a compost bin and a makeshift cage and gotten two chicks, raising them to produce eggs.

These permaculture projects were initiated by Wafiq's growing environmental interests. As he learned through his activist work among environmentalist and social justice NGOs about permaculture, the politics of food safety and self sufficiency, and the environmental ramifications of urbanization, he slowly began to bring some of these principles to bear at home. Although he did not speak with his brothers a great deal about the environmental campaigns with which he was involved at work, he did begin using the family compound as a site for experimentation in permaculture. The pursuit appealed to him on ideological and educational grounds. He hoped to create a model within the township of how to build stronger Bedouin Arab communities by combining local Bedouin traditions with permaculture principles that had been developed and promulgated halfway around the globe. For Wafiq, the Bedouin traditions gave his project authenticity, and the permaculture principles stamped it with the mark of advancement, staving off labels of backwardness. Family members liked the experimentation for the practical improvements it either brought or promised to bring to their lives. Um Ahmed looked forward to having vegetables and herbs available at home, rather than needing to go to the market. Mufid anticipated the calming environment of

¹³⁵ Permaculture is a method of sustainable land use design that attempts to mimic relationships found in natural ecologies. It has become an important school of thought within global environmental movements and figured prominently in the environmental campaigns that will be discussed further in chapter eight.

greenery that they would soon be growing in the middle of the township.

The mud-and-tire house that Mufid was building also grew out of this experimentation with permaculture, after Wafiq introduced his brother to this mode of building. The external frame was constructed of stacked car tires, trash like cardboard and cans to fill and weigh down the tires, and a mixture of mud and straw to seal the tires together and create a smooth wall. As the house slowly took form, it became a more complex object, a multi-valent symbol, to which different family members attached very different meanings.



Image 6: Mufid Abu Assa's permaculture house, under construction.

For Ahmed, it was a shrewd tactic and a way to dodge the unfair zoning laws that confined ‘Ayn al-‘Azm residents. The family did not have permission to build on that spot of land, because they had already covered so many square meters of their family plot with housing. Since the structure was illegal, Ahmed thought it wise to construct it with these free or inexpensive materials. If “they” came to tear down the house at some point, Ahmed commented, Mufid would have managed to create a house for his family for a time and not have lost a significant financial investment. Wafiq extolled the house as the first mud-and-tire building in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. It was a progressive melding of ecological principles and Bedouin traditions that also made a pointed political statement about the

limitations that government planners imposed on Bedouin Arabs. For Mufid, an avowedly apolitical person, mud-building was not a political statement, but rather, a way to provide inexpensive and comfortable shelter for his wife and two young children. He had been married for several years and had struggled to find a house in this neighborhood. This mud-building also fit in well with his pastoral dream of creating a small home farm of livestock and vegetables. Mufid fondly remembered the family togetherness of his time living in a tent, and he saw in permaculture the opportunity to regain a vibrant, cohesive, and productive home life. He nostalgically sought out “the simple life” that he imagined “real Bedouin” like his grandfather had enjoyed. He hoped, through a pastoral taskscape, to regain a lost sense of comfort and belonging.

As these cases demonstrate, agropastoralism includes more than just planting and harvesting crops and raising sheep. It involves a whole lifestyle, from cycles of sleeping and waking, to the kinds of foods people eat and the physical arrangement of their houses. Each of these families included some elements of small-scale agriculture in their township landscapes, but each undertook these practices to different extents and for different reasons. The Al-‘Uwaydi family's raising of animals and growing of crops was more continuous with their pre-township taskscape. Agriculture was integrated into their daily routines, such that we all awoke at sunrise and gathered in the *‘arisha* to eat breakfast before tending to animals or walking to the *‘izbe*. The day ended with the women gathering around the hearth in the *‘arisha*, then moving inside to sleep around 10:00 pm, so that we could all wake up early the next day. In contrast, with the Abu Assas, I stayed up late watching dubbed Turkish soap operas, the whole family crowded together on the couches and armchair. In the morning, everyone awoke at different times, with the children going off to school, men to work, and women staying to do household chores.

Both families ate store-bought foods and used some prepared meals, but also cooked large, home-made meals. With the Al-‘Uwaydis, foods considered to be traditional Bedouin fare, like *mbasala*, *nbiy'*, and *chubeza* were common.¹³⁶ Such dishes

¹³⁶ *Mbasala* is a spiced stew of tomatoes and onions, poured over a tray of roughly shredded *saaj* bread. *Nbiy'* is a sort of jam made from raisins, usually eaten with olive oil as a dip for bread. *Chubeza* (mallow) is a wild green that grows in the winter, and is made into a thick soup eaten with dipped *saaj* bread.

were less common in the households of the Abu Assa compound, where Hanin, Mufid's wife, brought northern Palestinian dishes from her home in the Galilee, and Luna avidly watched cooking shows on television and incorporated new ingredients and dishes. But *saaj*, also referred to as “Bedouin bread” (*chubz bedoui*), was central to both families' diets. This large, very thin, circular bread is baked on a wide, convex piece of metal set over a small fire. The subtle chewiness of the delicate bread becomes rubbery after a day or two, so women in each compound worked together to knead the dough, toss out, and bake the bread every few days. While I lived with the Abu Assas, Hanin and I were both learning the art of *saaj*-making. The family members who gathered to tease good-naturedly at our clumsy movements also commented approvingly at how Bedouin we were becoming when we successfully produced the delicate rounds of bread without burnt holes.

Because the bread is labor-intensive and requires open space for a fire, many people in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm and other townships and cities had stopped baking it. However, these families had held onto this familiar practice. As part of their taskscapes, *saaj*-baking involved social interactions as an extended family, bringing together women from different nuclear family units. It bridged generations as a task that girls were eager to learn from their mothers and aunts. Whereas many other domestic chores had been shifted inside to take advantage of electric ovens, sinks, and even television to entertain oneself while chopping vegetables, *saaj*-making continued to mark certain outdoor space as domestic. And in the Abu Assa household, *saaj*-baking in the evening helped strengthen family relationships, drawing many family members to warm by the fire, talk, and sip tea as they ate scraps of fresh bread.

Many elements of these agropastoral taskscapes—penning animals in the family courtyard, *saaj*-baking, gathering outside in an *‘arisha*, and sitting on the ground—are marked within Israel as Bedouin or Arab, and family members were aware of this social marking. Some, like Sarah and Ahmed, advocated the continuation of these taskscapes, enlisting food production and preparation to preserve a threatened Bedouin culture or to make a sociopolitical statement in the context of Israeli norms (cf Bahloul 1999). These practices also helped to reproduce kinship, bonding family members in the daily running of a household (Carsten 1997). Most, however, did not view their participation in these

agropastoral taskscapes as rebellious acts. They were “making do” (de Certeau 1984). They ate *saaj* because it tasted better than store-bought loaves and kept a few animals in their courtyard because it reduced the grocery bill.

Practices associated with agriculture or rural living partially assuaged the nostalgia of many ‘Ayn al-‘Azm residents by recreating elements of those taskscapes and landscapes to which they could not return in full (Bryant 2008; Bahloul 1996). Some older residents who had raised sheep and harvested grains prior to moving into the planned township found ways to continue these practices within the township on a small scale. Um Yunis was uniquely dedicated to her past taskscapes and demonstrated a complex combination of adaptation to new landscapes and preservation of old ones. She was already middle-aged when she moved to a plot at the edge of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, and though her son built her a concrete block house with two bedrooms and a large kitchen, she continued to live in a tent that was anchored with cement into the hard-packed dirt in front of the house. She appreciated the addition of certain conveniences, like running water, a gas burner for cooking food, social security payments from the state, and ready access to veterinary and medical services. She was unwilling, though, to give up certain aspects of the taskscape in which she and others engaged before moving to the planned township, such as raising a small collection of animals and living in a tent. She simply felt more comfortable with the fresh air breezing through her tent and the sound of chickens and goats just beyond the open flaps. Residents like Um Yunis did not intend to make a political statement.

For younger residents, these practices were more deliberate acts of cultural revival. They were ways to maintain or recreate a link with the past and what the past represented. As Margaret Jolly (1992:56) noted in observing Trobriand women's seemingly timeless tradition of making banana leaf bundle skirts, “apparent persistence may be resistance to colonial intervention.” She found that what seemed to be simply the stability of a tradition practiced by women, and thus buffered from the change exerted by Western influence on more public men's practices, was in interaction with politico-economic changes just as much as the men's practices. The production and trade of these skirts had “expanded and [taken on] novel salience, as symbols not just of the constant regeneration of Trobriand persons, but of the self-conscious regeneration of Trobriand

culture in the face of external pressure” (Jolly 1992: 42). Similarly, the seemingly mundane persistence of agropastoral practices amidst the urbanizing pressures of the township took on added cultural and political salience.

For example, Sarah associated health with traditional Bedouin connections to landscapes in the past and found both health and connections to the land to be lacking in present-day ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. As a result, she was a strong proponent of reviving Bedouin traditions. She brought children to the *‘izbe* to learn about herbal remedies and farming, and she urged her family to cook with fresh home-grown ingredients instead of sugary, pre-packaged foods. Fawzia took pride in building her mud-brick house as a personal accomplishment, but also for its fidelity to traditional building methods. The younger members of both families noted foods that were uniquely Bedouin and commented on their authenticity for my benefit when we ate them. Though many residents may have been personally making do, their collective dwelling practices contradicted elements of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm's urban planning. They invested labor in these agropastoral taskscapes that made places (Harvey 1996a) marked as Bedouin. Some culture workers (Shryock 2004a), like Sarah and Wafiq, recast this persistence more explicitly as cultural resistance.

Recreating Loved Landscapes

In addition to these residents invested in the persistence of agropastoral taskscapes, some residents were motivated by the specific desire to create lost landscapes. Responding to feelings of dislocation in the township, they attempted to recreate, at least partially, landscapes that they remembered from “before ‘Ayn al-‘Azm.” These were not memories from the distant past, but recollections of landscapes and taskscapes left behind only twenty to forty years ago.

Furthermore, rural and agricultural taskscapes were not always meant to recreate something specifically Bedouin. Bayan, a woman who had married into the Al-‘Uwaydi family and moved into ‘Ayn al-‘Azm from further north, adored gardening. She grew vegetables and tended fruit trees in small areas all around her house. When she felt tense or angry, she told me, she would work the land a bit and start to feel at ease. In addition to her enjoyment of gardening tasks, Bayan fostered all this greenery in an effort to

recreate a small portion of the landscapes she remembered so fondly from her former home. The best years of her life, she told me, were those when her family had lived on the edge of a *moshav* in central Israel and worked together tending the orchards. Bayan and her sisters worked hard picking and carrying grapes and persimmons during the day and later enjoyed exploring the green countryside on foot. There was really freedom then, she said wistfully. Though she had grown up for the first dozen years of her life in the Naqab, in an unrecognized village and then in an unrecognized neighborhood adjacent to one of the planned townships, and though she continued to appreciate desert landscapes, too, it was the greenery of the moshav in central Israel that she recalled as her favorite landscape. Eighteen years later, Bayan sat with me in her *'arisha* in 'Ayn al-'Azm and told me with a serene smile how she loved seeing the trees begin to fruit each year or watching the seeds she had planted emerge into seedlings.



Image 7: Muna's Gazan garden in the Naqab.

Like Bayan, Muna approached gardening as a way of recreating a beloved landscape. The first time I visited Muna's house, my view from the street was only of a tall, metal fence with thorny bushes filling any gap and spilling over the top. But when I entered through the narrow gap in the fence, I was struck by the greenery that Muna had coaxed out of this desert climate. Flowering cacti and ornamental trees sprouted from pots, and a few olive trees shaded nooks of vegetation. It was expensive, she assured me,

when I asked about the cost of water, but she willingly spent large portions of the meager salary she earned picking fruit as a seasonal laborer on pots, seedlings, and water. For Muna, creating a small, private pocket of greenery helped her to feel at home in a town she viewed as unwelcoming. She was not a Bedouin Arab, but a Gazan who married a Bedouin Arab man from Israel and lived in the coastal Israeli city of Ashkelon for many years before moving to ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. She told me that she never felt accepted by the Bedouin Arabs among whom she lived, the watchful restrictions imposed on her by her husband's family not being paired with close relationships of either financial or emotional support. And the Naqab environment felt dry and infertile to her. She remembered Ashkelon being better because of the “freedom, clean air, and...pretty nature. There, everything just grows on its own.”

A New Way to Make a Living: Negotiating “Progress” and “Tradition”

Many elements of Arab agropastoral taskscapes have been drawn upon for tourism throughout Israel, particularly those marked practices or cultural products that are deemed non-threatening and marketable (Shryock 2004c). Throughout Israel, Palestinian tourist spaces have been co-designed by Ministry of Tourism officials and Jewish and Palestinian entrepreneurs to declare the loyalty of Arab citizens and display safe forms of cultural difference (Slyomovics 1998; Stein 2008). At times, these spaces offer Palestinians the opportunity to counter the normalization of their dispossession within Israel, but most often, the circumstances of the tourist encounter demand that participants self-censor for the sake of “consumer coexistence” (Stein 2008).

In the Naqab, images of exotic Bedouin culture and a remoteness that promises a relatively untouched picture of “the past” have been key marketing tools (Dinero 2002, 2010).¹³⁷ Billed as cultural encounters, tourists can visit the nearby Museum of Bedouin Culture or book a night of Bedouin camping with a tour guide and be offered tea and *saaj* bread as a gesture of authentic hospitality. In Israel, most of these tourist encounters do not occur where Bedouin Arabs actually live, and most large-scale tourism operations that deal in these safely “displaced” elements of Bedouinness (Shryock 2004c) are not run by Bedouin Arabs themselves (Dinero 2002). Many of these enterprises, by

¹³⁷ Such symbolic marketing of “the past” and Bedouin hospitality has also been big business in other Arab contexts, as well (Shryock 2004c).

presenting Bedouins as culturally wild and exotic, yet living today in somewhat more “modern” and “developed” circumstances due to their Israeli citizenship, construct a moral narrative that blames the Bedouin community for quality-of-life disparities with Jewish Israelis (such as in health, education, and employment) and congratulates the Israeli state for any improvements along these lines (Dinero 2010:170). But some Bedouin Arab entrepreneurs are joining the business of heritage tourism (Boniface and Fowler 1993; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998) in order to create employment opportunities in Bedouin Arab towns and villages and make a living in ways they see as embracing progress and protecting traditions.¹³⁸

Sarah's venture was an intriguing example of heritage entrepreneurship because it showcased the traditional botanical knowledge she learned from her grandmother and built upon the business acumen she gained through college studies in England. She had long been troubled by the health and social problems that residents of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm shared with other Bedouin Arabs of the Naqab and was made more aware of socio-economic disparities by her time in Europe. In response, she developed a set of projects combining the marketing of her herbal products and tourism that brought international travelers and Israeli Jews into ‘Ayn al-‘Azm with initiatives in community-building, women's empowerment, and ecological education.

Sarah welcomed groups of visitors—mostly Israelis, but also international visitors—to her tent and store by prior appointment. When they came in buses and vans, she usually showed them around the circular paths of the herb garden first, inviting them to touch and smell the plants and explaining some of their medicinal uses. She explained that the inner circles were all native desert plants, stronger in potency than those grown in greenhouses because of the dry intensity of the desert climate, and the outer circle was a collection of common but non-native medicinal plants. Urging them to sniff her favorite plant, she often suggested they take a sprig with them. This garden was only a teaching site; the volume of plant material she needed to extract essential oils could not be grown in this small space, so Sarah and her sisters gathered plants from the wild, and she occasionally supplemented their finds with mail-order purchases. Then, Sarah would

¹³⁸ Similar ventures in other townships include several organizations of women weaving rugs and embroidering, a cooperative of shepherds producing organic milk and meat, and the projects of the environmental NGO that will be discussed further in the final chapter.

lead the group through the shop and into the large tent, where carpets and cushions were laid out, but plastic chairs also waited for those not adventurous or nimble enough to sit on the ground. Tea was served by the sisters and neighbors that Sarah employed. Staging a home-like setting, Sarah served a taste of the famous Bedouin hospitality (Shryock 2004c), not cynically, but nonetheless savvy to its appeal.

As the visitors sipped tea, Sarah would describe the problems within the Bedouin community that prompted her to create this business and the winding path she'd taken to do so. When Sarah returned from her university studies, she recounted, her concerns about Bedouin Israelis' health centered on chronic diseases like asthma and diabetes. She noted their current prevalence and found research showing that such illnesses had not been so widespread forty years ago. Sarah recalled the different eating habits, outdoor lifestyles, and naturopathic remedies her grandmother's generation had used and saw a connection between worsening health and Bedouin Arabs' "forgetting, losing their culture." There was so much more awareness of health problems in England and in the United States than here, she told visitors, and those communities were striving for lifestyles that had been the norm for Bedouin Arabs until recently.

Sarah decided to use her college training in business to help her community. Over the next several years, she practiced making herbal balms, teas, soaps, and tinctures, using what she remembered from her grandmothers' practices and supplementing this with research on the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed and college courses in botany, medicinal herbs, and cosmetics production. She treated neighbors' ailments with trial batches, and then, cobbling together loans from skeptical relatives and neighbors, she bought raw materials in large enough quantities to begin selling some of her products.¹³⁹ Having a place to teach local children about these herbs and other Bedouin practices to which they were connected was important to Sarah. After failing to gain land in the township's center from the local council, she settled on converting a portion of her father's *izbe*. Though many urged her to establish a non-profit and seek out grant money, and though she did welcome help from an Israeli NGO to establish her herb garden, she ultimately embraced the goal of profitability because she wanted her projects to be "sustainable and independent." In fact, not one for modest goals, Sarah aimed to build

¹³⁹ This reliance on family for the capital to start a business enterprise, creating a "family firm," is common among Negev Bedouin entrepreneurs (Jakubowska 2000).

“the biggest organic, natural cosmetic line in Israel.”

After her explanation and a question-and-answer period, Sarah would invite guests to browse her store and make any purchases they wished. In addition to her products, several neighborhood women sold their weavings, embroidery, and other crafts at the store. Some groups arranged for a buffet meal of “traditional Bedouin food” to be served, which consisted of salads, stewed dishes of lentils, chickpeas, potatoes and vegetables, rice, and plenty of *saaj* bread. If the group had more time, they might also be walked across the *‘izbe* to see the *taboun*, an oven made of earth and straw, that Sarah and Fawzia had built for demonstrations.



Image 8: At the Al-‘Uwaydi ‘izbe, Sarah's shop in the background.

There were always projects underway at the *‘izbe*, such as repairing the *taboun*, mulching the herb garden, or building Fawzia's *bayka* house. When Sarah was not hosting groups, she, Fawzia, and several other relatives would work at the *‘izbe*, accompanied by a small gaggle of children who alternately helped on these projects and played tag or made mud pies. It was important, Sarah told me, for the children to experience tasks like farming and *bayka* construction, as well as simply being outdoors, because without this *‘izbe*, they mostly stayed in their homes and watched television. Sarah also encouraged the children not to litter but, instead, to use the discarded trash around them to make useful things, such as a rabbit hutch. The children gathered plastic bottles, cardboard, and other items for such projects from the piles of litter that lined their

walk to the *'izbe*. Sarah's dream, not yet realized, was to hold regular lessons for 'Ayn al-'Azm's schoolchildren that would integrate experiential learning at the *'izbe* with their regular classes.

While many other residents practiced traditions such as *saaj*-baking or raising sheep on an individual basis, Sarah's business venture enabled her to persist in and revive traditions she saw as key to Bedouin culture and to do so on a more collective scale. Nathalie Peutz suggests that a global trend in recent years shifting "Bedouinness" from being a descriptor of a lifestyle to being something closer to a shared ethnic identity or sub-cultural Arab identity (Cole 2003) (which Ahmed highlighted with such ambivalence in chapter two) has allowed for the marketing of "a more collective and consumable 'Bedouinness'" in heritage tourism around the world (2011:338). Viewed within the frame of heritage tourism, Sarah was taking part in this wider trend. However, her business and the neighborhood outreach projects she initiated were also more particularly familial and personal. The viability and meaningfulness of Sarah's venture derived from her "self-conscious[ly] calling forth an economically useful, marketable vestige of [her] destroyed past" (Slyomovics 1998:168). However, heritage tourism is an ambivalent practice. It may support the continued vitality in certain practices, but in placing them in a context of high social visibility and commodification, this tourism also carries risks (Bunten 2008; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998).

Sarah's community projects were a self-conscious effort to regenerate Bedouin culture in the face of external pressure (Jolly 1992:42) that involve resistance to dominant Israeli discourses of land and people. Sarah taught children about a rural heritage that is fixed in place, based on farming and building *bayka* houses, and passed this portrait of Bedouin culture on to visitors. These projects challenged *Iyur HaBedowim* and, indirectly, long-standing narratives of Jews as being tied to land and Bedouins as rootless wanderers. By practicing elements of agropastoralism and advocating environmental stewardship, Sarah also countered contemporary discourses of Bedouin Arabs as environmental hazards. And to some extent, she challenged the dominant spatial separation of Jews and Arabs in Israel by not just hosting tourists for a brief lecture and garden tour, but also inviting volunteers, some of whom were Jewish, into her family's home for longer periods of time and incorporating them into the practice of Bedouin

traditions.

To make it financially practicable to persist in these traditions that had lost most of their earlier value due to the Naqab economy's shift to capitalist wage labor, Sarah put these traditions on display, creating a venture of heritage tourism. The dilemmas involved for Sarah arise both from the process of framing certain practices and products as heritage and from the particular sociopolitical context of the Negev. First, though, Sarah wished to protect and promote dwindling cultural practices and experiential knowledge of landscapes and particular plants, heritage tourism risks rendering practices obsolete as they are framed as heritage. It is an ambivalent practice that “has recourse to the past” but is produced by simultaneously foreclosing that past (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:49). Second, in this public venue, her business and the neighborhood outreach projects she initiated maneuvered between positions of defiance and acceptance with Israeli environmental discourses.¹⁴⁰

The face of Bedouin Arabs that most visitors saw was a collection of carefully formatted cultural elements (Shryock 2004c), such as soaps and creams, foods like *saaj* bread, crafts, and the goat-hair tent. Tourist enterprises like Sarah's enlarge the place of Bedouin Arabs in Israeli society, but do so by catering to the Israeli market, using a counterhegemonic practice that is complicitous with state power (Stein 1998:92). These same safe indicators of difference often have been used in liberal Zionist discourses of multiculturalism, which advocates a place for Bedouin Arabs in Israeli society, but one that is carefully bounded off from Jews, reinforcing a dual-society paradigm. They carefully construct experiences of Bedouin culture and displays of Bedouin connections to nature that are acceptable to the Israeli tourist gaze (Urry 2002). Sarah drew on the value of these safe elements of difference (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998) to attract a wide group of Israelis to her store, helping her business grow. She embraced the profit motive and pursued personal goals of success, but she channeled much of her earnings into the collectives—neighborhood and family—by which she also defined herself.

Sarah drew on supposedly unchanging cultural practices, such as the use of medicinal herbs, mud-brick building, and cooking in *taboun* ovens to resist the erasure of Bedouin culture in the Negev. But as traditions in any setting may be vehicles for

¹⁴⁰ See Bunten (2008) on how Native Alaskan tour guides in the heritage industry negotiate defiance and acceptance (even strategic deployment) of discourses of ethnic difference.

change (Jolly 1992; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), Sarah's venture also incorporated significant innovations. Sarah's engagement of certain Bedouin traditions simultaneously broke with other traditions. She had convinced her family to postpone her marriage in order to start the business. The ways she moved about in space, both in traveling to study abroad and in the mobility and public interaction necessary to run her business, challenged gender norms within her community.

Not all of Sarah's neighbors approved of her ventures and the changes they brought to 'Ayn al-'Azm. This was made particularly clear one afternoon by a group of boys from the neighborhood between Sarah's house and the *'izbe*. Sarah, another American visitor, and I were walking through their neighborhood that day, on our way back from the *'izbe*, and the group of boys was gathered by the side of the road. They called out to us as we passed, which we ignored. When one boy threw a small stone toward us, though, Sarah turned angrily to scold them. We then continued down the street, but just before we turned the corner, a handful of pebbles came bouncing behind us, and I turned to call out, "*halas, bikaffi!*" ("Stop it, that's enough!"). Sarah also turned, and she and the boys began to argue. The confrontation escalated, and she actually broke into a run after the culprits for a few meters before stepping into their family's courtyard. The other visitor and I stood waiting at the corner until Sarah returned, reporting that she had talked to the boys' mother, telling her that "this should be the first and last time for such behavior."

As we continued walking, Sarah explained that her business depends on being able to have foreigners feel safe moving about the neighborhood. Extremely few non-Arabs entered 'Ayn al-'Azm except to visit Sarah's tent, and of those few, almost none traveled beyond the center of the township where the clinic, local council, and community center were clustered. However, similar to 'Ayn al-'Azm's urban planners, Sarah wanted legibility and mobility (Scott 1998). She wanted spaces designated as public to be open to everyone, regardless of family belonging, and she wanted the three of us, all women, to be able to move about this public space freely. The boys had been reacting to the intrusion of outsiders into their space, using small stones and taunting words instead of cement road blocks. However, like those road barriers used to block traffic through neighborhoods, the basic goals of policing movement through this

neighborhood's landscape had been the same: to protect private space from being opened up as public and to govern gender norms.¹⁴¹

The confrontation provides just one example of the many challenges faced by ventures like Sarah's, which were viewed by some residents as threatening because they could change local landscapes by introducing new taskscapes. Sarah was aware of this and wanted to remain a respected member of her family and community, as well as being reliant to some extent on assistance from family members to make the business succeed. To family members, she downplayed the convention-breaking aspects of her ventures and emphasized instead the ways in which she was encouraging cultural traditions. She marketed her herbal products using the internet and cell phones and advertised health benefits backed by modern botanical research, but based all her products on a long-standing tradition of Bedouin herbalist practices. And, she added when in audiences she deemed Islamophilic (Shryock 2010), black cumin oil she used in many products was praised by the Prophet Mohammed for its healing properties.

Sarah confronted a particularly fraught context within which to negotiate the dilemmas of heritage tourism. Not only did Sarah maneuver personally between strategically employing and resisting stereotypes (Bunten 2008), but she also navigated a web of competing norms. She carefully negotiated between the expectations of Bedouin Arab society—which frowned on her avoidance of marriage and her public persona—and those of Israeli society—which encouraged these behaviors as evidence of a progressive and liberated Bedouin woman, but were wary of any Islamic influences or serious challenges to a dual society paradigm. Although some visitors saw and commented on the sociopolitical implications of her business and neighborhood projects, Sarah refrained from overtly political discussions tied to her projects. She offered political commentary in other settings, but the formatted cultural elements that Sarah showcased could be kept safely apolitical.

Conclusion

In the counter histories told to me by residents throughout the Naqab, residents recalled a time when they had lived without the pressures of governmental urban

141 See Abu-Lughod (1987) on the role of “boys' gangs” in protecting space.

planning. These narratives were set in landscapes that differed dramatically from 'Ayn al-'Azm's present state. While investigating the widespread feelings of uprootedness that are not only tolerated, but fostered by Bedouin Arabs of the Naqab, Safa Abu-Rabia (2010) found that both elders, who were first expelled from their lands, and subsequent generations had constructed "expellee" (*msharadeen*) identities for themselves. In 'Ayn al-'Azm, such expellee identities and attachments to far-away places heightened residents' awareness of the landscapes of neglect that they found where they lived. Residents perceived the urban landscapes of the township as pregnant with the past and troubled by the present absences of their remembered family lands. Neglected public spaces intensified residents' alienation from the township. Although residents expressed strong attachments to their families and their neighborhoods (as a group of people living there), they resisted identifying themselves with the place of 'Ayn al-'Azm.

These perceptions of alienation and threat in public spaces, as well as more positive associations with home and neighborhood, influenced how residents participated in shaping the township's landscapes. While blockading roads was an example of a dwelling practice carried out in deliberate opposition to urban planning, other tasks, such as sowing a kitchen garden or baking *saaj* bread, were less consciously rebellious. Yet, each of these examples departed from elements of state planning. As they were making do, people engaged in tasks that helped to reshape the restrictive and even threatening landscapes of planned 'Ayn al-'Azm into more familiar landscapes. In the dense residential space of the township, this reshaping of landscapes was not always a comfortable process, as one person's tasks could negatively affect her neighbor's. At times this led to violent confrontation, such as the blood feud that occurred. More often, it aroused feelings of resentment, which were directed either at neighbors or the state agencies that forced residents to live in such close quarters.

Not all residents embraced these rebellious tasks, even in their less defiant forms. Some residents accepted the power of state institutions to shape people in and through their landscapes. Just as the elder Abu Assa brothers were initially eager to move into modern Israeli society through their residence in the planned township, some residents continued to strive for inclusion through cooperative participation in the tasks encouraged by *Iyur HaBedowim*. By turning entirely to wage labor in the

regulated labor market, dressing in mainstream Israeli fashions, and striving for a middle-class, consumption-driven lifestyle, these residents pushed for inclusion in Israeli society through the criteria of the state's discursive framework (Kanaaneh 2002). They built and lived exclusively in houses, rather than tents, were more accepting of children building households away from their parents, and often frowned on the noises and smells of the animals neighbors raised in their courtyards.

Beyond these individuals, the power of hegemonic state discourses of nature and human nature was apparent to some extent in all residents' dwelling practices. From the imagined gaze of a judging (Jewish) Israeli majority (as well as their “more modern” neighbors) weighing on residents' judgments of social events such as the blood feud, to the material constraints placed on young couples wanting to build homes, Zionist discourses pressed upon many everyday endeavors.

Residents in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm were caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, they could play by the rules of (Jewish) Israeli society, including its many forms of discrimination against Arabs, as they tried to improve their financial and social standing. This would involve renouncing claims to family lands and silencing their counter narratives of Naqab history. On the other hand, they could act in ways that would be more consistent with their memories of landscapes and taskscapes past, but these practices are marked as backward and deviant within Israeli society. Some residents sought out creative resolutions to this double bind. For example, going beyond “making do,” Sarah consciously attempted to improve ‘Ayn al-‘Azm and strengthen her own and her families' attachments to its landscapes, while also reviving some of the rural taskscapes they fondly remembered.

CHAPTER V

Seeking Post-Agricultural Community: Dwelling in a Jewish Moshav

“It's a bit funny to me, this research, because we're not Bedouin or something, living off the land (*ha'adama*).” This was Pnina's first reaction when I explained the topic of my study as being about connections between land and people in the Negev.¹⁴² Pnina lives in Moshav Dganim, and though she helped on her family *meshek* (farming plot) as a child, I met her when she worked in the community's heritage center and no longer practiced agriculture. Her statement simultaneously signaled several important features of the dwelling practices and environmental discourses prominent in Dganim. Most obviously, she asserted a distinction between *moshav* members and Bedouins that drew from the association, common in Israel, of Bedouins with nature and Jewish Israelis with society. She thought it made sense for me to research relationships between humans and landscapes among the Bedouin, but not among her community of Jews. In fact, though, the imperative to “live off the land” had once been a driving ideological force behind the founding of her *moshav* and others like it throughout Israel. Thus, on another level, her statement points to the profound changes that have come with the country-wide shift away from cooperative agriculture. From a local economy and community-wide taskscapes that had been entirely dependent on agriculture just fifteen years ago, Pnina's daily life had come to feel disconnected from the land as we sat talking in 2009. In this initial confusion of our first meeting, Pnina began teaching me about environmental discourses that have been influential in shaping Dganim residents' senses of group identity and belonging to place.

While the previous chapter focused on residents encountering, dwelling in, and

142 The vocabulary I used is important here, because of Hebrew's two glosses for “land.” I explained my research broadly as being concerned with *keshirim bein enashim v-ha-adama* (קשרים בין אנשים והאדמה), lit. “connections between people and the land”), rather than *keshirim bein enashim v-ha-aretz*, which would hold the connotations of “country,” and specifically, the Land of Israel.

modifying the planned landscapes of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, this chapter turns to the neighboring community of Moshav Dganim. As in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, residents were grappling with a shift away from agricultural taskscapes. In this case, though, residents had invested themselves in making place through the “blood, sweat, and tears” of physical labor, as well as the “discursive construction of affective loyalties” in the narratives of place that filled their discussions and guided their actions (Harvey 1996a:323). While grappling with the remoteness of the Negev within which they lived, most Dganim residents also perceived themselves and their agricultural practices to be central to the Zionist task of nation-building. This perception of belonging has influenced how residents cope with the end of their familiar agricultural taskscapes and how they encounter state planning projects. Unlike in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, residents of Dganim have been transitioning to taskscapes that involve decreasing direct intervention from state agencies, as state support for *moshavim* and cooperative agriculture has been withdrawn, but less direct financial and advisory involvement continues. Within the context of competing claims to Negev lands, the group of immigrants who were settled by the Israeli government on these formerly Bedouin-claimed lands, and who created this *moshav* as a collective place, have come to feel and express a sense of connection to and ownership over the land. In this chapter, I will consider how these connections to landscapes are lived today, including how residents bring the past into present landscapes.

Building fences, enforcing selective residential policies, and telling stories of threatening differences help create segregated Jewish and Arab spaces. Such dwelling practices intensify Jewish-Arab conflict by embedding lines of social conflict in the landscapes in two ways. First, these practices create or intensify material barriers between Jews and Bedouin Arabs. Second, they make these social barriers seem natural, both in the sense of being taken for granted and seeming to reflect inherent differences between Jews and Arabs. However, analyzing these landscapes in the making also reveals the contingency of these current barriers and may also help us envision taskscapes that would challenge them.

In the first sections of this chapter, I will identify elements of past taskscapes that continue to exist in the present through residents' stories and the physical landscape. The next two sections examine how residents interpret the end of agriculture in their

community and how they deal with this change through their daily dwelling practices, followed by a section on their plans for making a living after communal agriculture. Finally, I focus specifically on the ways residents' interpretations and dwelling practices draw and police boundaries.

Agentive Stories of Arrival

When I asked residents about contemporary life on the *moshav*, they often began by explaining how they or their parents had arrived and begun building this community. Moshav Dganim was originally founded in 1946 by a group of immigrants from eastern Europe, as part of the Zionist movement's frontier projects in the Negev. But these settlers did not succeed in establishing a functioning farming community. The *moshav* was deserted within a few years, and Dganim's current incarnation as a *moshav* of Cochini Jews began in 1953, when a group of two dozen families immigrating from the area around Cochin India, in what is now the state of Kerala, agreed to settle a few kilometers from the original site.¹⁴³ The *moshav* has since grown to include approximately 700 residents.

Dganim, like so many other immigrant settlements in the Negev in these first decades of Israeli statehood, was founded as a *moshav olim* and guided closely as an “administered community.” Arriving from such an “exotic” place (Blady 2000) as coastal India, these Cochini immigrants were viewed paternalistically by the mainly Ashkenazi absorption officials in charge of their settlement. They were pushed to assimilate to the demands of farming through, for example, physical strengthening, training in punctuality, and a re-ordering of priorities away from religious practice and towards economic production (Mandelbaum 1975; Kushner 1973). However, while these immigrants could be viewed like many other Mizrahi immigrants of the 1950s as the “Jewish victims” of Zionism (Shohat 1988), Dganim narrators recounted agentive stories of their arrival to and building of Dganim. They saw themselves not as Mizrahi, but as Cochini, and as proactive participants in the Zionist project.

¹⁴³ The group generally referred to as “Cochini Jews” moved to Israel from five cities in the state of Kerala, in southwestern India: Cochin, Ernakulam, Mala, Parur, and Chennamangalam.

Stories of Arrival

Contemporary *moshav* residents told me proudly that they were unlike other immigrants to Israel of their era (Weingrod 1966) because they had not come as refugees escaping violence or persecution. On the contrary, they spoke of Cochin as a place where people of different religions lived amicably together. For example, as one resident, Yaron, was describing his parents' reasons for making *aliyah* with him when he was a child, he recalled two recent return visits he had made with fellow Cochini Israelis to Cochin. The non-Jewish Cochin residents had received them kindly and begun crying as they asked why the Jews had deserted them in the 1950s. Located on the southwestern coast of India and situated along trade routes between Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, the Cochin area has been a hub of international trade for centuries. Jewish traders were major figures in this trade, which interwove the lives—business and intimate—of Jews, Muslims, and Hindus (Ghosh 1993). “No, there wasn't anti-Semitism, not at all,” Yaron assured me, both during his recent trips and in his parents' time of emigration.¹⁴⁴

Further, he added, the Cochini Jewish community had immigrated to Israel with their own money, not relying on the Jewish Agency (JA) for financial assistance. Cochini Jews in India had been tightly organized around their synagogues, which were centers of prestige, socializing, and financial assistance for needy members (Daniel and Johnson 1995; Katz and Goldberg 2005). When congregations sought immigration to Israel, the JA used these synagogues' funds to finance the families' transportation (Kushner 1973). Residents took great care to explain the elements of their lives in India that would demonstrate that they had *not* arrived in Israel as refugees from anti-Semitism or as seekers of financial assistance. A few residents recollected experiences of poverty and hunger, but escaping poverty was not put forth as a reason for emigrating. Whole congregations, including wealthier and less wealthy families, undertook *aliyah* together, they told me. And the new immigrants faced similar hardships and hunger during their early years at Dganim.

Rather than being driven by need, narrators insisted, the Cochini Jews had come

144 Likewise, researchers of the Jewish community in Cochin report that although Jews lived in “voluntary ghettos” in the cities of Cochin and Ernakulam and maintained many social separations from Muslims and Hindus, there were “harmonious relations between the Cochin Jews and all other Malayali-speaking residents” of the region (Mandelbaum 1975, 75; see also Katz and Goldberg 2005; Koder 1974).

to Israel motivated by Zionist zeal, eager to help build the Jewish state. Their particular location in the Negev was appealing for its holy connection to forefathers in the *Tanach* (Jewish Bible). For example, when I asked Yaron whose choice it had been to settle in the place of Dganim, he said, “our parents. And that's because in the *Tanach*, they talked about Beersheba, and Abraham our father, long ago... [So,] they came here.” This depiction of the immigrants' decision highlights both their Zionist dedication and their religious piety by identifying their priorities as being tied to resettling “Jewish” land (Shahar 2008). The description supports a discourse of land's importance as an unbroken tie between ancient Israelites and contemporary Jews. It also asserts Dganim residents' rightful place in an Israeli mainstream by countering ideologies of Mizrahi immigrants as less dedicated to Zionism (Shohat 1988).

This recollection of agency in choosing their location departs from the narrative more commonly told of Mizrahi immigrants' experiences in the 1950s. Both in scholarly literature and in recollections shared by residents elsewhere in the Negev, individual settlers were dependent on Zionist leaders in the state government and JA who possessed the authority to assign immigrants to settlement sites. Immigrants from Algeria and Morocco living in other *moshavim* near Dganim told me stories of discrimination and manipulation. They recalled being brought in large trucks to barren sites in the desert and deposited, alone amidst “the sand and birds” (see also Weingrod 1966), and some even reported having been tricked into moving to empty settlement sites in the Negev. In contrast, all residents with whom I spoke in Dganim asserted their agency in choosing the location.

If asked directly, most Dganim residents would acknowledge that they and other non-Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants have been treated similarly by government authorities, and that they often are not differentiated from Mizrahim in an Israeli popular imaginary. But this was never the label chosen to specify residents' own ethnic identity within a broader “Jewish” or “Israeli” identity. Rather, they were part of the Cochini *eda* (ethnic group, plural, *edot*). And they did not share tales of prejudice from Ashkenazim. A broad distinction between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim has long been important for understanding social relations and power disparities in Israeli. But the more multiply differentiated category of *eda* is also important, as many immigrant groups more strongly

identify with a particular *eda* than with one side of the Mizrahi-Ashkenazi divide (Leichtman 2001).¹⁴⁵ Virginia Domínguez (1989:182, 184) suggests that *edot* identify “selflike others” or “internalized others,” and such a distinction can hold value in the contemporary climate of Jewish multiculturalism in Israel.

Yet other accounts of and by Indian Jews describe considerable discrimination in Israel. “Colour prejudice” was strong enough to prompt a different group of Jews from India, the Bene Israel, to return to India in the 1950s soon after having made *aliyah* (Weil 1986:20). In her 1995 memoirs, a Cochini woman living in a northern Israeli kibbutz notes that while she was prepared for the physical hardships of moving to Israel in its earliest years, she was surprised by the discriminatory behavior she and fellow Cochini immigrants faced from Ashkenazi Jews: “They thought we have come from some jungle.... Everywhere we felt discrimination, and I still do” (Daniel and Johnson 1995:105).¹⁴⁶ Dganim's narratives of *moshav*-building were part of a common storytelling practice in Israel aimed at integrating the differences of Diaspora into a single Israeli collective (Domínguez 1989). As such, they embraced and celebrated the differences of *edot*, but did not highlight the hierarchical distinctions between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim that trouble this Israeli collective.

Dganim residents agreed with these other accounts of the Negev on one important point: they, too, painted the Negev as barren. But they took this as a point of pride. Many residents, both those who had seen India themselves and those who had lived all their lives in Israel, compared the barren landscape of the Negev to the plentiful, tropical climates in India. Remember, several middle-aged interviewees born in Dganim

145 The English term *ethnicity*, may refer to boundaries between Jew and Arab or divisions between Jews of different ethnic origins. In common parlance in Hebrew, *eda* is reserved for discussing ethnic differences among Jews. For more on *eda*, see (Anteby-Yemini 2004; and cf, Domínguez 1989, 180-186).

146 Though the issue of “caste” divisions among Cochini Jews between “white” or Paradesi Jews and those whose Jewish heritage was questioned (referred to in different contexts as “black,” “brown,” or “Malabar” Jews, or even “slaves”) has preoccupied researchers of Jews in India (Katz and Goldberg 2005; Mandelbaum 1975), and features in Cochini memoirs (Daniel and Johnson 1995), these intra-Jewish divisions were absent from Dganim narratives and did not seem to play a role in *moshav* social life. Such divisions may simply no longer be relevant to Dganim residents' experiences of community, after the social uprooting and reorganization of immigration and several decades living in Israel. A desire to represent the Cochini community as being in line with espoused egalitarian values among Jewish *edot* may also prompt self-censorship. Reports that “many Western Jews are shocked to learn of the Cochin community's discrimination against their brethren” (Katz and Goldberg 2005:100) suggest the negative reaction that discussion of castes would provoke.

emphasized, our parents came from the tropics of India and had lived in cities and towns there. Most were merchants and some were craftsmen; they did not have experience farming or living in such a rural setting. Their former homes had been full of greenness and water. Cochin and the other cities and villages from which Dganim residents had emigrated were surrounded by water, located on a sheltered bay at the mouth of the Piriya River and just three miles from the Arabian Sea. Kerala, named after the coconut palm (*ker*) that grew so plentifully there, was a place of lush vegetation, where fish, fruits, and vegetables were abundant and relatively cheap (Daniel and Johnson 1995).

In contrast, Dganim residents spoke of the Negev to which they arrived as *shmama*, an empty wilderness. When we arrived, many residents told me, there was nothing. Ephram, who arrived in 1954 as a child, recalled this emptiness, narrating the past in the present tense, “There aren't showers, there aren't toilets.” He paused to reflect and then added, “and there was sand...just sand.” To the eyes of immigrants from densely populated and tropical coastal India, the *moshav* site they arrived at, with only the bare, basic structures initiated by the Settlement Department, looked empty. This contrast of the Negev to their former homes, along with the Zionist depiction of the Negev's remoteness, made the Zionist call to *kibush et ha'shmama*, “conquer the wilderness,” seem all the more necessary.

Chaim, also from Ephram's generation, spoke of the social emptiness of the wider region around the *moshav* site, stressing many times that the settlers were on their own, since there were no other rural Jewish communities between Dganim and the nearest cities. That these accounts do not recognize the Bedouin Arabs already living there as having “settled” the place is, in part, due to the area's recent depopulation. These immigrants arrived in the 1950s, after nearly nine-tenths of the Bedouin Arabs who had once dwelled in the Negev had either been expelled or fled (Abu-Rabia 1994). However, a “dichotomized conception of space” such as that underlying Chaim's comments, between desolate and ahistorical desert and modern, socialized places of settlement, has also been fundamental to Zionist environmental discourses (Zerubavel 2008). “Arab and Jewish settlements existed next to each other in physical space, but in the cultural construction of space the Zionist settlers put the Jewish settlement at the center and saw it as surrounded by desert” (Zerubavel 2008:207). Such a conception erases Arab sociality

from the landscape. Its reiteration in stories of community building like this draw from and reinforce a binary enframing of Jew-culture-progress versus Arab-nature-tradition.

Stories of Building

Like many *moshavim*, Dganim went through many agricultural phases as it sought to make profits in a changing agricultural market. Beginning with vegetable farming, the residents then shifted to raising orchards of fruit trees, followed by chickens, and finally, flowers. Each shift was led by the agricultural *madrichim* sent through the JA and made possible by substantial loans, and sometimes the provision of infrastructure and equipment from government agencies. Gilbert Kushner outlines a pattern of dependency and apathy that grew from such pervasive external management, and argues that such an administered community is “*not* conducive to the development of clientele autonomy” (1973, 95, emphasis in original).

Such intensive governmental involvement would also seem to contradict Dganim residents' accounts of independent agency. However, as residents recounted the *moshav's* early years, they had come to this empty place and built a lasting community. Through their labor, the houses were finished, the fields were plowed, and later, orchards were planted and greenhouses and chicken coops were built. Although residents did also make frequent references specifically to the JA and agricultural *madrichim*, or more vaguely to “them,” as sources of loans, advice, equipment, and other guidance, their narratives of the *moshav's* early years were dominated by expressions of self-sufficiency and overcoming odds. In residents' accounts, governmental aids were matched by the daring of the first few families who switched to a new agricultural venture, such as moving from vegetable-farming to tending orchards. If these first families enjoyed some success, others followed suit. These transitions had been difficult, but residents took pride in describing how they had worked hard and managed to get by. That the *moshav* had previously been inhabited and then abandoned added to residents' sense of achievement, because they had succeeded where others had failed. In addition, some of the families that had been part of the 1950s settlement group eventually left the *moshav*, unable to cope with the lifestyle of desert agriculture, so those who remained felt even more of a sense of accomplishment and ownership.

In fact, much of the discussion about land claims in Dganim focused on the suffering residents went through—usually emphasizing that it was taken on willingly—for the Land of Israel. These past hardships lived on in the present, as they were brought to mind and made current and relevant by storytelling. For example, one *shabbat*¹⁴⁷ eve when I visited Chaim and his family for dinner, the winds were kicking up a sandstorm. As we sat together at the table, sipping grape juice and savoring the spiced rice and broiled chicken, a particularly strong gust of wind against the windows prompted Chaim to recount the *moshav*'s early days. Directing his comments to me and to his grown children, he described the harsh climate and frugal lifestyles they had endured and lamented that today's young people do not understand the sacrifices that early residents endured. Unprompted, Chaim went on to echo Zionist leaders such as A.D. Gordon, asserting that sacrifices like these rendered even stronger the Jews' claims to lands in the Negev and throughout Israel. The importance of suffering for bonding Jews together as a group has often been discussed (Markowitz 2006; Cohen 1997; Rubin-Dorsky and Fishkin 1996). But Chaim's point was more particular, asserting a history of Jewish suffering in this place as grounds for stronger land claims (see also Moore 2005). I surmised from his daughter's subtle smile that she had heard this story many times before. Such stories of suffering in landscapes, told by parents to their children, were lessons in duty to country and collective sacrifice (see also Basso 1996).

In this context, the narrative of Cochin's community harmony and lush tropical climate serves as an important anchor point. If life in India was good, then coming to Israel and going through the ordeals of *aliyah* in the 1950s renders immigrants' contribution to the nation that much stronger. Paradoxically, residents portrayed their alienation from the landscapes of the Negev as a further justification for their claim to the land. Like Chaim, Ephram praised the sacrifices that *moshav* residents had made and the order they had brought to the desert. While drinking tea and discussing the history of the *moshav*, Ephram explained how his generation had succeeded in their dreams “to *l'hafeach* (literally, “to turn over,” indicating both, “to plow” and “to transform”) the land, to expel the wilderness.” They made the *moshav* so lushly verdant that “It was a garden of Eden!” he exclaimed. This drive to transform the wilderness, rather than adapt

147 Saturday, the Jewish day of rest.

to the desert landscapes, evokes the discourse of redemption so fundamental to Zionist nation-building. That this transformation from “wilderness” to “oasis” was accomplished in the dry foothills where Abraham once walked meant, particularly for the older generation that endorsed a religious version of Zionism, that these sacrifices were made not just for country, but for God.¹⁴⁸

In the 1990s, when prices for Dganim farmers' most recent product, flowers, began plummeting, governmental priorities had shifted, and aid was no longer forthcoming to help farmers adjust to a new branch of agriculture. The JA withdrew the last of its direct financial assistance and advising for collective farming, and farmers in this marginally fertile land could not compete on the open market without such aid. As they racked up debts, family after family quit agriculture and began searching out other means to earn a living.¹⁴⁹

In 2009, more than fifty years after the *moshav's* founding, and fifteen years after the withdrawal of this assistance, residents recalled the hard work they had invested in building the *moshav* more vividly than the guiding hand of the state. These depictions of proactive, self-directed settling of the *moshav* counter popular discussion of the *moshvei olim* as products of the state, as well as scholarly analyses that highlight their paternalism and the dependent communities they created. Whatever the reason for this seeming discrepancy, I am interested in these narratives of community-building as indications of how Dganim residents perceived their position vis-a-vis state planning and fellow residents of their landscapes. These agentive stories of arrival framed their encounters with contemporary landscapes, helping them to feel ownership of and belonging to the place and its people.

Home and Field: Landscapes of Privatization

Israel's economic and political restructuring was visible in the landscapes of this *moshav* through residents' adapted taskscapes. Yet, past taskscapes were not simply

148 Chaim's and Ephram's references to sacrifice as a collective generational task harkens to the oft-cited Talmudic text, “Let all who work for the community do so from a spiritual motive, for then the merit of their fathers will sustain them, and their righteousness will endure forever” (Avot “Ethics of the Fathers” 2:2).

149 This was part of a wider trend throughout Israel. For more on the *kibbutz* and *moshav* crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, see Schwartz et al (1995).

replaced or covered over by new taskscapes when *madrichim* and loans were withdrawn. Rather, the current landscapes of fields, houses, gardens, and public areas still reveal evidence of former taskscapes. These landscapes indicate the forces of economic restructuring, privatization, and neoliberalism which residents have encountered.

During walks about the *moshav*, I often crossed through abandoned agricultural fields to shorten my way. Rough, narrow footpaths of hard-packed dirt cut through wide, open fields of dry dirt and weeds. These dilapidated fields recalled the *moshav's* agricultural past. Three times, market forces and shifting governmental subsidies prompted Dganim farmers to change their practices and alter their landscapes, from raising fields of vegetables to tending orchards, building sheds for chicken coops, and finally, erecting long rows of greenhouses to grow flowers. In places, the formerly plowed furrows and ridges were still evident as petrified crusts of mounded earth. A few small copses of lemon and pomello trees remained of the large orchards of fruit trees that once included apricots, apples, and plums, as well. Rusting piles of discarded farming equipment lay here and there in the fields, and the tall skeletons of former greenhouses leaned against the sky.



Image 9: Former greenhouses in Dganim.

Though most *meshekim* (plural form of *meshek*) stood empty, a few families managed to stay in agricultural enterprises by enlarging and intensifying flower

greenhouses or warehouse-like chicken coops. A half-dozen large coops still hummed with activity, relying on high volume and fast turnover (raising chicks to two-kilo chickens in 45 days) to make profits. Two men headed flower-growing operations. Amnon used mechanization and synthetic breeding and employed several hired workers to grow large quantities of flowers for export. These residents, Amnon explained, consisted of several Bedouins, who commuted to the *moshav* to work each day “by the unit,” being paid for each package of flowers they bundled, and several foreign workers from Thailand, for whom Amnon provided housing on the *moshav* and who were expected to work at night, as well. In order to survive in Israel's changing economic climate, these residents pushed their businesses to raise larger quantities, mechanize more fully, use the latest chemical inputs, and even conduct some genetic engineering in order to keep up with an agricultural industry that they saw as running away from them.

Ephram, the other flower-grower, seemed the exception that proved the rule for *moshav* agriculture (to scale up or cease production). Identified by a friend as “the last dinosaur of farming” on the *moshav*, he grew just a single greenhouse of expensive, high-quality roses for the local market. Several other residents commented regretfully to me that they did not think Ephram would last much longer in the flower business. His approach was not their vision of modern agriculture, and they did not think it could keep up with the seemingly inevitable decline of prices. Ephram insisted, though, that his approach to farming met his priorities:

to work as a family, to make a living on the farm, not to grow too big, so that you also have time for other things, to enjoy life... I tell myself that I want, first of all, health for me and for my family, that we will be healthy. After that, that we have clothes to wear, bread to eat, and a little recreation.

In addition to his farming practices, these priorities helped Ephram earn his “dinosaur” label because they were associated with the outdated discourses of collective agriculture and a pioneer's frugal lifestyle. To help make ends meet, he and his wife were beginning to incorporate tourism into their flower business. They were working to open a small, weekend cafe where visitors could eat Cochini food and enjoy the rural airs of the *moshav* as they also bought flowers.

This push toward industrialized production had altered not just the agricultural tasks themselves, but the participants in these tasks. The Dganim families who had once

been in charge of their *meshekim* were then joined for about two decades by Bedouin Arab laborers from ‘Ayn al-‘Azm and the surrounding unrecognized villages, as well as some Palestinians from the once open borders with Gaza and the West Bank. With the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada in the late 1980s and 1990s, the Israeli military restricted these borders in an effort to prevent violence from spreading into Israel. This slowed the flow of wage-seekers from the Palestinian Territories, and the Israeli government began issuing permits for migrant workers (Willen 2003). Being vulnerable to deportation, these migrant workers would labor for lower wages and on more demanding schedules than most Palestinian citizens of Israel. Most farmers who remained in business through the economic storms of the 1990s shifted to hiring these foreign workers.

Because so few Dganim residents continued to farm, there were only a few migrant workers on the *moshav*, but working relationships with Arabs had once been more plentiful. Different residents recalled the relationships forged with these workers with a conflicting variety of emotions. Some, like the gate watchman, Nehemiah, recalled some of his former workers fondly, as having been “like part of the family, coming to share meals at my house, and everything,” though he had not heard from them in years. Others recalled the interaction as more burdensome because, they said, the Arabs were always stealing. Only one Dganim resident that I knew of maintained semi-regular contact with a family from ‘Ayn al-‘Azm that had once worked guarding his fields.

Other than these few exceptions, the *meshekim* were silent. I never met anyone else walking through the fields, but residents did drive past them and see them from their yards. They often commented on the abandoned fields, even recalling the sensory experiences of former times when the *moshav* was filled with bountiful greenery and delicious produce. For example, Esther, an elderly resident who had emigrated from Ernakulum as a young woman, recalled the rich tastes of Dganim's past. “In the market, they always used to search out our apricots. The most tasty,” she declared with pride. “It's too bad you came too late,” she continued. “In the earlier years, [we had] potatoes, cucumbers, tomatoes. Do you know how tasty they could be?” she exclaimed. She brought her fingers to her lips and breathed a sigh as she tried to express to me just how

delicious the sweet potatoes once had been. But now, she said, so many of the vegetables have no taste.

In addition to individual families' fallow fields, former sites of community-wide labor and interaction stood present but disused. A large building that used to house the agricultural cooperative remained in the *moshav's* center. This building had once served to gather produce from all the *moshav's* farmers and sell it in bulk, which brought together people from around the *moshav* and encouraged chatting and socializing. Now, the building lay empty. Similarly, the empty building of a former corner store sat near the center of the *moshav*. The store, the only business on the *moshav* that had served residents rather than producing goods for export, lost customers when so many began leaving the *moshav* for jobs and doing their shopping on the way to or from work at the less expensive supermarkets in Beersheba and its surrounds. At first, this slack in customers was taken up in part by Bedouin Arab residents of the nearby unrecognized settlements. However, when a tall perimeter fence was erected around the *moshav* in the late 1990s, this flow of customers dwindled, as well, and the corner store eventually closed.

In contrast to these landscapes of abandonment in fields and public spaces, many homes were surrounded by thick gardens of greenery and bright, water-thirsty flowers. Most homes had some landscaping of shrubs and flowers, and a few were artistic compositions that included flowering succulents and tall grasses. Residents who had once cared for large fields of fruits and vegetables had contracted their focus to the small area of yard around their homes, often tending a tiny number of trees remaining from former orchards. Esther, for example, an elderly woman who had spent decades working in agriculture, spoke proudly of the care she devoted, despite the expense of water and the limitations of her aging body, to the flower beds and small cluster of fruit trees in her yard. Not all of Esther's neighbors shared this investment in home gardens. Esther acknowledged that with the growing income disparities in the *moshav*, not everyone could afford this sort of gardening, but she was disappointed with those who simply chose not to maintain their properties.

Many others in Dganim shared Esther's concern with the *moshav's* appearance and were were ashamed of the ramshackle fields in its center, but they also resisted taking

personal responsibility for cleaning out the old equipment, stating that the local council should handle this problem. These fields were no longer a place of shared responsibility. Like the public spaces in 'Ayn al-'Azim that did not belong to places in residents' taskscapes, these fields gathered rubbish and weeds.

Like the lush gardens surrounding many homes, the individuation of Dganim's houses themselves signaled residents' shifting focus of economic activity and leisure time to nuclear families, rather than the *moshav* as a whole. A few homes were still the original uniform, frugal structures erected in the 1950s by the JA. But Dganim's neighborhoods had come to exhibit considerable variety in the size, style, and apparent expense of different houses. A few families had built entirely new structures with modernist curving lines and tall windows. Most had enlarged and embellished their houses during more profitable years. This variety was a striking departure from the uniformity that still exists in most kibbutzim housing and once characterized *moshav* homes, as well. But the modest little structures of many of these original *moshav* houses were still visible underneath these additions.



Image 10: A home in Dganim

My landlord Chaim spoke proudly of his own home improvements. Beginning with the “small box” provided by the JA, he built additions on either side for bedrooms and a spacious master suite, a large covered porch in back for shaded summer relaxation, and a small porch in front. Chaim had studied flower agronomy at an agricultural school, then directed Dganim's flower growers for several years before finding employment

outside the *moshav*. He had long been active in the *moshav*'s leadership, served several terms as the head of the local council, and had recently been re-elected to that post. For Chaim, his home was solid evidence of his success in taming the wild forces that he and his parents had encountered when they first reached this harsh place and of his industriousness in earning a living here. He was also proud of the community's success, of which he saw tangible proof in the proliferation of neighbors who have undertaken similar renovations. But this house was a personal achievement, undertaken through his own initiative and finances, and shaped according to his own desires.

This recent landscape of renovated houses demonstrated the individualism and neoliberal economic norms that had come to guide the *moshav*'s taskscape. That some of the original houses were still visibly present only rendered more starkly the departure from the egalitarian and cooperative practices that once ran this *moshav*. Similarly, the continued visibility of abandoned agricultural fields in striking juxtaposition with the well-tended gardens surrounding residents' homes served as a reminder of the overall shift in lifestyle that their community had undergone.

Interpreting the End of Agriculture

Agricultural taskscapes had once defined Dganim, socially and physically. For a time, the *moshav* had even had a country-wide reputation as a top flower producer. As residents' agentive stories of arrival and building suggested, success in agriculture held not just economic importance, but also individual and collective implications for moral character. The cessation of these agricultural taskscapes held similar implications, and as among 'Ayn al-'Azm residents, the different ways Dganim residents read changes in the *moshav*'s landscapes revealed debates about responsibilities, rights, and belonging in Israel.

Ephram saw the end of agriculture as a reversal of the "garden of Eden" they had created. He lamented, "Today, because the farmers aren't working,...the desert is beginning to enter into the *moshav*." The *moshav* is turning more brown than green, Ephram told me, and it is hit more strongly by sandstorms, without orchards to buffer the winds. For Ephram, this lost agricultural landscape also represented a reversal of the unity, high moral standards, and dedication that made it possible to create the state of

Israel. Losing a base of agricultural workers had been “a terrible hardship” because “we, all of us who were farmers, used to be the kings of the country. Proud people. Good people.” A great portion of Israel's early leadership, like David Ben Gurion and Yitzhak Rabin, had come from agricultural work, he explained. “All of our leaders grew out of working the land, [whether] it's shepherding, or working the land [ie, farming]. Because he who works the land loves this country.” Ephram worried that the general move away from agriculture throughout Israel would weaken the country because it robbed future generations of the collective work and contact with the soil that had so strongly attached his own generation to Israel as a national body of people and as a place. Once everyone leaves agriculture and land is simply traded by real estate agents, Ephram reasoned, people become less attached to places, are more willing to move for conveniences like better schools and higher-paying jobs, and are less willing to defend particular places within Israel. Ephram's concerns echoed Labor Zionism's discourse of redemption through agriculture, which had placed an ideal of individual responsibility to the nation as the cornerstone of its institution-building (the *moshavim*, *kibbutzim*, and the *Histadrut*).

On the other hand, some former farmers in Dganim read the *moshav's* empty fields as reminders of state neglect. For example, Esther narrated the series of challenges she and her fellow farmers had faced in adjusting to their new desert home, meeting the expectations of their agricultural advisors, and working within the state-directed model of collective labor. Dganim's residents had built this *moshav* for the good of the country, she explained, as a key point of Jewish settlement amidst Arab squatters. She then declared with frustration that when the *moshav* encountered financial difficulties in the late 1970s, “the state didn't care for us at all!” Similarly, Ephram expressed his disappointment in the state's recent treatment of himself and his generation. He listed the wars in which he had fought, describing the sacrifices that he and his fellow soldiers and reservists had made, and labeling these deaths, injuries, and emotional traumas as their contribution to the Israeli state. “We were in many wars. I say, my generation,” he paused, gazing past me into middle-space for a moment. “I don't know if it was our good fortune or our bad fortune, but we delivered the country on our shoulders.” Ephram calmly stated his anger at the state because, after such profound sacrifices, the state was not “with us” as he and his fellow soldiers had been with the state. His flower farm

suffered great losses while he was away doing reservist military service, he told me, and the state did not offer any compensation. These residents had built their lives around Zionism's discourse of virtue through labor in land and felt deceived when this founding discourse shifted.



Image 11: In honor of fallen soldiers from the moshav on Yom Ha-Zicharon, the flaming letters spell "remembrance."

However, during conversations with other moshav residents, sentiments about the sad decline of agriculture carried no assignment of blame. As noted earlier, Ephram's approach to farming and his outlook on life's priorities had earned him the label of "dinosaur." Many other residents emphasized the value of adapting. The global agricultural markets had simply changed too much. Prices had fallen, and collective agriculture in the Negev could no longer compete, some former farmers reported (Schwartz 1995). Chaim, who had been both an agronomist and flower grower, expanded on these explanations to detail the factors that had ultimately led to Dganim's agricultural folding. In the early 1980s, he learned that Dganim's flowers were being undersold by those from a region in Kenya, and he traveled there to research their growing methods. In Kenya, he found European-run companies that had been granted usufruct rights to thousands of *dunams* of land "without problems" (i.e., with no competing claims of ownership) by the Kenyan government, a large freshwater lake from which the growers could draw freely, and an abundance of low-wage laborers to tend and pick the flowers by hand. Dganim did not have this collection of assets. "We didn't have

a chance,” he said flatly. “In another couple years, we would fall.” Looking at agriculture as a practical business venture, rather than as a character- and nation-building enterprise, as did Ephram, Chaim began urging his fellow moshav residents to leave agriculture in search of other trades.

Both Ephram's and Esther's disappointment with “the state” rested on an understanding of reciprocity that recognizes suffering and labor as contributions that deserve a return (Moore 2005), regardless of market conditions. Their complaints accuse the Israeli government of “cutting the network” (Strathern 1996) of reciprocation (through moshav residents' labor and sacrifices of personal comfort, and governmental financial assistance and training through *madrichim*) that had bound together workers and government leaders. Their disappointment was also based upon an understanding of mutual aid that had been at the center of the founding ideology for moshavim, which held that members should help other members in need before concentrating on their own profit (Baldwin 1972).

Ephram's generation in particular, those who arrived in Israel as very young children in the 1950s, came of age during Labor Zionism's heyday and took part in many of the institutional activities that strove to instill Labor Zionism's environmental discourses: the redeeming power of physical labor in nature and the naturalness of the nation-state form. The members of this generation were educated in agricultural schools, participated in the army, and many even served with *Nahal* (army units that founded agricultural settlements and prepared them for later civilian settlers). Such experiences reinforced an association between cooperation, labor in the land, and moral fortitude (Zerubavel 1995). The moshav movement had been founded on the value of independent work, but within a framework of mutual aid (Zusman 1988). With the decline of agriculture and the collapse of the moshav's collective economic framework, many residents worried about the disappearance of reciprocity within the moshav, as well.

Others shrugged off these concerns, contending that the failure of collective agriculture was a demonstration of the natural law that people work harder for themselves than for the large group. Collectivism simply does not work, these people felt. Chaim, for example, asserted that the *moshav*, and Israel as a whole, could only succeed if they harnessed the power of the individual profit motive. Chaim frequently expressed equally

strong, if not stronger, territorial Zionist views as Ephram, but he saw the collectivist movement of the *moshavim* and *kibbutzim* as a touchingly naïve, but unrealistic dream. Human nature, he explained, prompts us to save ourselves first. To illustrate this point, he told me a joke about two friends who suddenly find themselves being chased by a lion. One stoops to tie on running shoes while the other is looking for a way to ward off the lion. The first laughs as he runs away, saying, “Now I’ll be a little faster, and he’ll catch you, eat you and be satisfied, and he’ll leave me alone.”

These debates about the practical and moral values of cooperation versus individual initiative were neither new nor limited to Moshav Dganim. Residents of veteran *moshavim* were already questioning cooperation as a basis of *moshav* social and economic life in the 1960s and 1970s (Baldwin 1972), and social analysts have shown the individual and factional competition that often pervades these purportedly cooperative settlements (Mars 1980; Zusman 1988). But Dganim residents were speaking to me at a time when the privatization of *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* had become commonplace, and neoliberal norms dominated Israeli economic practices. Within this changing climate, even steadfastly Labor Zionist *moshav* residents like Ephram conceded that, perhaps, although collectivism was necessary to build the country, it was not viable in the long term. Yet, collectivism was not gone from Dganim. For example, Chaim, perhaps the *moshav*'s most vocal proponent of individual initiative, worked hard, as a volunteer, for many terms on the *moshav*'s local council. He, like most other residents with whom I spoke, sought to retain some degree of the taskscapes of the past and the social relations they entailed.

***Yom Shlishi, Yom Shabbat* (“Tuesday, Saturday”)**

In its post-agricultural state, Dganim emptied out during each weekday. Beginning at 7:00 in the morning, the *moshav* had what passed for its rush hour, when most residents left their homes in private cars to drive to work in other towns and cities, and children left for school. After this, the yards and streets would be quiet. In this empty weekday landscape, many saw the end of a more social and happy past of working together; in the morning taillights of departing cars and the quiet stillness of the day, these people saw the absent social taskscapes of the past. Farmers used to work together,

particularly during intense periods such as the harvest. Dani, who was born in Dganim and grew up working on his family's *meshek*, fondly recalled the social cohesion of Dganim's former days, especially the task of packaging flowers that periodically brought farmers from across the *moshav* together to work and socialize. With the decline of collective agriculture, those collective taskscapes were no longer necessary for the *moshav*'s economic survival. Now, Dani told me, nobody had time for socializing, since they all left the *moshav* to work in different markets and careers. Dani and other residents perceived this loss of *moshav*-wide socializing and working as a lacuna in Dganim as a community, and many still valued and sought out elements of these faded collective taskscapes. They shared a concern with retaining a *kehilatiut* (community spirit and activity) that they felt to be slipping away.

A contrast between a typical weekday and weekend day demonstrates how *moshav* residents dwelled in Dganim's post-communal agricultural landscapes, including its social contraction toward nuclear families, on a daily basis. To some extent, this contraction parallels the situation in 'Ayn al-'Azm, as workers emptying from both communities each morning to participate in Israel's neoliberal industrial economy drove the nuclearization of families. But there was a crucial difference in this point of comparison: the place of nostalgia.¹⁵⁰ Whereas 'Ayn al-'Azm residents located their lost social ties primarily in landscapes outside the township, Dganim residents recalled the *moshav* landscapes as socially vibrant places, and they continued to see this community as a site for the potential revival of *kehilatiut*.

There were a few exceptions to the typical weekday emptying of the *moshav*, as, in addition to the several remaining agricultural enterprises discussed above, a handful of individuals had initiated non-agricultural businesses on their *meshekim*. Most of these enterprises were geared to the service sector, specifically tourism, rather than the production sector of Israel's economy. As will be discussed further below, many within Dganim saw tourism as the *moshav*'s best opportunity to regain a sense of shared, community enterprise. For now, only a handful of these enterprises were underway. A horseback-riding school, an artist's studio and gallery, and a small bed-and-breakfast drew a trickle of visitors. The community synagogue and a Cochini heritage center drew

¹⁵⁰ Additionally, 'Ayn al-'Azm's high unemployment rates prevented this daily emptying from being as extensive as in Dganim.

a few more. However, even these remaining enterprises were part of the overall shift away from collective taskscapes, as each business employed only a small number of people.

The notable exceptions to this general contraction of daily activities to the nuclear family catered to either end of the age spectrum. Near the *moshav's* center, wisps of children's voices could be heard each day from the community preschool and kindergarten.¹⁵¹ Just next door was the *moadon* (clubhouse), where daily activities were provided for the community's elderly during the morning, and occasional community events, such as bridge games and Torah readings, were held in the evenings. During the day in Dganim, these two centers were the only public spaces occupied by community members.



Image 12: Arts and crafts at moadon ha-kashishim.

Funded by the regional council and run by a social worker, the *moadon kashishim* (senior's club) was open to the *moshav's* elderly residents each weekday morning through lunchtime. The director, Adina, was a social worker who commuted in each day from a nearby town to run the center and to pay house calls to residents in need throughout the *moshav*; her assistant, Chava, was a *moshav* resident. The *moadon* served as a center of

¹⁵¹ Following kindergarten, Dganim's children attended several religious or secular schools in other towns and Beersheba.

socializing for these residents, who took part in daily activities in exercise, arts and crafts, Hebrew language practice, and current events that were organized by Adina and Chava. A rabbi came each Sunday to explain a passage of the Torah and lead a discussion. After the organized activity each day, but before being served a hot lunch, attendees would gather in the dining room for tea, often chatting with each other in Malayalam, their south Indian language.¹⁵² A few of the older women still dressed in sarong skirts, though all wore sweaters, sweatshirts, and polyester tops rather than the saris and thin blouses they had donned in India. These men, as well as the younger generation, wore the distinctive box-like *kipot* (skullcaps) typical of Cochinim. Some attendees had very limited physical capacities and required the aid of a personal care assistant to move through the physical exercises and produce their crafts. Others were quite mobile and enjoyed helping to serve tea and prepare salads with lunch each day. After lunch, a hired van driver transported attendees back to their homes.

Interpretations of the *moadon's* place in Dganim's social landscape demonstrated residents' ambiguous feelings about the *moshav's* socially contracted landscapes. Adina stated how unusual it was for such a small community to have their own day center for the elderly, and that caring for the elderly was particularly important for “this community.” Many residents expressed this particularity in explicitly ethnic terms, describing elder care as a key part of Cochini culture. However, though all elderly residents were welcome at the *moadon*, only between ten and twenty attended regularly. Several of these regular attendees framed their attendance as reciprocation for work done. They saw the care and activities provided at the *moadon* as their due after the many years of hard work they put into building this *moshav*. Adina would have liked for more to come, she told me, because there were many elderly in Dganim who simply sat by themselves at home while family members were away at work. Unfortunately, there was a stigma, Adina continued, because some saw this as a place for poor people who could not take care of themselves. Like interpretations of post-agricultural landscapes, elderly residents' interpretations of the *moadon* spoke to debates about the value of cultivating a sense of independence in line with the norms of a post-*sabra* Israeli ideal of personhood, and the implications of “cutting the network” of reciprocal obligations.

¹⁵² Though all these elderly residents understood Hebrew, they varied in their fluency. Very few younger *moshav* members spoke Malayalam well, but many understood it.

Each afternoon, those of working age returned to the *moshav*, joining the young and elderly. Most spent their evenings with nuclear families. Many men attended synagogue regularly, and so they gathered in this communal space each evening before returning to their homes for dinner. Having been settled primarily by a few large families, many of Dganim's residents had cousins, aunts and uncles within the *moshav*. Members of these extended families did visit each other frequently, but nuclear families spent most of their time in Dganim in their houses.

During the weekend, a combination of religious observance and leisure time brought more of Dganim's residents into social contact. Though the Cochini Jewish community has been characterized in earlier decades as a predominantly Orthodox community (Kushner 1973; Katz and Goldberg 2005; Segal 1993), contemporary Dganim residents' strict adherence to religious laws varied. As a result, observation of *shabbat* varied from household to household, as some did not turn on electricity, while others enjoyed watching television. Yet, on Friday afternoons, most women busied themselves cooking an assortment of dishes for the weekend's large family meals of *shabbat*. For its social and religious significance marking the beginning of *shabbat*, the Friday night meal served as a meaningful time to recall Cochini cultural origins and express a syncretic Cochini-Israeli identity (Bahloul 1999). Foods considered to be traditional Cochini cuisine, such as fish served with a strong cilantro sauce and cardamom-infused rice, featured prominently along with non-Cochini Israeli inclusions, like fluffy white challah bread. These *shabbat* eve meals were often focused on the nuclear family, seeing the return of many grown sons and daughters who had moved away from the *moshav*. But the meal was also an opportunity to enlarge one's social sphere, visiting extended family and inviting guests. Even as a temporary resident without family of my own, I never spent *shabbat* eve alone.

Many residents spent *shabbat* refraining from using electricity and driving cars, which in this remote location meant that they stayed on the *moshav*. On Saturday mornings, residents, especially men and older women, walked to synagogue services. The ornate building was reconstructed in the style of one of the large community synagogues in Kerala. To understand the community, many residents told me, one needed to visit this synagogue. On the first *shabbat* that I attended services, I followed

my host, Einat, through the side door and climbed up to the women's balcony. We sat with a view down over the main room where the men recited segments of the Torah in unison. Though the balcony was plain and functional, with white walls, muted carpeting, and stackable chairs, the main hall was vibrantly colored in blue, red, silver, and gold. An elaborate, floor-to-ceiling silver moulding surrounded the ark where the Torah scrolls were kept, and many electric chandeliers hung from the ceiling to mimic the oil lamps that were common in India. A few key pieces of the architecture, such as the gold posts ringing the lower cantor's stand, were brought from India, and the rest was constructed in Israel to duplicate the synagogue they left behind.

Building this synagogue had been a major expenditure, and residents pointed to it proudly as the defining feature of their *moshav*. It continued to be a main gathering place on high holidays, and to some extent on *shabbat*. Attendance was light that morning, my host told me, because the fiercely cold winds that had buffeted us on our walk had kept many in their homes. However, elderly residents of Dganim told me that overall attendance had declined through the years. The synagogue was a collective social space for many residents, and for all residents with whom I spoke, it was a feature of the *moshav's* landscape that marked it as distinctly Cochini. It made the *moshav* imageable (Lynch 1960), both to residents and visitors, but the synagogue was not a place for shared practices that united everyone in the *moshav*.

That *shabbat* after services, I walked home with Einat and spent the rest of the day with Einat and her family. As was common on Saturdays, we spent time playing board games with her four children and talking, then shared a large midday meal with her husband and aging father. On Saturdays with pleasant weather, residents often went for walks and visited neighbors; children rode bikes and played sports. Those observing *shabbat* in a less orthodox fashion drove to nearby towns or nature reserves.

One Saturday toward the end of my time in Dganim, a new addition appeared in the community that demonstrated residents' shared hopes for a communal revival. I had been gone for a week, and in that time, the community garden that had been underway was completed, and an artful pond had been dug and stocked with fish. As Einat eagerly led the family to the *moshav's* center, we met other families, all walking to the fishpond. As we reached the pond and mingled with other families, conversation was peppered with

comments about how unusual this kind of public gathering was, and one resident referred to the new pond as bringing back the old days of more frequent social gatherings when everyone in the community farmed. “Look,” I heard one man comment more sarcastically, “it takes fish to bring out the people here,” as if rueful that fellow residents were not enough to gather people together. Despite this sarcasm, the pond's planners and fundraisers had indeed hoped that the fish would “bring out the people,” both from within Dganim and from outside. These community leaders had raised the funds for the pond and surrounding garden through a tourism initiative they hoped would revive Dganim economically and socially. They and a large portion of Dganim's residents had come to see Cochini tourism as the *moshav's* hope for a return to some degree of collectivism, while also adapting to the new economic climate of Israel.

Visions of Cochini Tourism: Making a Living after Communal Agriculture

Signs at Moshav Dganim's entrance gate welcome visitors and announce the Heritage Center of Cochin Jews, as well as several individually run businesses, such as the horseback riding school. These signs declare the mix of tourism and Cochini heritage that most residents saw as Dganim's most promising new socioeconomic basis. Above, I described how communal taskscapes disintegrated along with the economic productivity of the *moshav*. In this section, I will discuss a common vision of Dganim's future in tourism, in which residents came to see the promise of a return to some degree of collectivism, while also adapting to the new economic climate in Israel. Examining how a future in tourism became the dominant vision for the *moshav*—and the changing taskscapes it would entail—reveals a great deal about residents' senses of place and belonging, both in their local community and in Israeli society.¹⁵³

Seeing “the writing on the wall” that the *moshav* as a whole could no longer be successful in agriculture, Chaim and a group of charismatic and proactive leaders began pushing their fellow residents to shift to a community economy based on tourism. Chaim had served in several governmental and semi-governmental positions before his retirement and was savvy to the operations of government and skilled in garnering financial support for community projects. He explained to me how he had first

¹⁵³ Grossman (2004) examines a *kibbutz's* transition to tourism; implications for interpersonal relations, changing norms of “hard work”; justified as a Zionist-educational endeavor

developed the plan to turn Dganim into a tourist destination, and other residents recognized him as a leader on this front, as well. During the 1990s, when Chaim was working for the JA, the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture developed a plan called “Village of 2000” (כפר אלפיים). This plan recognized that the *moshavim* were collapsing from an agricultural standpoint, but sought a way to maintain these communities as viable villages, continuing the goal of dispersing Jews across Israel's rural spaces. The plan advocated initial financing to train residents and construct infrastructure that would support more diversified economies, followed by a gradual reduction in governmental assistance that would leave the villages financially independent. In this way, privatization and the motivation of individual profit could be harnessed to continue socializing rural lands as Jewish.

Looking to farming community bed-and-breakfast ventures in Europe as examples, along with some early experiments in rural tourism in the Galilee, Chaim and other Dganim leaders embraced the Village of 2000 model. However, land-use regulations allowed *moshavim* to use open areas of land only for agricultural purposes, not to build tourism facilities. Chaim began lobbying the regional council within which Dganim is situated to change these regulations so that *moshav* residents would be free to develop creative tourist enterprises like bed-and-breakfasts. Regulatory change happens slowly, however, and Chaim and many of his fellow *moshav* residents knew that “for every green track there is also a bypass,” or for every authorized route, a back door. The handful of residents who were running tourism ventures during my period of fieldwork had taken advantage of a bureaucratic process that granted temporary permission for land-uses falling outside existing regulations.¹⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Chaim had retired, and he began working with his former colleagues in the Ministry of Agriculture to develop plans to run Dganim as a “tourist village,” rather than an “agricultural *moshav*.”

The contrast between the methods pursued in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm to use land in ways contrary to governmental plans, such as Sarah's use of alternative building methods and materials to remain outside the attention of the local council or neighborhood residents' blocking of streets, and the methods pursued in Dganim is striking. In Dganim, where residents told agentive stories of building their *moshav* and recalled earlier cooperative

154 This temporary permission is called *shimush horeg* (שימוש חורג), or “non-conforming use.”

relationships with governmental bodies, they worked to change laws and land-use plans to fit their needs. Such efforts were facilitated by government-savvy community members like Chaim and his personal relationships with government decision-makers. In ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, residents recalled histories of impersonal pressure and coercion in which their dwelling practices were suppressed in order to benefit Jewish Israelis, and they spoke of “the state” as a source of power imposing its will from afar. When encountering obstacles to their preferred taskscapes, most “made do,” attempting to engage in taskscapes with which they were comfortable, but which would not directly confront state sources of power. These contrasting tactics also correspond to contrasting types of landscapes; “making do” creates a landscape lacking order in the senses valorized by Dganim residents.

The approach in Dganim also contrasted with that in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm because it involved a significant degree of cooperation, undertaken by residents who identified as a community and had engaged in intensely cooperative taskscapes during the *moshav's* early years. Like the *moshav's* agricultural model, which combined individual initiative for production with cooperation for building infrastructure, marketing, and distribution, *moshav* residents described a vision of tourism that would also combine independence and cooperation. As a member of the *moshav's* local council elaborated, the *moshav* was already working together to create an environment conducive to tourism by laying down water and sewage pipes, paving roads, and building some facilities in the *moshav's* center, like the community garden with the fish pond and an events pavilion. Individual residents should then create small businesses to draw tourists in. Unlike the former agricultural taskscapes, however, the envisioned taskscapes of a tourism-based local economy would be far more heterogeneous. The daily routines for a family running a bed-and-breakfast would necessarily differ greatly from those of art studio owners, for example.¹⁵⁵

155 This plan to pursue tourism as the *moshav's* next socioeconomic phase was widely shared, but not universally supported. The most recent local council elections had been an airing of a community rift over this issue, with a smaller portion of residents arguing that the *moshav* should not take a collective turn toward tourism, but rather, should organize itself as a *yeshuv kehilati* (“community settlement”). The candidate supported by this smaller faction objected to the governance by “*hamulot* rule” (i.e., family factions vying for rule based on sheer number of relatives rather the quality and popularity of ideas) that had placed Dganim on the path toward tourism. However, like the tourism path, this candidate's proposal for the *moshav* to be run as a *yeshuv kehilati* would also combine cooperation in running the *moshav* with heterogeneous individual taskscapes.

Most commonly, residents described the future Dganim not just as a tourist village, but specifically as a Cochini tourist village. These plans built on societal changes throughout Israel, which was taking part in global trends embracing multiculturalism (Maddox 2004; Kymlicka and Banting 2006; Taylor and Gutmann 1992). Whereas the moshav's initial settlers, like immigrants elsewhere in Israel, were urged to shed their “Oriental” traits and assimilate to the Ashkenazi-dominated norms of the *sabra*, widespread multicultural ideals have since softened this pressure to assimilate. Since the late 1980s, non-Ashkenazi Jews have made some real economic, educational, and status gains (Ben-Rafael 2007). The rhetoric of politicians and government ministries now commonly refers to the Jewish “mosaic,” rather than the “melting pot.” In contemporary Israel, certain forms of Jewish otherness are celebrated in tourism and festival settings (Domínguez 1989). For example, heritage centers and special immigration programs encourage immigrants from rural Ethiopia to revive pottery traditions and create gardens in their urban absorption centers (sites for new immigrant housing, advising, and language classes). The Mimuna festival at the end of Passover, a tradition among Moroccan Jews that was suppressed during earlier decades because of its associations with Arabness and non-European norms of Judaism, is now celebrated as a national holiday.

However, great inequalities still exist (Ein-Gil 2009), and even in the midst of multiculturalism, a “trope of tribalism” allows Ashkenazi norms to prevail (Appadurai 1996). Virginia Dominguez's (Domínguez 1989) observation from fieldwork in the 1980s, that the inclusion of non-Ashkenazi traditions was conditional and partial remained true in 2009. Dominguez noted that *tarbut* (culture), depicted as achieved, was associated with Ashkenazim, while *moreshet* (heritage), cast as ascribed, was associated with non-Ashkenazim.

In this multicultural context, Dganim's Cochini residents hoped to attract tourists to the *moshav* by featuring their heritage. While they also mentioned the calming rural atmosphere and their location between Israel's center and the tourist destinations of Eilat and the Dead Sea as benefits for the *moshav*'s shift to tourism, residents foregrounded their “authentic” Cochini synagogue and the Heritage Center of Cochini Jews. This heritage center was a small museum housing artifacts from Jewish communities in the

Kerala area of India. The artifacts were grouped by their occasions of use, such as daily cooking, religious services, and weddings.¹⁵⁶ Large pots, metal molds for shaping dumplings, and wooden utensils; Torah cases and Hanukkah lamps; and the canopy bed, dowry box, and white clothing of a wedding celebration were clustered in cases around the one large room. Plaques next to light, cotton blouses, long wrap-skirts and *kipot* (skull caps) explained men's and women's daily habits of dress, and elaborately embroidered vests and kerchiefs were flanked by signs describing festive occasions.

These artifacts had been donated by Cochini immigrants throughout Israel, and they displayed the elements of culture deemed most uniquely Cochini, and, significantly, least relevant for the everyday lives of immigrants and their children in Israel. Making heritage presupposes the foreclosure of the past that constituted it (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). This preservation of Cochini heritage was particularly important for Dganim residents because it had become more common in recent years for residents to marry outside their *eda*. Now that most young Cochinim were not marrying members of the *eda* and “just want to be Israelis,” explained Pnina, one of the two guides at the center, the future of Cochini culture was uncertain. These objects were important “to preserve and bequeath the culture,” Pnina asserted, relying on “the constitutive power of display” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:81) to turn this collection of objects into a materialization of culture that could be protected and passed on. Moshav residents, beyond those few who actually worked in the heritage center, also expressed the responsibility they felt to safeguard the Cochini culture by safeguarding these artifacts. Yet, most visitors to the heritage center were not these children and grandchildren of Cochini immigrants but, rather, other Israeli visitors stopping by during tours of the Negev.

As the moshav members anticipated a shift to tourism, the beauty of their synagogue and the educational potential of their heritage center became valuable assets for attracting visitors. Going beyond the confines of the small Heritage Center, the tourism venture's promoters sought to put the moshav as a whole on display as an “open-air museum” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:131). Some families also took up food service in “authentic” Cochini cuisine, opening their homes as restaurants by appointment. This

156 This arrangement is strikingly similar to “the Jewish plan” (an arrangement of life-cycle events in terms of synagogue, home, and person) that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998:86) notes in presentations of nineteenth-century museum displays of Jewishness.

marketing of Cochini heritage through synagogue, heritage center, and cuisine was directed toward entertaining and educating fellow Israelis, more than international visitors. Brochures and websites were printed primarily in Hebrew. Moshav council members and entrepreneurs referred to visitors from the nearby (Jewish) towns and cities of Omer, Meitar, and Beersheba, and possibly even Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, as their intended customers.

As in Sarah's tourist venture, Dganim residents strove to establish Cochini tourism for its potential economic support, but also in the hopes that it would help preserve a cultural tradition. In this case, moshav residents' assimilation into Israeli society had already led to a more complete discontinuing of Cochini cultural practices than Iyur HaBedowim had prompted for Bedouin Arabs. The lamps, clothing, and cooking utensils on display in the museum had already become heritage objects that signaled the cessation of their daily use (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). They were “moving objects” (Boniface and Fowler 1993:102) that had become artifacts of a past way of life. Still, the circulation and visibility of these Cochini cultural elements gave *eda* members a sense of security.

Whereas Sarah's venture was thoroughly infused with the landscapes of the Negev (from the stories she told to the raw materials for her products), Dganim's tourism invoked far-away tropical landscapes. If left unbalanced by other indicators of their Israeliness, this turn toward Cochini could paint Dganim residents as outsiders to Israeli society, something against which the early immigrants had fought so hard to avoid. But none of Dganim's residents expressed concern over this possibility.

Though labeling themselves as distinctively Cochini may seem to set them apart from mainstream Israeli society, Dganim residents' pursuit of tourism through the framework of the “Village of 2000” plan also demonstrated their sense of belonging within Israel. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998:141) suggests that “tourism can be taken as a barometer...of local and national self-understanding,” and moshav leaders were calculating that Israelis understood themselves to be in a multicultural climate that could embrace Cochini difference. Particularly because this Cochini difference was depicted as having faded over the course of fifty years in Israel, the story told by Dganim's heritage tourism was a comfortable one for Israel's selective multiculturalism (Domínguez 1989).

It was a story, familiar to Israel's museum settings, of incorporation from diaspora to “one people” (Fenichel 2005).

Residents envisioned their venture in heritage tourism as continuing their contribution to the Zionist project of settling the desert. Procedurally, they spoke of working through approved governmental channels to adjust their land-use zoning, rather than using oppositional or avoidance tactics like those found often in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm residents. And ideologically, residents saw these tourism ventures as means of continuing their contribution to the Zionist project by remaining settled in this remote but important area of Israel. As Pnina was narrating how *moshav* residents had settled in this landscape of sand and “reclaimed the wilderness,” she insisted on this continuity:

There are the grandmothers and grandfathers. After that, there are our parents, who continued the work. And their children, which is us, who continue to help. Until agriculture was destroyed. And then, [we] go out to work, but [we] don't leave the place where you grew up and came to in order to grow this state of ours.¹⁵⁷

Explaining the shift from agriculture to employment outside the *moshav* and their initial attempts at tourism, Pnina drew a narrative line joining this settling mission across generations, despite changing economic practices. Pnina leaned in as she finished this statement, adding staccato emphasis that stressed “not leaving,” “growing up,” and the “state of ours.” The same goals of settling Jews in the desert and civilizing the wilderness can be served, according to her narrative, as the community shifts from communal agriculture to a more individualist combination of some residents seeking external employment and others like herself working to build the *moshav's* Cochini tourism.

Morality and Belonging in Landscapes: Drawing Lines, Policing Boundaries

Thus far, I have traced an intertwined process—of encountering landscapes, dwelling practices, and interpreting tasksapes and the landscapes they produce—that has been confined primarily to the landscapes within Dganim and among *moshav* members. But residents engage this same combination of perception, judgment, and action outside

¹⁵⁷ Pnina's slippage between first- and second-person pronouns and past and present tenses may have been a simple slip of the tongue, but the mixing may also indicate her sense of the continuous and cooperative nature of this settling mission of the desert.

the boundaries of the *moshav*. In fact, residents contribute to the drawing and policing of these boundaries. Residents of Dganim, like their neighbors in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, interpreted the landscapes around them in ways that often crossed and blurred boundaries between purportedly natural and social phenomena. Building on physical experiences of dwelling, as well as the interpretive framing offered by particular environmental discourses, residents drew moral evaluations from these landscapes. Of particular importance in framing Dganim residents' evaluations were interpretations of orderliness and views of the Negev lands around the *moshav* as wild and potentially even dangerous. In turn, these evaluations guided residents' taskscapes and their reshaping of landscapes, demonstrating the material power of environmental discourses. Among other things, this material power consisted of the ability to include and exclude particular kinds of people from the *moshav*'s landscapes.

Policing Difference, Making Residential Place

Part of producing the place of Dganim has been exclusionary, defining what kind of place Dganim is, who belongs, and who must not be allowed in. The *moshav* has grown more diverse since its settling in the 1950s by members of the Cochini *eda*. During my research, Dganim continued to be identified, both within and outside the *moshav*, as a Cochini community, but it was no longer the case that all the *moshav*'s residents were members of this *eda*. In recent years, a few Jewish couples from Beersheba and elsewhere had bought homes in the *moshav*, attracted by the rural, small community atmosphere. More significant was the diversity brought through young residents' marriage partners. Though some parents reported concern that the *eda* would not continue if their children married members of other *edot*, most welcomed sons- and daughters-in-law from a variety of backgrounds.

Because residents spoke so consistently of Dganim as a Cochini place while also noting the tendency for young people to marry outside their *eda* and the rarity of Cochini habits of dress or fluency in the Malayalam language, I asked what this Cochini descriptor of the *moshav* meant. Some referred to a heritage traced through parents, or to the few “Cochini” customs still widely practiced in the *moshav*, such as their special cooking and religious observances. Many spoke of personality characteristics that were

ted to particular *edot*. For example, as one Moroccan woman explained, Moroccans are much more quick-tempered and outgoing than Cochanim. Such a description suggests a blending of the biological and the social, as the following quote does much more explicitly. When I asked Chaim about his *eda* and the social changes in Dganim, he insisted that Dganim continues to be Cochini:

“That's how I feel, that the Cochini character remains in the blood, that you need to recognize the other in order to understand that here, there is something special. Do you understand what I mean? [Emily: Mm-hmm.] It's true that from day to day, they behave like everybody else. But..., on the whole,... I'm not saying that there aren't those exceptions. There are exceptions, and there is the norm. On the whole, this character of patience and the smile, and of warmheartedness, and of... of.... That's how I recognize my own ethnic group, that people are very friendly, very pleasant, very close, very embracing of the foreign, of the different, don't create any sort of distance with the different. Very accepting of the different.”

This biological view of in-group *eda* portrays non-Cochini community members as welcomed, but still “different.” Indeed, residents of other *edot* whom I met reported feeling comfortable and accepted in Dganim, but they also consistently referred to the *moshav* as “Cochini.”

This welcoming to Dganim of people seen as different was limited, though, to Jews. There were no Arab residents, and when, several years prior to my fieldwork, a Bedouin Arab family had attempted to rent a house in Dganim, it had raised a furor in the community. One couple, the Kafnis, had offered to rent out their home to Bedouin Arab friends of theirs, but when the local council learned that the family seeking to move in was Arab, they refused to grant permission. The event spawned legal battles, and the Kafnis faced ostracism from some within Dganim, property damage, and taunts of “Arab lover.” Ill feelings continued to linger between the Kafnis and those who opposed permission for the Arab family to rent.

The exclusionary housing policy adopted by the *moshav's* local council, along with the retaliatory behavior of community members against the Kafni family, effectively policed the boundary line between “us” and “them.” This episode did not result from state governmental housing policies being imposed on local communities, but from the voluntary policing of residential space by residents. The willingness to include Jews of other *edot*, but not Arabs, reinforced a Jewish-Arab division as the line between acceptable and unacceptable otherness within the community. The fierce defense of this

line through residential restriction further socializes the landscapes of Dganim as Jewish.

Order and Moral Landscapes

This policing of Jewish space within Dganim must be understood within the larger context of protecting Jewish lands throughout the Negev. At times, it was simply in terms of land, homogeneous and quantifiable areas of the Negev, that Dganim residents and other Jewish Israelis expressed anxiety. But often, these actors also referred to particular characteristics of landscapes as being Jewish or Bedouin. In Dganim, orderliness was a particularly notable characteristic separating Jewish from Bedouin landscapes.

Within Dganim, orderliness or a lack thereof appeared frequently in residents' discussions of good and bad character, allowing residents to draw moral evaluations by observing the landscapes around them. To some extent, the disparities between luxurious and humble houses within the *moshav* were seen as indicators of a bad economic situation that had “fallen” on some families. Though not framed in terms of a growing class disparity, residents expressed concern about the increased competition and decreased mutual aid, of which they saw physical manifestation in these disparities. But a family's house and yard also indicated something about their character. In stories of the *moshav*'s agricultural past, orderly fields were a mark of a good work ethic. In recent years, as indicated in comments like Esther's about her neighbors' messy gardens, the yard and gardens around one's house had replaced agricultural fields as indicators of responsibility and work ethic. Even if one had limited financial means, Esther and other residents told me, one should not shirk the responsibility of keeping the yard and gardens clean and orderly.

When Dganim residents looked to the hills and *wadis* around the *moshav*, disorderliness was also a telling feature of landscapes. Many residents spoke of the Bedouin settlements around them with dismay, both for the deplorable state of disorder within the settlements and for their disorderly layout (i.e., the sheer number of Bedouin settlements and their unplanned scattering throughout the Negev). Both aspects of disorder were read as indications of Bedouin character. First, residents drew interpretations from the disordered landscapes within these settlements. Although few

Dganim residents reported having spent significant time in Bedouin settlements, many held a picture of the internal landscapes of these settlements based on occasional visits, depictions in news media, and what could be viewed as one drove by the settlements. When residents described Bedouin living spaces, either governmentally approved or unrecognized, they described shacks built on the median strips of roads, litter, trees planted by governmental or NGO groups and torn up by residents, and an uncivilized mixture of people and animals in the same space. This lack of order was not interpreted as simply a matter of circumstances, but rather as a reflection of residents' character. As one Dganim resident began his remarks about disheveled Bedouin landscapes, "*ayn l'hem elohim*; they don't care about the environment." The phrase, which translates literally to "they don't have a god," identifies extreme disregard and a lack of any reasonable limits.

Second, the placement of Bedouin settlements, whether attributed to haphazard disregard or defiance, was read as an indication of Bedouin character. Some residents saw this haphazard attitude as tied to socioeconomic status and educational opportunities, and thus changeable. For instance, the resident who asserted of Bedouins "*ayn l'hem elohim*" went on to say that they could learn to be respectful of their surroundings and responsible members of society, given the right education. This paternalistic notion associated disorder with Bedouins, but deemed them capable of progress. But many blended class and culture and saw this as an inherently unchanging characteristic of Bedouins. For example, one Dganim resident who also worked in the regional government spoke of the area's rising rates of theft as coming first and foremost from the great increase of "spontaneous" Bedouin settlements. She remembered that there used to be just a few small clusters of families around Daganin. But, she said, "you know how it is. Nomads. They build the tent, and around it, instantly, a big village. Israelis, Jews, can't do that." Jews respect government, she explained, and limit themselves to what is legal, but Bedouins do not respect the laws. Just as they built without permission, so too, they stole without qualms. Such a connection between theft and disorder was asserted by many Dganim residents. Oftentimes, the character flaws that Dganim residents read from the Bedouin landscapes around them were biologized. "Stealing is in their blood," I was told.

Landscapes of Danger

This perceived connection between Bedouin character and thievery imbued the landscapes around Dganim not just with disgraceful disorder, but also with danger. The threat of theft was seen to increase as Bedouins “multiplied.” Whether worrying about the acts of theft that were “in their blood” or “just their way of life,” or of squatting on state lands, residents painted a portrait of a Bedouin problem growing uncontrollably. Many residents felt surrounded, encroached upon, and pointed out repeatedly that theirs was the only Jewish settlement in the area. Here in Dganim, Chaim explained, if you go up to any high point around, you will see that other than the land on which the *moshav* sits, everything else is full of Bedouins. They have come and settled on every area of land, and it's all illegal, he concluded angrily.

In the context of the common environmental discourse (evident in Pnina's comments at the start of this chapter) pairing Bedouins and nature in opposition to Jews and society, the choice of terms such as “multiplying” to describe Bedouins' procreation suggests that Bedouins are a part of this dangerous desert nature and challenges their status as fully human and social members of the landscape. Residents perceived the surrounding landscapes to be dangerous because of the Bedouins multiplying there, but also because of a variety of other threats deemed inherent to the desert. Consistent with the ethos of development that pervaded Zionist discourse at their time of arrival, immigrants described the brutal environment they encountered and the beauty they worked hard to instill by civilizing it. In addition to the barrenness that set the stage for immigrants' agentive tales of arrival, the harsh and inhospitable climate immigrants perceived in the Negev made it seem a threatening place. In residents' descriptions of the *moshav's* early years, sandstorms blew piles of sand through every crack in the houses and coated one's mouth with grit whenever one tried to eat or speak. Swarms of “black crickets” from Sinai landed in the fields and decimated the crops. One particularly favored anecdote of elderly residents told of the special work teams formed on the *moshav* during its early years to combat scorpions and snakes. As Ephram summarized a common sentiment, his parents and other immigrants arrived in Israel thinking that it was a land of milk and honey, but found it to be a land that “eats” its inhabitants.

Many of these threats were tamed by technological mastery, such as spraying

pesticide and pumping water to grow crops and fix soil. But even during the successful years of farming, the dry desert climate challenged farmers each season, and a devastating wind storm during the late 1980s was one of the final blows that pushed *moshav* residents to abandon farming. Unlike the harsh desert climate, though, which could be held at bay with air conditioners and chemicals, if not fully overcome, residents perceived “the Bedouin problem” only to grow worse.

In addition to the threat of sheer numbers, Dganim residents worried about the younger generation of Bedouins, who, they asserted, were more violent, unchecked by either a respect for Israeli law enforcement or their elders and the traditional forms of tribal law followed by their parents' generation. As evidence of this growing violence, many residents repeated the story of an elderly woman who had been hit over the head during a recent home invasion and robbery. The invasion was assumed to have been committed by Bedouins, and it was cited as evidence of a wider social pathology (van Dijk 1993). Not all residents held such fearful views of all Bedouins. Some explained a distinction between the Bedouins “around here,” some of whom had been employees on the moshav in the past and invited Dganim residents to wedding celebrations, and those who lived further away. For example, when several precious artifacts were stolen from the moshav's synagogue, heated, emotional debate arose among residents as to who was responsible. All suspected Bedouin perpetrators, but some carefully specified that the neighboring Bedouin would not commit such a betrayal. A rare few Dganim residents also contextualized these thefts within the wide socioeconomic disparities between Jews and Bedouin Arabs in the Negev, identifying the thefts as an expression of the growing frustration spawned by these disparities.

Yet, fear was shared widely enough that the community constructed and progressively strengthened a perimeter fence around the residential portion of the *moshav*. First, a fence of barbed wire was erected during the 1990s. Several years later, they added an electrified fence and buried a series of reinforced concrete tubes underneath. The fence bars entrance into the *moshav* from any of the surrounding Bedouin Arab villages, and it cuts off *moshav* residents from the *wadi* and surrounding landscapes.

This fence is a striking example of the material power of environmental

discourses. Discourses of dangerous landscapes were solidified in this barrier, which then redirected people's tasksapes. The Bedouin residents of surrounding settlements had stopped going to the *moshav's* corner store after the fence and gate were installed. Dganim residents rarely ventured into the landscapes surrounding the fence. They no longer farmed the fields that lay beyond the fence, and they did not go walking in the *wadi* behind the *moshav*, even though hiking was a fairly common pastime in other Negev landscapes.

When I mentioned my plans one day to walk through these fields outside the fence and into the *wadi* in order to meet a friend from 'Ayn al-'Azm, the couple I was visiting for tea both warned me against such a dangerous outing. Was this purely a reaction to repeated thefts? Over the past decades, Dganim residents had gradually withdrawn from tasksapes beyond the *moshav*, and the *wadi* had reverted back to the wild and contested territory that it had been before the place-making of cooperative agricultural tasksapes. The Bedouin Arabs who lived in or traveled through the lands outside the fence were no longer employees; those tentative social ties had been cut with the cessation of agriculture and the raising of the fence. Like the warnings I received not to walk the streets of 'Ayn al-'Azm that lay in the unprotected public spaces outside familiar families' neighborhoods, this couple's warning steered me away from lands that lay outside the socialized place of Dganim. To what extent had this fence magnified Dganim residents' perception of the landscapes around them as dangerous by cutting off actual interactions in the landscapes and leaving only the circulation of frightful rumors to characterize the place?

Of the more dramatic statement of state power less than thirty kilometers away, the West Bank Separation Barrier, Parizot (2009) finds that the purported security measure actually proliferates antagonisms and creates alternative zones of crime and trafficking. The restriction of movement and economic activities by Dganim's fence is not comparable to the Separation Barriers, but it, too is a guarded enclosure separating one community from another, and it also constructs an opposition between these communities by its presence. It holds meaning within the moral landscape. For example, I sat with Yousef, a resident of the unrecognized village across the highway from Dganim, one day in 2009 as he pointed out an area of his family's land that lay under

several rows of crumbling former greenhouses, inside Dganim's fence. He had been denied use of those lands for decades, but the moshav's erecting of the perimeter fence was a more forceful and insulting denial of his claim to these lands that were “taken, not bought” by Dganim.

Conclusion

Claims of Bedouin brutality and primitiveness, fence-building, exclusionary housing policies—acts like these are part and parcel of Negev land conflict. So too, many Dganim residents would argue, are acts of theft and Bedouin families' building of homes without permission. Such acts are not predetermined by hegemonic discourses and institutions directing residents' thoughts and behaviors. Neither are they simply the irrational and inexplicable outbursts of individuals. In these chapters exploring Dganim and ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, I have attempted to depict a sample of the lived experiences of Negev residents, so as to better understand the dwelling practices and differential interpretations of rightful land use and ownership that underlie contemporary land conflict.

The fears and complaints expressed by Dganim residents about their Bedouin neighbors reveal the double bind facing Bedouin Arabs in Israel. Though images of the noble Bedouin of the past were romanticized, actual Bedouins were expected to “modernize” to accommodate to Jewish Israeli norms and discontinue many cultural practices. Dganim residents' depictions of surrounding Bedouins take part in a moral narrative that demands dramatic culture disruption and accommodation of Bedouins, and also blames them for the results of this chaotic transition. On its surface, this moral narrative is similar to that applied by Ashkenazi Zionist leaders to non-Ashkenazi immigrants. And perhaps this similarity explains some of the harshness with which *moshav* residents spoke of Bedouins. For the good of Israel, Dganim residents went through the upheaval of *aliyah* from a radically different ecology, culture, economy, and social status. Why shouldn't the Bedouins do the same? However, whereas Dganim's Cochini residents faced the demands of assimilation, they were also offered the material rewards of state support in loans, advising, and regulatory assistance, as well as recognition as cultural and societal members. Bedouin Arabs have been asked to accommodate without truly joining Jewish Israeli society. The chapters to come will

explore this dilemma further.

A planned Bedouin township and a formerly administered Jewish *moshav* each offers a different set of institutions that provide economic and educational opportunities or obstacles, avenues to or blockages from governmental decision-makers, and differential access to agricultural and residential lands. These features significantly shape residents' landscapes. In addition to physical encounters with these institutional landscapes, the prevalence of the particular environmental discourses described in chapters one and two shapes residents' interpretations of the landscapes around them. For example, these Jewish and Bedouin Arab residents both tended to evaluate good and bad land uses through an environmental discourse that valorizes agricultural labor in land. In addition, residents often participated in making segregated places within the segregated spaces mapped, planned, and built by non-resident, government planners. Such participation draws from and reinforces discursive frames that pose Negev land relations in oppositional terms. But these residents' dwelling practices did not always coincide with state-initiated strategies. On the part of the state, this disjuncture is due both to deliberately confrontational planning and the folly of high modernism. This deviation is also due, in part, to residents' creativity, finding ways to dwell in these landscapes that fit their needs and partially altering landscapes in the process.

CHAPTER VI

A Bridge Chapter: Reluctant Neighbors

The physical proximity of Dganim and ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, as well as certain shared elements of their past taskscapes, provide a number of similarities. The two settlements experience the same climate. They lie equidistant from the nearby city of Beersheba, where residents can access governmental offices, sophisticated health care, a university and several colleges, and other urban conveniences. Both communities also share agricultural pasts and their associated taskscapes. And both have been coping with recent changes in their socioeconomic bases and daily practices, as the majority of residents have moved away from agriculture to seek wage-earning jobs outside their communities.

Yet, as I have explored in the last several chapters, the residents of Dganim and ‘Ayn al-‘Azm are reluctant neighbors, and the barriers between them are constructed both “top-down” and “from below” (Lentz 2003). Residents are separated by the differential treatment of state planners, but they also participate in this social distancing. Most residents would only meet each other through the paths by which they might meet any other Negev residents across the Jewish-Arab line, such as in relatively anonymous commercial encounters. I found that residents of either community held little detailed knowledge about the other, and if they spoke of each other, it was usually as Jews and Bedouins, rather than referring to town or neighborhood of residence, family, occupation, or other social grouping. Because my fieldwork took me between both communities, some residents viewed me as a conduit of social information and inquired about what life was like “over there.” Most often, though, residents expressed little curiosity about their neighbors. In this bridge chapter, I will look more closely at the landscape that buffers these two communities from each other.

Between the outskirts of Dganim and ‘Ayn al-‘Azm lies a *wadi* with sloping banks of rock and sparsely strewn shrubs and a floor that remains dry most of the year, except

for the rare winter days when flash floods sweep through. The orchards and fields of the *moshav* once stretched much closer to Dganim's bank of the *wadi*, but as residents ceased agriculture, fruit trees that could not survive in the desert without irrigation were cut down, and those fields not rented out to absentee farmers went fallow. On a day-to-day basis, most residents of both settlements did not spend time in this buffer zone, and as mentioned above, many felt it to be a dangerous space. Typically, it was actively avoided or simply ignored.

This particular area in between, and residents' treatment of it, has been mirrored on a wider scale in Israeli scholarship. Because this scholarship tends to be segregated between works focused on Jews and works on Arabs, neither meeting spaces nor buffer zones like this tend to receive analytical attention.¹⁵⁸ However, focusing on border zones such as this *wadi* can shed light on how the Jewish-Arab line is drawn and policed and, equally importantly, where it is breached (Modan 2007; Vila 2003). As Susan Bibler-Coutin (2003) states, "borderlands are marginalized yet strategic, inviolate yet conventionally violated, forgotten yet significant." Examining people's dwelling practices in and around border zones can illuminate how two settlements so close together are also so distantly separated by physical barriers, social norms of behavior, character judgments, and emotions such as fear and mistrust. Here, I analyze the two occasions when I accompanied residents of Dganim and 'Ayn al-'Azim into the stigmatized and typically avoided space of the *wadi* between the two towns. On one occasion, I met Sarah for an outing she had arranged for the Al-'Uwaydi neighborhood children. On the second occasion, Gil, a police officer from Dganim, took me on a tour of what he and his community considered to be the *moshav*'s territory.

A Walk in the *Wadi*

One warm Saturday in February, after relaxing with Einat and her children in the morning, I received a call from Sarah, inviting me along on the excursion she was leading for the neighborhood children. For a number of months, Sarah had been mentioning her plans to walk with the children out of 'Ayn al-'Azim to explore the bordering *wadi* and see the tribe's old water well, where they had lived before the government had moved

¹⁵⁸ For an exception, see Parizot's (2009) study of social and economic practices at and around the West Bank Separation Barrier.

them into town. I filled a bottle of water and laced on sneakers, then walked out of Dganim via the front gate. “There aren't any buses today,” a guard warned me, assuming I was heading for the main highway. I felt self-conscious as I thanked him and then turned off the road to walk around Dganim's fence toward the *wadi*, knowing that I was breaching norms of the *moshav*. I was also entirely uncertain of where to go, since Sarah's only directions had been to walk toward ‘Ayn al-‘Azm and meet them at the large “cake hill.”

After hearing from so many residents of both the *moshav* and the township that “nobody goes to the *wadi*,” I was surprised to find that I was not alone. An elderly man and a group of young boys were gathering weeds from the edge of a field. I asked directions of the man, and he told me I was going the right way, but insisted that I wait as he flagged down a pickup truck that was bucking down a rough dirt track toward us. The drivers, who turned out to be two men working for one of the two remaining flower farmers in Dganim, and who were relatives of a woman I had befriended in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, kindly agreed to drive me to the hill Sarah had designated. As we bumped down the path, the driver told me how unsafe it was for me, a woman on her own, to be walking by myself in the *wadi*. *Shebab* (young men) who are no good hang out here, and sometimes they are drunk, he warned. Or, he began and then paused to sniff deeply while drawing a finger across his nose, indicating drug use. Kids come here instead of going to school, hang out and cause trouble. He pointed to a couple of boys with a donkey in the distance, as if to prove his point. Later, though, when I left the truck I found that these were several of the boys in Sarah's group. They were children on a supervised trip, and not exactly hardened criminals, but the driver's expectation of illicit activity in this border zone led him to interpret what he saw with a lens that only seemed to confirm his original view.

We had arrived in front of a hill rising abruptly above its relatively flat surroundings, with stone pillars erected in a circle at the top. The terracing carved into the hill made it resemble a layered cake. The driver informed me that the JNF had built this hill as a tourist attraction. He then gestured around us to the bare, sandy landscape and opined that it could have been full of trees and well taken care of, but “these Arabs” don't take care. In contrast, he pointed to the small grids of young, JNF-planted trees

recently laid at the base of this constructed hill. The driver, himself Arab, interpreted this landscape through the discursive frames propagated by Labor Zionism, which identify Israeli Jews as good stewards and Arabs as undeserving of the land. At a more basic level, he based his judgments on a discourse that frames good land-use as that which involves intensive labor and creates greenery, rather than adapting to an arid environment.

As I got out of the truck, the children who had arrived with Sarah were scrambling up the steep slopes of the hill. Sarah and the last few girls came up out of the *wadi* and greeted me, and we walked up the more shallow ramp on the other side of the hill. We all gathered at the top, to rest in the shade of the pillars, frolic in the sun, and feed orange peels to the donkey. As we rested, Sarah explained this place to me, building on the driver's explanation, but using a different discursive frame that valued non-productive forms of dwelling as much as planting or reaping. The JNF built this hill, she explained briefly, as part of a larger plan for hiking paths around Beersheba that would entice tourists. A fond smile then lit her face, and her voice seemed to hold a tune of nostalgia as she pointed to the area where the JNF's saplings grew. She played there as a girl, she reminisced, among the trees of Dganim's orchard. This was many years ago, before the fence was erected and when some of her family members were employed to guard the orchards.

Fostering this sense of connection to the landscape and the enjoyment of simply being outdoors were Sarah's main goals for this excursion. The children so often sit all day indoors with school and video games that they do not know the landscapes around them, she lamented. Where we would go depended on the weather, Sarah replied when I asked her plans for the afternoon. If it remained so hot, we would not wander far. If the weather cooled, she had several places in mind that were significant to the Al-'Uwaydi family's past taskscapes, including a small stone house and an old water well. For the time being, we continued cooling in the shade as the children ate snacks. Sarah praised those who had brought healthy food and scolded any who dropped wrappers into the wind. We descended the hill, played a game of team tag, and then, with the children's urging, set off toward the well.

We walked along the Dganim fence, atop the spine of an earthen wall that had

been heaped all around the fence. I brought up the rear of a single file line of children calling out, running and walking, finding pretty rocks and pointing out snails. Several of the girls asked me about the odd structures they saw across the fields in Dganim, of chicken coops and leaning greenhouses, and I explained the agriculture that once took place there. At one point, we came upon the path's lone tree, and Sarah stopped us under the shade for a break. Three girls were excitedly showing me the spiny seed pods scattered around the tree when I overheard Sarah describing a wide, flowing river to another cluster of children. She's imagining what it would be like here with a full river, one of the girls explained. Then someone started singing a rain song and the rest joined in, calling for the rains to fall. The request for rain, a sort of indirect stewardship, demonstrated a degree of investment in the *wadi* as their place. Sarah led the group in a call and response prayer for God to bring the rains, and we continued on our way. I wondered as we walked if anyone from Dganim was watching this brightly colored parade moving along the earthen wall, but there were no movements, no signs of occupation on the other side of the fence.



Image 13: Walking in the Wadi.

Once we reached the well, Sarah stood guard by the open pit, holding onto the children who wanted to lean over the circular stone wall and peer into the depths. She told the cautionary tale of a Bedouin man who had thrown a pebble down this well at

night, angering the *djinn*, a dangerous spirit, who was dwelling inside and who threw the pebble back at the man. Sarah then led us to another section of crumbling stone wall, the remainder of an open storage vat that used to be filled with water raised from the well. She explained how shepherds would water their flocks at the stone trough running along three sides of this storage vat. When the children had had their fill clambering around the old trough, Sarah decided it was time to go home. She and the children climbed down into the *wadi* and up the much higher far bank to return to ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, waving and shouting to me as they went, while I walked back around Dganim's fence to reach the front gate.

Because the *wadi* was associated with danger and degenerate social groups, a trip like this was unusual, a rare opportunity for children living in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm to move through the landscape of this border zone. Sarah led this and several similar excursions because she wanted the children to get outside and play, to enjoy “nature” in ways they could not experience within ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. With these trips, Sarah challenged the asocial or antisocial designation of the *wadi*. She invested value in this in-between space, both with stories of ancestors' activities, and by labeling it as a destination for “nature.” There was some didactic instruction, as Sarah warned the children not to litter and explained how they should behave as they moved through the landscape. But the socializing power of the excursion lay primarily in the physical experiences the children had in the landscape and the associations made between Bedouins and this place, as in the stories of past Bedouins using the well. They made place by walking and playing through this buffer zone (Casey 1996), and this place became available to them in forging a local identity (Gray 1999).

Tour of the Territory

The second time I ventured into the *wadi* was a month later, at the invitation of Gil, one of the *moshav's* police officers. Gil had heard of my research and offered to take me on a tour of Dganim's *shetach*, or territory, which included the fields outside the fence and extended several kilometers to the *moshav's* original, now abandoned settlement site. He picked me up at Dganim's *moadon* one afternoon in a four-wheel drive jeep, with a rifle slung over his shoulder. Gil's use of the term, *shetach* to describe the landscapes

through which we traveled clearly claimed ownership over this territory, but by keeping his gun close to hand at all times and repeatedly explaining the importance of security measures like the *moshav's* periphery fence, he also indicated a view of these landscapes as threatening.

As we drove out the main gate and turned left onto a ruddy track running along the fence, Gil described the security features protecting the *moshav*. He traced the progressive fortification from a metal fence with barbed wire to an electrified fence, interrupting himself to point out sections of the older fence that “they” had stolen in order to break in and to sell the metal for scrap. As Gil described the concrete tubes that had been buried along the outside of the fence to prevent infiltrators from burrowing underneath, I realized that this security device had been the narrow hill along which the children had skipped and run during Sarah's excursion.

The incongruity of this image highlighted the different interpretations of danger held by Dganim and ‘Ayn al-‘Azm residents. For most residents of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, the *wadi* held moral danger; it was a place frequented by anti-social characters (see also Modan 2007). The *wadi* seemed dangerous in a more physical sense for Dganim residents, as the source of thefts and violence. Had anyone actually tried to dig underneath the fence, I asked, having difficulty reconciling such acts with the relaxed atmosphere I had known in the *moshav*. Gil nodded, but then referred to the recent news stories of Gaza residents digging tunnels under border walls to smuggle supplies.

Conversational associations like this, linking Arab citizens of Israel to Palestinian militants, were common, especially during the early weeks of 2009, when the Israeli army bombarded Gaza and Hamas sent rockets into areas of the Negev close to Dganim. These associations, as well as worried statements about family ties between Palestinians in Gaza and nearby Bedouin residents, explained and perpetuated Dganim residents' fears of their Bedouin neighbors as threatening potential insurgents. As Gil and I continued bouncing along the rough path, he pointed to the line of poles along the highway that were missing their long metal guard rail. “They” stole that, too, he informed me, clarifying that it had been “the Arabs, the Bedouins,” when I asked who “they” were. Jewish communities in the Negev are like guarded villas, he added, reinforcing the depiction of a small community beleaguered by surrounding violence, but also, perhaps

inadvertently, pointing to the economic disparities that festered between neighboring communities (Kedar and Yiftachel 2006). Class, culture, and political agenda were blended as Gil drew associations between Bedouin Arab citizens, Palestinian militants, and metal scavengers, and contrasted these with wealthy Israeli Jews.

Gil drove us away from the *moshav*, between two clusters of wood and metal shacks characteristic of unrecognized Bedouin settlements and toward the silhouette of a two-story building on a rise in the distance. This was part of “old Dganim.” Gil repeated the story I had heard so many times before of the original inhabitants who couldn't manage on this desert *moshav*, but told this time in the landscape of the abandoned site. He finished as we parked between the shells of two buildings. Gil left the truck running as we climbed out and took his rifle with him. We walked over to inspect the building's remains, picking our way through an array of broken beer bottles scattered thickly on the ground. Gil then led me over to a well and warned me to be careful as I neared the edge.

I lingered for a moment, examining the old well, but Gil quickly shifted his focus away. Indicating greater interest in the current Jewish presence of the region, he pointed to and named several Jewish towns visible on the horizon. Still intrigued by this well, I mentioned the other well I had seen with Sarah and started to ask about the wells' comparative ages. Gil looked alarmed and asked why I had been in the *wadi*. With shock in his voice, he interrogated me as to when, with whom, and why I had visited the well. He appeared mollified by my description of an outing with a group of children and their informal teacher, though, and we climbed back into the truck and drove back toward Dganim and around the other side.

Naming prominent features of the landscape was important to Gil. In addition to the towns he had pointed out earlier, he identified a peaked hill across the highway as Abraham's Shoulder, conjecturing that it received its name because *Abraham Avinu*, (our father, Abraham) had lived in this place. Gil labeled “cake hill,” the JNF constructed mound, as Mitzpe Dganim (“Dganim Lookout”). Both labels identified these features as part of a Jewish landscape.

Driving along, Gil took a cue from the landscape to explain how Israeli Jews and Arabs are different. We were passing by the outer fields that Dganim used to farm. I noted that some fields had fresh crops, despite the departure of all the *moshav's* residents

from field agriculture. The *moshav* rents fields to farmers living elsewhere, Gil replied, so that the JNF will not take the lands back while the *moshav* goes through the slow process of having these lands reclassified from agricultural to commercial, so that they can be used for the *moshav's* plans in tourism. “We, the Jewish people, are a law-abiding nation,” Gil averred. Unlike the Bedouins who just use the land as they please, he continued, sweeping his hand in a wide circle to indicate the unrecognized villages around us, Jews respect the law and obtain permits for different land uses.

Gil continued to narrate the landscape as we bumped through the agricultural fields in the jeep, occasionally noting which *moshav* residents had once farmed these plots. As we left the fields, though, we entered unfamiliar territory. I pointed out a crumbling old stone building that he did not remember having seen before, and he parked so we could walk over to gaze at it for a few moments. Quickly, Gil led us back to the vehicle, and we continued along the edge of the *wadi*, switching to 4x4 power, to a “surprise” he wanted to show me.

The recent rains had swept away a large section of the earthen barrier surrounding Dganim's fence in what must have been a torrential flash flood. Gil's reaction to this breached barrier, along with his previous narrations of the landscape, suggested his dedication to shaping and socializing this landscape as part of Dganim and the importance of maintaining a protective boundary around the *moshav*. Gil had discovered the breach during one of his periodic inspections of the barrier. Fascinated by this vivid demonstration of “the force of nature,” he had recorded a video on his cell phone of the swirling waters and brought me to bear witness, too. Though struck by the force of nature, Gil was not deterred by it. He planned to bring earthmoving equipment to fix the breach soon, he explained as he climbed back into the jeep and drove us back to the *moshav's* front gate.

Each of these ventures into the *wadi* suggested different attachments to landscapes on the part of my hosts. Unlike the trip I joined with Sarah, this was more explicitly an educational tour for the resident anthropologist, conducted so that I could return home and write more accurately about the place. Gil used a more didactic style to teach me. We drove through, rather than walking and allowing the climate and shady spots to dictate where we went and when we stopped to rest. This was a tour not simply of a

landscape, but of Dganim's *shetach*, the areas over which the *moshav* claimed control and the right to exclude others. Gil's demeanor, surveying rather than lingering in the landscape and carrying a rifle at all times, and his references to Jewish legality versus Bedouin illegality, all suggested that he approached these landscapes as a matter of possession. He was preoccupied with maintaining the barrier around Dganim. As a police officer, he was, himself, part of the state apparatus enforcing the particular legal structure that designated Jewish and Bedouin spaces, and he sought to maintain the physical barrier of the fence and earthen mound as impermeable.

Challenging Border Zones

These outings in the *wadi*, precisely because they were anomalous, provide a sense of that which usually remains unsaid and un-acted. The trips suggest how these neighbors understood and behaved toward the buffer zone that separates them. I do not claim that these are representative views of the two settlements. These two portraits would have looked quite different if I had been able to join the *shebab* against whom the truck driver warned me, or if my guide from Dganim had been someone tending toward less bravado. But these accounts offer a glimpse at the gulf that can separate neighbors' perceptions of and interactions with the same landscape.

Though these were only two trips into the *wadi*, and during both instances it became clear that such outings were unusual, they demonstrate that residents do venture into this supposedly off-limits zone. Such border zone activities often reinforce boundaries (Vila 2003). In the first bridge chapter, I traced a journey across social boundaries that crisscross the Negev region. In the bustling Beersheba market, *sayaarat*, and bus station, a boundary between Jews and Arabs was reinforced by the imposition of state planning (for example, through the selective routes of a government bus system), as well as norms of language, dress, and gender relations. In this local buffer zone of the *wadi*, physical avoidance and tales of danger reinforced this boundary. Some who ventured in, such as Gil and the truck driver who drove me to meet Sarah, read confirmation of their existing stereotypes from the landscape.

But the *wadi* is also a “space of nothings that falls between named things, the space of the taboo, the queer, the neither here nor there” (Chapin 2003:5). In such a

“space of marked cultural liminality” (Chapin 2003:5), it was possible to experiment with new associations, new landscape relations. Sarah's outing, in particular, demonstrated that, although there are powerful social norms discouraging taskscapes involving the *wadi*, these norms are not determinative. Traveling during the day, as a large group of children and two adults, and framing the trip as an enriching nature excursion for the children, Sarah did not encounter any resistance from her neighbors. By hearing an instructive story of how (not) to act in this place from the story of the man and the djinn, learning how this place fit into their forebears' lives, and touching and climbing on these old buildings and the constructed hill, the children brought this border zone partially into their socialized landscape of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm. The trip was an unusual event, and I heard of no other ‘Ayn al-‘Azm residents leading similar outings. But it shows the permeability of the *wadi* as a border zone.

This close examination of the border zone between two communities offers a bridge between the preceding and subsequent sections of this dissertation. The firm, yet somewhat permeable border zone separating these Jews and Bedouin Arabs suggests the importance of looking to transgressions when trying to understand how residents encounter, dwell with, and sometimes challenge dominant environmental discourses. The final section of the dissertation focuses on concerted efforts to alter dominant environmental discourses and practices throughout the Negev. First, residents of two types of settlements—Bedouin unrecognized villages and Jewish single-family farmsteads—test state powers of land-use planning. Second, a group of environmental justice activists draw on alternative discourses of place, people, and nature as they attempt to reshape the ethical frameworks and material realities that underlie contemporary land claims. Both of these chapters exhibit cases in which taken-for-granted boundaries separating Jews from Arabs are challenged, rhetorically in chapter seven, and then in more material practices in chapter eight. Neither case exhibits entirely liberatory possibilities. But both teach us about the stubborn discourses, practices and institutions that shape current landscapes of conflict and suggest avenues of incremental change to de-naturalize this conflict.

CHAPTER VII

Seeking Recognition: Unrecognized Villages and Single-Family Farmsteads

Hundreds of police officers and heavy machinery rolled into the village of Al Arakib before dawn one July morning in 2010.¹⁵⁹ Police officers evicted families and, helmeted and holding large shields, they moved all the residents away from their homes. As some residents shuffled away, others attempted to hold their ground. Pushing and shouting broke out between the two sides, but before long the police had formed a line between residents and their homes. The destruction teams with bulldozers then went to work crushing the eleven cinder block buildings and 34 homes made of corrugated metal. Approximately 300 residents and several dozen allied Bedouin rights activists looked on as the demolitions proceeded. Some wailed while others sat quietly staring. Several witnesses videotaped the events. Crews also uprooted groves of olive trees, carefully keeping them intact so that they could be replanted elsewhere. By afternoon, as the mid-summer heat was peaking, the demolition was complete.¹⁶⁰

In newspaper articles following the Al Arakib demolition, governmental representatives claimed that the demolition crews, led by the Israel Land Administration (ILA), were simply enforcing Israeli laws against unauthorized building. Al Arakib was not recognized as a legal place of residence by the Israeli government because it fell outside government development plans for the region. The village lay on land that was registered as “state lands,” and the government held authority to determine its use, these representatives argued. Because all of the houses in Al Arakib were built without governmental permits, they were all subject to demolition. A spokesman for the ILA,

159 I have elected to use the villages' proper names because (a) the residents of these villages struggle to gain recognition of their villages, (b) many of the events described in this chapter have already been well publicized, and (c) in those cases that do not involve public reports, I offer few enough details that the individuals involved are not identifiable.

160 This event, which occurred after fieldwork was completed, is reconstructed from newspaper reports of this and subsequent demolitions, as well as digital video footage from protestors (JTA Wire Service 2010; Kaler and Khalil 2010; Gordon 2010; Hartman 2010; Sanders 2010)

Shlomo Tziser, described the Al Arakib demolition as “implementing a verdict for the evacuation of the area which has passed all legal instances” (JTA Wire Service 2010).¹⁶¹ This included an initial eviction notice in 2003 and a series of appeals that reached the High Court of Justice.

Residents and other land rights advocates, on the other hand, claimed that these demolitions were unjust and unwise. They were dangerous for Israeli society because they add fuel to the fires of Jewish-Arab conflict. Further, residents and advocates argued, they are fundamentally unjust because they are based on laws that use a selective set of criteria, which do not recognize Bedouins' land ties and use predating the Israeli state, to determine ownership (Shamir 1996; Abu-Saad 2005; Yiftachel 1995; Kedar 2003).¹⁶² Without recognized ownership, residents cannot obtain permits to build houses legally, despite these villages being their historic homes. As one member of Gush Shalom, a left-wing peace activist group, declared following the demolition in Al Arakib, “Residents of al-Arakib are neither squatters nor invaders: Their village existed many years before the creation of Israel in 1948. Residents were evicted by the state in 1951, but returned to the land on which they live and which they cultivate” (Hartman 2010). Or, as one elderly resident of Al Arakib stated succinctly, “This is my home.... Why should I leave?” (Sanders 2010)

Two stories of eviction lie at the heart of this chapter, this one carried out in Al Arakib and similar events in other unrecognized villages, and another set of forestalled evictions of Jewish farmsteads. In each case, residents lived in places and through lifestyles that challenged state authority to govern behavior and structure landscapes. A comparison of these threatened evictions—the struggles undertaken by residents to save their homes, and the very different resolutions in each case—reveals both the high stakes of cultural recognition and how this recognition is entangled in the management of land use in Israel.

161 Further background on the historical developments of these legal definitions and their role in Israeli nation-building is available in chapters one and two. See also Kedar (2003) and Forman and Kedar (2004).

162 See Williams (1986) and Nadasdy (2002) for discussion of incompatible notions of ownership and land use in other colonial contexts. Rose (1994a) explains this incompatibility in terms of standards of property that are fundamental to Western law and would hold across global and historical contexts.

Two Evictions

Following this demolition in July 2010, residents rebuilt their homes, erecting tents and metal structures. One week later, these structures were destroyed when the ILA returned to carry out another demolition. This process was repeated dozen more times within the following seven months. Residents rebuilt homes, often as makeshift structures, and governmental authorities demolished them. Naqab residents attempting to dwell outside the boundaries of state planning were encountering the power of this state planning in blunt, material form. Al Arakib is one of 39 to 50 villages in the Naqab that are similarly denied the legal right to exist.¹⁶³ This razing of an entire village was the most extensive act of demolition in recent years, but houses in many other unrecognized villages have been demolished and many additional residents throughout these villages have been served with demolition orders that may be carried out at any time.

Two years earlier, in the spring of 2008, planned evictions of a different sort were announced. The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* reported that twenty-three farmers “in the Negev recently received notices that were a bolt out of the blue: the Israel Lands Administration and the State Prosecutor's Office instructed the farmers to clear their land and restore it to its original state, because they were violating planning and zoning laws” (Golan 2008). These notices were not administered to Bedouin residents living outside government-planned townships. They were served to Jewish residents living on *havot bodadim*, or single family farmsteads.

These farmsteads existed in a planning gray area. In 1992, the Negev Development Authority (NDA) was established by a legislative act of the Knesset with the goals of initiating “the economic and social development of the Negev” and “the settlement of the Negev and the increase of its capacity to absorb immigrants” (Knesset 1992). Development officials for the region began to promote agro-tourism as a new source of economic growth and a way “to make a living and settle in these areas” (Moskowitz 2007). Such calls to increase settlement in remote areas of the Negev,

¹⁶³ The commonly cited figure of 45 unrecognized villages that was formulated in the 1990s and promulgated by the newly established RCUV, was based on a definition of a village as housing 500 residents or more. Some of these villages have been incorporated into plans for the Abu Basma regional council, and so they exist in a state of semi-recognition (to be discussed in more detail below). Other villages, once under the threshold of 500 residents, have since grown. Commentators now cite between 39 and 50 unrecognized villages.

despite the many Bedouin Arab residents already living there but being pressured to leave, were directed specifically to potential Jewish residents. In the context of “Judaization” efforts throughout dominantly Arab regions of Israel (Kanaaneh 2002; see also Kahn 2000), many read these statements as euphemistic language for the protection of state lands from Bedouin settlement. Though small-scale agriculture alone had not proven profitable in the Negev's arid climes, planners hoped to take advantage of the flow of tourist traffic traveling through the Negev along one of two main roads toward the resort town of Eilat as an additional source of income. Planners dubbed this corridor in the desert “The Wine Route,” and hoped that vineyards would sell boutique wines directly to visitors, and shepherds would make and sell gourmet cheeses (Moskowitz 2007). In addition, these farmsteads would educate visitors about local history (such as Nabatean archaeological remains) and industry, because “most of the Israeli people does not know the Negev” (Moskowitz 2007).¹⁶⁴

Some farmers who had been seeking out land for independent farms, rather than plots within existing moshavim or kibbutzim, saw this development initiative as an opportunity. With the assistance of several government agencies, these farmers established themselves on tracts of land in the central Negev. Importantly, these tracts of land were zoned only for agricultural, not residential, uses. However, farmers also built homes and bed-and-breakfast units and brought their families to live with them, encouraged by spoken promises of support or benign neglect from governmental officials.

In recent years, these farmsteads have been subjected to closer scrutiny, and some watchdog groups and governmental bodies called for their dismantling on legal and environmental grounds. The distribution of state lands to these farmers was unlawful, these groups argued, and their settlement wreaked environmental damage on sensitive desert lands that were meant to be preserved. Farmers counter that they had received approval from some government officials and that their activities in the desert were far less destructive than the other sorts of economic development, such as quarrying and building hazardous chemical facilities, typically brought to the Negev.

Both the Bedouin Arab residents of unrecognized villages and Jewish residents of

¹⁶⁴ Because the speaker used the singular noun “העם הישראלי,” I treat “the Israeli people” as singular in the translation.

single-family farmsteads challenged state planning authorities. In doing so, both tested the state government's ability to shape the landscapes of the Negev, including the kinds of residential institutions (like moshavim and planned townships) that would manage people and places according to governmental logics (Scott 1998; Moore 2005). By issuing evacuation orders in both cases, government officials reacted in parallel ways to these two challenges. However, the story of the farmsteads departs from that of the unrecognized villages.

The Jewish farmsteads received considerable attention from government officials, news reporters, and NGOs, as well as local residents. These farmsteads were not numerous—between 25 and 30 existed at the time, each housing just one family¹⁶⁵—but the interests invested in them proved powerful enough to achieve what 45 unrecognized villages that house tens of thousands of Bedouin Arab residents have not been able to achieve. The plight of these few dozen farmers eventually mobilized an array of local and state governmental bodies to cooperate in shaping Israel's laws to fit their dwelling practices. After two years of threats and court cases, the farmstead owners found help from a group of Knesset representatives. Rather than evacuate the farmers, these Knesset members developed legislation that changes state development priorities in the Negev and offers a mechanism to retroactively legalize the farmsteads. The legislation, an amendment to the NDA Law, passed in the Knesset during the summer of 2010.

However, the Bedouin residents of unrecognized villages have not been able to gain similar governmental recognition for their homes and taskscapes. Recent years have brought yet another government-appointed commission to investigate potential solutions for “the Bedouin problem,” and several villages have been granted some degree of provisional recognition (though little material change has been seen in living circumstances). But, as noted by Hana Sweid and Talab El-Sana, the two Arab Knesset members present for debates of the NDA amendment, no legislative changes have been made to legalize these unrecognized villages and bring clarity and security to all of their residents.¹⁶⁶ Meanwhile, demolitions of Bedouin Arab residents' homes continue in these villages.

Both these battles over recognition are part of the conflictive “social dramas” that

165 Knesset committee debate of NDA amendment May 27, 2010.

166 Knesset debates of the NDA Law October 26, 2009; March 16, 2010; and May 27, 2010.

have become normalized in Negev social relations. In his study of Ndembu society Victor Turner (1957) describes social dramas occurring in four phases: breach, crisis, redressive action, and re-integration or recognition of schism. He finds that those social dramas that cannot be resolved through redress may lead to social schisms. Yet, these schisms do not often lead to dramatic social change because they typically fall along already-drawn social boundaries. Such is the case in the Negev, as well. Though dramatic encounters such as these between Green Patrol officers and other governmental agents, residents, and activists are profoundly disruptive at an interpersonal and local community level, they most often reinforce preexisting divisions between Jews and Arabs, maintaining a continuity of structural tension on the larger scale.

At times, though, social dramas can lead to more fundamental societal change, and my comparison of these two threatened evictions examines attempts to effect such a transition. Though living in similarly “illegal” settlements, residents of unrecognized villages and single-family farmsteads have had very different experiences and interpretations of governance, and they have enlisted different tactics as they attempt to dwell in defiance of government orders. In this chapter, I argue that the tactics used by both residents and their allies, as well as the responses of governmental bodies, cannot be fully understood without consideration of the environmental discourses at their core. Actions and interpretations on all sides of these land-use battles are tied to discourses of wild Bedouins, wild desert frontiers, separately socialized Jewish and Bedouin landscapes, and the historically iconic status of agriculture in Israel. These discourses and the practices that embody them operate as both background for struggles over land and the means for struggling. They are tools used in these skirmishes over dwelling space, and their significance in Israeli society is also negotiated and challenged through these battles. For example, Bedouin Arab residents may plant crops in order to strengthen their ownership claims, drawing on the high status of agriculture, and in doing so, they challenge a discourse of itinerant Bedouins.

Dilemmas of Recognition

These efforts to shift dominant discourses are constrained by dilemmas of recognition and non-recognition in an Israeli society that endorses multiculturalism

selectively. The stakes of resolving these dilemmas of recognition are psychological, material, and political. Both collective and individual identities are realized, in part, through the recognition, or lack thereof, that we receive from others. Thus, argue proponents of multicultural politics such as Charles Taylor (1992), societies have a responsibility to recognize members of minority cultural groups as such. As discussed in chapter two, property rights also rely on recognition. They depend on a conversation in which claimant and audience share a language, allowing the audience to recognize the claimant's possession of property (Rose 1994a). Here, I explore links between recognition or its refusal in terms of collective identity and land-use rights.

In her discussion of multiculturalism's treatment of Aboriginal people in the Australian state and nation, Elizabeth Povinelli (2002) refers to these contradictions as “the cunning of recognition.” The Australian nation-state recognizes “authentic” Aboriginal customs and Aboriginal land rights, and it ties Australia's national identity to this multicultural inclusion of the Other. However, liberal multiculturalism recognizes an impossible expectation of the Aboriginal subject, who must be simultaneously authentic and different, yet also conforming to and non-conflictual with dominant Australian norms. Such recognition of cultural rights, framed as support for a minority group's cultural continuity within a society dominated by other cultural norms and practices, is common in societies organized around liberal multicultural ideals (Kymlicka 2003; Kymlicka and Banting 2006; Taylor 1992; Asad 1993).

Alternatively, minorities may be incorporated into an imagined community through assimilation. For example, as discussed in previous chapters, the recognition of Jewish immigrants in Israeli society demanded assimilation to an Ashkenazi norm (Shohat 1988; Weingrod 1966) (especially prior to the opening of Israel's selective celebration of multiculturalism in the 1980s). Such assimilation entails its own sort of violence (Ong 2003). As part of the Arab-Jewish opposition in Zionist discourse, Mizrahim have long been expected to extirpate any hints of Arabness in their appearance, speech, religious observances, and other practices in order to gain recognition as full-fledged, modern Israelis (Shohat 1988; Domínguez 1989).

However, Bedouin Arabs in Israel face a different set of dilemmas tied to recognition. They may seek inclusion in the state and access to substantive citizenship

(the collection of civil, political, and social rights promised by formal citizenship (Holston 2008)) *neither* through recognition of difference, as offered by liberal multiculturalism, *nor* through recognition of similarity, as offered through assimilation. Rather, they face what I refer to as an expectation of acultural accommodation. Notwithstanding the central role that Arab culture has played as an Other against which to define Jewish Israeli culture (Rabinowitz 2002b), and the highly visible role of Bedouin culture in particular (Almog 2000), inclusion in the nation is not attainable for Bedouin Arabs.

As we will see below, Bedouin rights advocates (including some Bedouin Arabs themselves) also call for recognition of Bedouin Arabs' rights through the language and logic of multiculturalism. But they struggle against a discourse of Jewish-Arab difference that remains pervasive (manifest for example in the consistently separate administration of Bedouin and Jewish affairs described above) and prevents inclusion of Bedouin Arabs in the national “we.” Instead, inclusion in the state, or the realization of more substantive citizenship, is at stake. But the terms of governmental recognition for this citizenship push individual Bedouin Arabs to live aculturally. State bodies insist that Bedouin Arab residents *not* perform in supposedly authentic Bedouin ways, such as shepherding, living nomadically, and tracking land use and ownership rights orally rather than through written documents. They require Bedouin Arabs to relinquish their own cultural practices, but without the inclusion (albeit potentially violent) of assimilation to Israeli culture. It was against these pressures to accommodate, for example, that cultural practices recognized as traditional served as strong practical and symbolic rallying points for resistance through persistence in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm (Jolly 1992).

Other scholars have used the term “acultural” to refer to a self-appointed position above culture, a perspective resulting from an ethnocentric view of culture as exotic difference (Rosaldo 1988; Gershon and Taylor 2008). I use the term “acultural accommodation” differently, to refer not to an aspiration for social dominance, but to a pressure exerted through hierarchical power relations. It describes a type of pressure applied to Bedouin Arabs as a minority group that would deny them cultural practices in order to remove them as an obstacle to Jewish nation-building. Like the cunning of recognition Povinelli describes, this acultural accommodation is an impossible demand.

This impossibility underlies the experiences of Bedouin Arabs struggling for recognition in Israel, and it helps to explain the different outcomes in the two eviction stories around which this chapter revolves. In this chapter, I consider how the residents of each type of settlement (and their allies) challenged prevailing legal and social norms of land-use and belonging in Israeli society. By first discussing dwelling practices in unrecognized Bedouin villages and then addressing Jewish single-family farmsteads, I examine residents' motivations for living in these places and the various ways residents encountered and challenged the limits imposed by government.

The juxtaposition of these two types of settlement and their residents is deliberate. It demonstrates that cultural recognition facilitates land claims, while a refusal of cultural recognition renders a groups' land-use practices illegitimate, foreclosing many legal rights, including land ownership. All the residents discussed in this chapter sought governmental recognition of their land claims, but while Jewish farmstead owners were eventually recognized as participants in Israeli nation-building, Bedouin Arabs were offered a tepid recognition contingent on acultural accommodation. In the former case, place-based identities, though nascent, helped residents make their claims. In the latter case, place-based identities were seen by authorities to threaten the Jewish character of Negev landscapes and did not help residents gain recognition of their own belonging in Israeli society or the legitimacy of their land claims. Taking a region-wide comparative approach that places Jewish and Arab residents in the same analytical frame reveals how land ties matter for the different possibilities of belonging and recognition available to Jews and Arabs. This focus helps to unmask the power dynamics that shape the rules of public discourse and policy making in Israel (Kirsch 2002).

Unrecognized Bedouin Villages

Not surprisingly, given their extra-governmental status, numerical data on these villages and their residents are highly contested. Between 45 and 50 villages now house 65,000 to 100,000 residents (Swirski and Hasson 2006).¹⁶⁷ Most of these villages are

¹⁶⁷ Overall population estimates are unreliable because populations fluctuate over time as many residents may move between family members' households, and the context of conflict challenges compliance because there is great suspicion of how population data would be used. In addition, some residents who moved to townships have since returned to live with family members in unrecognized villages, but no accurate statistics count these populations fluctuations.

clustered in the northern Naqab and along a corridor running south of Beersheba. The topic of unrecognized villages is a complicated issue that can be addressed from a number of directions, including historical accounts of residential practices and land conflict (Abu-Saad 2008a; Swirski and Hasson 2006; Falah 1985b); moral arguments about citizenship, nationalism, the public good, and human rights (Kressel 2003; Yiftachel 2009a; Schechla 2001; Gottlieb 2008; Rangwala 2004); and practical and legal discussion of the effects of these unrecognized settlements on Israeli society (Yiftachel 2009b; Shamir 1996; Abu-Bader and Gottlieb 2008). Here, I focus on one aspect of the issue, namely, how residents' taskscape encounter governmental plans and what these encounters demonstrate about efforts to divide and claim landscapes in the Naqab. Nonetheless a brief account of the legal and governmental maneuvers leading to the unrecognized status of these villages will help to clarify how land use, citizenship, and government planning have become so heatedly interwoven in battles over the recognition or evacuation of these villages; and how these battles have become synonymous in popular discourse with "the Bedouin problem in the Negev."

As discussed in detail in chapter two, Bedouin Arab residents were residing in the Naqab prior to the war of 1948 and the establishment of the state of Israel. Following the establishment of Israel, those Arabs in the Naqab who had not fled or been expelled were compelled to move into the *siyag* (the area governed by military rule between the 1950s and 1966). In the years since the end of military rule, some residents returned to the lands from which the Israeli government had removed them in the 1950s while others continued living and building homes in the areas of the *siyag* where they had been transferred. Beginning in the late 1960s, the government attempted to halt the growth of these villages and clear space for development plans that would increase the Jewish presence in this frontier region (Yiftachel and Meir 1998). The 1965 Israeli Planning and Building Law in tandem with the construction of governmentally planned townships combined threats and incentives in an attempt to remove Bedouin Arabs from their more dispersed settlements and concentrate them on smaller patches of land.

This effort has been only partially successful. Today, approximately half of the Naqab's Arab residents live in recognized townships, while the other half live in unrecognized settlements. Because the state government does not recognize the latter as

legitimate municipalities, it does not provide the basic services that it supplies to other municipalities, such as water, electricity, sewage systems, garbage collection, health care facilities, and schools.¹⁶⁸ In addition, because these settlements are not accounted for in regional plans, many are exposed to environmental hazards from industrial zones and chemical waste and nuclear facilities (Almi 2003; Tal 2002:332).

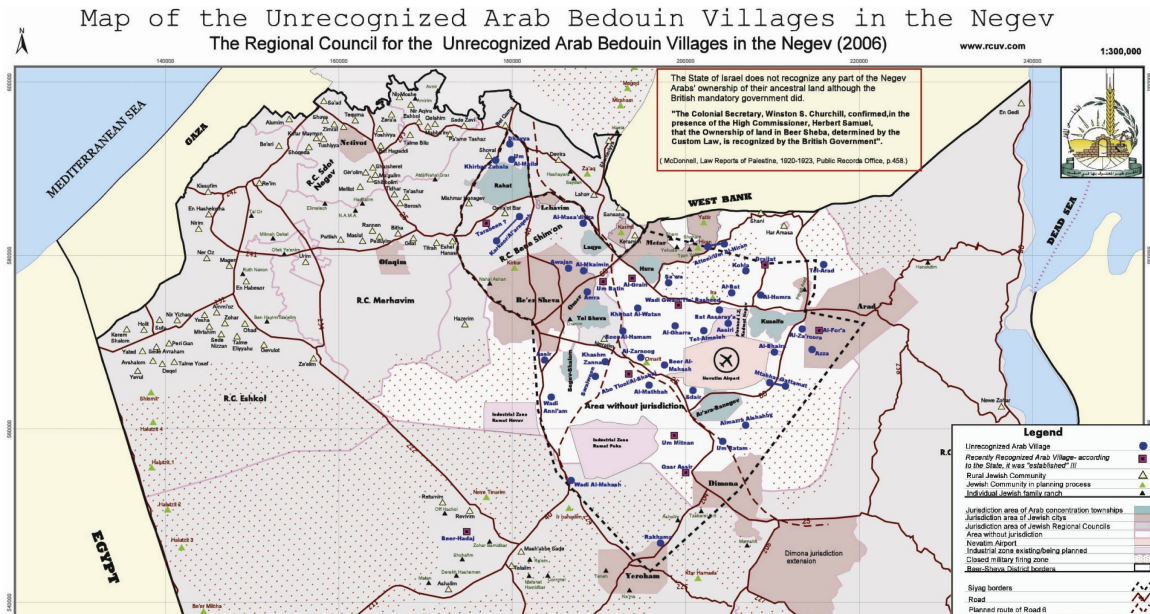


Image 14: Northern section of the map of the unrecognized villages in the Naqab, produced by the RCUV. For the full map, see Appendix.

As Israel's geopolitical priorities have shifted over the past several decades, residents of these unrecognized settlements have faced shifting forms of governance, leaving them uncertain of what to expect in relations with governmental bodies, and many are pessimistic about real improvement. As national attention to and investment in the Negev has ebbed and flowed (primarily with shifting frontiers of military conflict and increasing population pressure in the country's center), so, too, the state government's attention to questions of Negev Bedouins' land rights has ebbed and flowed. In 1980, as Israel faced the loss of the Sinai (which it had gained militarily during the 1967 war) in exchange for peace with Egypt, the Negev took on new significance. These landscapes became Israel's borderlands again, renewing pressure to "Judaize" them, as well as find

¹⁶⁸ Recent court rulings have established the government's duty to provide some services—notably primary education and health care—to all Israeli citizens, regardless of statutory classification of their place of residence. As a result, several primary schools and wellness clinics have been established for residents of unrecognized villages.

space in them for the military bases that had to be moved out of the Sinai. The government's tendency towards enforcement or negotiation has also shifted somewhat with changes in Israel's ruling party (with right-wing parties tending towards less compromise and harsher enforcement).

Throughout these shifts, though, a network of official and unofficial governance has consistently separated Bedouin affairs, including the provision of health and education services, water infrastructure, and land use regulations, from those of Jewish citizens. This separate treatment follows from a discourse of fundamental Jewish-Arab difference and contributes to its instantiation in taskscapes and landscapes. A series of special offices designed to consolidate Bedouin affairs (the most recent being the Bedouin Authority) have mediated Bedouin Arab residents' relationships to state (Swirski and Hasson 2006).¹⁶⁹ In addition, unrecognized villages have no officially recognized local councils, and with no official addresses, residents cannot vote in regional council elections.

Though the 1965 law formalized their unofficial status, and despite governmental efforts to empty them, these villages continue to exist. Since 1965, residents and governmental planners have been in a stalemate. This stalemate has only become more firmly entrenched during governmentally initiated commissions, legislative measures, and court cases. The state denies all ownership claims of the Bedouins to Negev lands, and it has offered limited compensation to those Bedouins willing to evacuate the lands where they resided, move to planned townships, and relinquish all ownership claims (Swirski and Hasson 2006).¹⁷⁰ Meanwhile, at least half of Bedouin Arab residents of the Naqab have refused these terms, for reasons that will be discussed further below.¹⁷¹

169 Scholarly commentators and community activists alike have noted certain parallels between the bureaucratic treatment of Bedouin Arabs in Israel and the treatment of indigenous and minority groups elsewhere. Most commonly, I heard the case of Native Americans in the United States used as a parallel. One significant difference between these cases in the U.S. and Israel is that consolidation of Bedouin affairs under separate governmental bodies does not accompany any recognition of sovereignty or treaty rights, as is the case for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the U.S.

170 Commissions and resolutions from executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, including an initially secretive inter-ministerial committee in 1962, the Albeck Commission in 1975, the Negev Land acquisition Law (Peace Treaty with Egypt) in 1980 (commonly referred to as the Peace Law), the Supreme Court ruling in 1984 on the Al Hawashla case, and the "Land Settlement and Compensation Plan for the Evacuees in the Bedouin Diaspora in the Negev" Cabinet Resolution of 1997, have all resulted in similar stances and recommendations, though with some variation in the level of compensation offered (Swirski and Hasson 2006).

171 Some alternative proposals have been offered by groups of Bedouin Arab leaders, but none have been

One common explanation offered by Israeli officials for this stagnation throughout its 45-year-long duration has been the lack of a real negotiating partner in the Bedouin Arab community. In response, and galvanized in particular by a 1995 Beersheba district master plan that ignored unrecognized villages and planned a number of industrial areas, public parks, and urban infrastructure in their locations, Bedouin Arab leaders established the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages in the Naqab (RCUV) (Swirski and Hasson 2006). This body of elected local leaders was meant to offer a strong, collective voice in negotiating recognized status for the villages, recognition of land ownership, and the provision of services. Though not recognized by the Israeli government as an official local government, the RCUV has significantly raised the visibility of Bedouin Arabs' demands, primarily by appearing and testifying in governmental hearings and by providing legal assistance to residents engaged in court cases with the state over land rights.

With this history of stalemate, several governmental initiatives appear at first glance to indicate a softening of its stance and a willingness to compromise. In 2000, under Ehud Barak's administration, the state government decided to legally recognize six Bedouin villages and begin reviewing three additional villages for recognition. In 2005, the Abu Basma regional council was created to administer to these newly recognized villages.¹⁷² However, by the end of my fieldwork in 2009, the regional council still existed primarily “on paper.” Little had changed in the landscapes and living conditions of these villages. Likewise, the recent recommendations of the Goldberg Commission, assigned by the Minister of Housing and Construction with the task of researching and proposing “a policy for regulating Bedouin settlement in the Negev,” seemed to promise some flexibility in the government stance, but the Commission's recommendations have not been implemented. Meanwhile, though little concrete improvement has come via the Abu Basma Regional Council or the Goldberg Commission's recommendations, since 2003 the state government has begun a new phase of escalated “enforcement,” which has

put into action. These include a 1989 proposal offered by 25 sheiks that accepted the general terms of previous government plans but called for higher compensation (Swirski and Hasson 2006), and several plans proposed in recent years by teams of Bedouin Arab residents and urban planners to formalize boundaries and improve infrastructure for individual villages (Meir 2005).

¹⁷² The initial governmental decision (number 881) to establish the council was made in 2003, but a budget was not assigned until 2005 (Governmental Decision 3956) (Government Secretariat 2005).

included home demolitions and the spraying of crops with herbicide (Qupty 2004; Brous 2007; Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality 2006).

In all these years of stalemate, opposition has centered around two fundamental disagreements over land rights and belonging. First, the state government has consistently attempted to minimize the amount of land occupied by Bedouin Arabs and to establish the “Jewish” status of state lands in law and in practice. Meanwhile, many Bedouin Arabs have refused to relinquish their ties to land because of its importance for their subsistence, collective sense of identity, and individual sense of freedom. Second, Bedouin Arabs have grown increasingly frustrated with the lack of substantive equality in citizenship between Jews and Arabs and have argued that as citizens, they should enjoy the same options of land use and land rights as Jewish citizens.

“Why Do They Live There?”: Grappling with the Double Binds of Recognition

I heard non-Bedouin Israelis ask this question many times throughout fieldwork. Given the consistent pressure from the Israeli government to move into planned townships, and given the difficult living conditions resulting from this pressure, why do so many Bedouin Arabs choose to live in unrecognized villages? Oftentimes, this phrasing was used as a rhetorical strategy to criticize these residents' choices. However, it was also asked within conversations genuinely seeking ways to improve the lives of the unrecognized villages' residents. The options open to these residents are highly restricted. To answer this question in the latter spirit, the limitations placed on Bedouin Arabs' choices by land-use policies in the Negev and by the dominant environmental discourses in Israeli society must be accounted for.

Residents of these villages face the limited choice between seeking recognition on the state's terms, resigning themselves to living without this recognition, or struggling from a subaltern position to change the terms of recognition. Each choice entails difficult double binds. As Fortun argues, double binds can be nodes of social change because groups coalesce in their attempts to solve these double binds and are forced “to ‘dream up’ new ways of understanding and engaging the world” (2001:13). However, stubborn structures of inequality often prevent these groups from materializing the new ways that they dream up.

The double binds entailed in seeking recognition are suggested in the contrast between the following two statements made by Bedouin Arab residents of the Naqab, both of whom were engaged in public advocacy on behalf of the unrecognized villages. Musa, a resident of the unrecognized village of Al Sira, spoke on a panel in 2008 that was part of a series of public education events organized by the Negev Coexistence Forum and entitled “The Future of the Arab Bedouins in the Negev.” He spoke in Hebrew to an audience of two dozen people sitting on plastic chairs in the Coexistence Forum's basement meeting space. After describing his family's long history of residence in Al Sira and the unfairness of the state's demands that they leave, he summarized his remarks not with a position of defiance, but with an appeal for help. He stated, “We need the government; we can't fix ourselves. We're children of the state, not like the Palestinians. We're not asking for a new state. We're asking for our rights....We're citizens who want a solution.” Musa cast himself and fellow residents as worthy subjects of the state, but neglected and in need.

Two days later, my discussion with Wafiq revealed a very different view of recognition. Wafiq, who lived in an unrecognized village as a child and moved with his family to a planned township as a teenager, works with an environmental justice organization, which he credits with opening his eyes to social politics. As we sat discussing his upcoming presentation at an international social justice conference, he stated that Bedouin Arabs must focus more on self-recognition, rather than waiting for recognition from the government. “You must recognize yourself,” he declared. “You must not shoot yourself in the foot and then blame someone else.” Confused by the culpability that Wafiq seemed to be assigning to Bedouin residents, I asserted that more than self-recognition is required because the government can demolish a family's house if it does not recognize their rights to live there. Wafiq replied that Bedouin Arabs must be more proactive in fighting for their rights and affirming their ties to the land. He argued that Bedouins must make it clear that the struggle is not just over a house, but over “my land, my food, my economy, my health, my life. Right now, the people are doing 90 percent of the work, and the government just comes and knocks down a house, like that, easy.” His voice rose as he asked, “Why are you running away from your traditions and your connections to the land, and running toward the city and modernization?”

As he made clear through explicit statements at other times and participation in many land rights campaigns, Wafiq, like Musa, also sought recognition from the state. But these two men's statements point to inherent contradictions in this quest for recognition. Recognition on the government's terms promises access to the support available to other citizens. But this recognition demands acultural accommodation because it requires the renouncing of what, as Wafiq's comments and the Naqab counter narratives of chapter two make clear, many view as the pillars of their identity (i.e., "my land, my food,..." etc.). Yet, to not seek recognition incurs punishments (e.g., demolitions, crop spraying) that threaten these same pillars. Recognition depends on the relinquishing of agropastoral lifestyles and the primacy of tribal and family affiliations, and on making the "logical" decision to move to planned townships. However, many residents refuse to remove the moral evaluations, emotional attachments, and elements of logic not recognized by the state government (such as family continuity and pride) from consideration.

Faced with these double binds of recognition, residents gave a variety of reasons for staying in unrecognized villages, a variety that is often ignored in public discussions of solutions to "the Bedouin problem" that assume "the Bedouin" to be a single group for which only one solution need be found. In fact, it is the lack of choice in legally recognized options for residence open to Bedouin Arabs that most frustrated residents. Many asked me rhetorically why Jews in Israel should have so many options, such as tiny kibbutzim and modern cities, that range from rural to urban and collective to individual, while Bedouin Arabs have only the choice between moving to a governmentally planned urban township or living in a rural, but illegal village.

Residents often explained their decision to remain in unrecognized villages in terms of an attachment to the landscapes there. A Naqab village was the only place they had known as home, and they felt comfortable in the open vistas and arid scrub of these villages in a way they believed they never could in a large town or city (Gray 1999). I understood this attachment on one level and had repeated it to others asking the "why here" question (mostly Jewish Israelis interested in my research). I understood on the level of anthropological theory that dwelling in a landscape means learning the world through that landscape; it means gaining the skills of life through the taskscapes one

undertakes in that landscape (Ingold 2000). And so, a long dwelled-in landscape gives a sense of familiarity and security, no matter how uncomfortable its material circumstances may be. But coming from a middle-class American culture in which mobility to find a comfortable home was the norm, I initially found it difficult to understand at a more visceral level why residents felt attached to these places.



Image 15: One side of Wadi al-Na'am, next to the electricity plant.

My first encounters with unrecognized villages came through the dueling news reports and commentaries of land rights activists and governmental officials, all of which emphasized the deplorable material conditions of the villages (though for different rhetorical purposes). For example, in the language of an editorial published in the Israeli newspaper, *The Jerusalem Post*,

Twail Abu-Jarwal can hardly be called a village. Home to some 450 Beduin, members of the al-Tlalka tribe, the clusters of tents and tin shacks are sprawled over several barren *wadis* in the northern Negev. Reached by turning onto a dirt road off route 40 north of Beersheba, the community—or what remains of it—is barely accessible.

This is Beduin country. Like dozens of similar shantytowns and makeshift encampments that dot the landscape around Beersheva, Twail Abu-Jarwal does not appear on any map. According to the State of Israel, it doesn't officially exist....

The results of the absence of planning and agreed-upon arrangements for the Beduin population can be seen in the chaotically expanding jerry-built collections of shacks and piles of refuse that are visible along the highways of the Negev; what was once a striking desert landscape has become an eyesore. The results can also be seen in the abject poverty and social neglect in which most Beduins live and in the growing alienation and rage that have gripped the Beduin

community. [Golan 2007]

My first visits to villages, led by land rights activists, highlighted the same poverty and social neglect. In Wadi al-Na‘am, a village near the Naqab's environmentally hazardous waste facility and industrial zone of Ramat Hovav, for example, the toxicity felt tangible. I smelled the rank smoke from the industrial plants and heard the buzz of the high-voltage electricity cables strung overhead. Thick drifts of garbage seemed to hug every depression and wind-side hill-face.



Image 16: The far side of Wadi al-Na‘am.

However, during one visit approximately half-way through my fieldwork, I stayed overnight with a family in Wadi al-Na‘am and realized another side of life in the village. The family lived over a hill and out of view of the industrial zone. A strong and constant wind blew, so no odors could linger. It felt cleaner here. There were only a few family compounds—each one with a solid house and a tent, most with several enclosures for animals, and many with a *shig* or shed attached—and the horizon of hills was dotted with just a few other Bedouin homes and plenty of open space. During my visit, we worked outside all day building a house and then sat in the blackening purple of evening. Bright lights began to dot the hills as generators were turned on, and the glow of Beersheba lit up the horizon. This family's fondness for this place made sense on a more visceral level. Aside from the purely aesthetic, romantic appeal of the sweeping winds and the variegated orange-brown of desert stone, there was a comfortable distance between one house and its neighbor. Once the generators were shut off for the night, there was also a

quiet punctuated only by crickets.

I write of this realization to highlight the complexity of residents' attachments to landscapes. Even though I entered fieldwork with keen attention already focused on experiential understandings of the Negev's landscapes, I initially saw in the unrecognized villages primarily what they lacked. Poverty and social neglect are real and pressing issues, but they do not fully encompass residents' experiences of these landscapes. Several months after my visit to Wadi al-Na'am, when I visited a family in the unrecognized village of El-Hawashla, I was more prepared to perceive the family's everyday dwelling practices in their positivity, rather than simply their negativity. Sahr, who explained her unease in 'Ayn al-'Azm in chapter four, had taken me and her children to visit her parents. Happy to be out of the township for the day, they walked through the hills behind her parents' house and knew the names and uses of seemingly every plant we passed by. Sahr proudly dug up the fuzzy, light green root called *cuch barri* ("wild peach") for me to taste and pointed out the *qasuum* that is good for easing stomach pains. Her son cleaned his hands by rubbing them on the leaves of a *slaameniya* bush. The younger children scampered about without fear in the open spaces around the house, and the women felt free to raise their voices and let their headscarves fall loose without fear of peering eyes from unrelated neighbors. They felt comfortable here. This was home.

Though "home is not necessarily a comfortable or pleasant place to be" (Ingold 2005:503), there is a familiarity and security that comes from knowing its landscapes well that helps to make a place home. The following examination of residents' reasoning for remaining in unrecognized villages supplements explanations based on this visceral attachment and familiar taskscapes. With it, I hope to clarify what exactly residents are affirming and refusing with their choice to stay, and how they interpret the double binds they face.

Histories of evacuation are important for residents' likelihood to stay or move out of villages. The tumultuous period of forced relocations during the 1950s and 1960s complicated the personal and formal legal ties residents hold to the lands where they live today, and the number of dislocations experienced varied from tribe to tribe. Many tribes live on lands to which the Israeli military relocated them. Some groups, such as the families of the Tarabin tribe currently facing eviction from their homes just outside the

fence of the expanding Jewish town of Omer, had already been evicted and relocated several times before the first governmentally planned township was completed in 1969. Today's governmental orders to relocate are simply one more in a series, and residents are tired of being pushed about. On the other hand, families whose traditional lands fell within the *siyag* may still live on lands upon which generations of their family members have lived, and they may hold a variety of forms of documentation, such as tax receipts and photographs, that demonstrate this continuous occupation.

Corresponding with these different histories of evacuation, some residents are more willing to relocate in return for recognition than others. Many of those with long-term family ties to a particular area described unassailable attachments to the landscapes of their villages in terms of familiarity, affection, and a connection to their extended family (both living and deceased), as well as rightful ownership. Those without such long-term ties often expressed a willingness to move, but only if given a fair deal by the government. Thus, land rights arguments based purely on the language of ownership do not unite Bedouin Arabs.

Despite this heterogeneity, several priorities were repeated consistently during conversations with residents about their reasons for staying: freedom and rural livelihoods, fairness and betrayed trust, and a personal sense of comfort in open desert landscapes. Because residents frequently incorporated narratives of past land uses to explain their present circumstances, it is not surprising that these priorities draw on the same environmental discourses as the counter narratives discussed in detail in chapter two. Past and present meld in residents' experiences of their landscapes.

Consistent with a common and long-standing association between land and freedom, and responding to the severe curtailments on freedom of action that residents of unrecognized villages see among their brethren in planned townships, many of these residents cited their decision to remain in unrecognized villages as an effort to maintain some degree of freedom. Farid, for example, lived in an unrecognized village where he kept a small garden and had recently converted a large room of his house into a classroom for after-school activities. He used to work as an agricultural laborer, but had difficulty finding work in recent years. He wanted to farm for himself, like the moshav residents who lived across the highway from him, but no such option existed for Bedouin

Arabs. If he moved to a township, he knew that he would probably have to give up his garden and would no longer have the option of growing wheat and barley in the lands around his house during the rare rainy years. Between the choice of moving his large family to a small, urban plot in a township, or continuing to experience the longterm uncertainty but day-to-day freedom of life in an unrecognized village, he chose the latter. He explained that despite the physical discomforts of living with his village's limited infrastructure, he refused to move into a planned township where he would have added expenses (for municipal taxes), yet have less freedom to determine the shape of his daily life and livelihood.

Beyond Farid's personal preference for freedom, having the flexibility to engage in agropastoralism, even if not as one's main livelihood, provides security. Emmanuel Marx (1984) noted the importance of ties to rural lands for Bedouins coping with insecure labor markets in the 1970s. Though agropastoral production was not as profitable as wage labor, it remained a critical safety net, accessed directly during breaks from wage labor or indirectly through extended family. Today, Bedouin Arabs must seek work in an employment market that tends to exclude them from more stable and high-paying jobs and places them in competition with foreign laborers willing to work for low wages, and where unemployment rates among Bedouin Arab men are often three times higher than those for Jewish men (Swirski and Hasson 2006).¹⁷³ Though labor markets in Israel have changed considerably since the 1970s, the overall economic stagnation of the Negev, an influx of unskilled laborers during the 1990s wave of immigration from Russia and the former Soviet Union, and discrimination against Arabs in employment mean that wage labor remains highly unstable for Bedouin Arabs (Abu-Bader and Gottlieb 2008). All these sources of instability in the labor market make it risky to rely entirely on wage labor and relinquish all ties to the lands necessary for agropastoralism (Abu-Rabia 1994).

In the Naqab reminiscences of chapter two, narrators contrasted the honorable relations maintained between Bedouins regarding land use with the dishonor the Israeli government has exhibited in land relations. Histories of betrayed trust continue to frame residents' experiences in the present. Because past promises were broken, such as the

¹⁷³ Bedouin Arabs report widespread employment discrimination from individual employers, and they face structural disadvantages in the frequent requirement of past military service for many of the more stable and higher-paying jobs.

often discussed promise that residents removed from family lands in the 1950s would be allowed to return after brief military exercises, residents do not trust that contemporary promises—about improvements to be made through the Abu Basma Regional Council, new relocation plans that include options for agricultural villages, and plans to improve living conditions in the existing townships—will be kept.

Sabr and Insurgence: Challenging Planning Authority

Residents have many reasons for wanting not to move, and they also challenge the government's planning authority in a variety of ways, ranging from non-confrontational “making do” (de Certeau 1984) to direct defiance. The vast majority of residents who do remain in the villages enlist *sabr*, patience, to manage the difficulties of life in unrecognized villages and not relinquish their dwelling ties to these rural Negev landscapes. Like the many residents of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm who “make do” by continuing traditionally rural food-making practices in their urban homes or constructing houses without building permits from found materials, these residents of unrecognized villages also “make do.” For example, residents often built houses that were very modest structures, using inexpensive and poorly insulating materials like sheet metal, due to economic limitations and tactical considerations. One afternoon while sitting with some of Sahr's family at the kitchen table in El-Hawashla, Sahr's brother explained the hesitancy of residents to invest anything in the external structure of their houses or to plant trees. Such activity would be more likely to invite the attention of state authorities, and it would cost a great deal of money that could be lost to the bulldozer. Sahr's brother wanted to get married and build a home, but he would only consider building something very basic, perhaps investing a bit more in furnishings to make the inside comfortable.

Residents enlisting this kind of *sabr* did not typically speak of their continued residence in the villages as part of a concerted effort to defy the Israeli government. Rather, personal and familial priorities were more commonly discussed. ‘Abd was an elderly man living in Wadi al-Na‘am. Far from being a politically vocal opponent of the Israeli state, he had worked as a translator and liaison between the government and the Bedouin community during the state's early years and had great praise for the Israeli government during that period. He bought a house in the nearest township many years

ago, but quickly left it to return to Wadi al-Na'am. He did not want electricity or any other state intervention now, he told me; he just wanted to be left alone to continue living in the same landscapes where his parents lived and died. Similarly, as one elderly member of the Tarabin tribe stated when I asked him about the land conflict between the town of Omer and the members of Tarabin living nearby, he "just wanted quiet."

However, public advocates of Bedouin land rights, including many who are also residents of the villages, often frame the patient making-do of these village residents as a form of collective resistance. Nuri, for example, whose narrative of expulsion in chapter two framed his evaluation of Zionist land-use planning as racist, saw residence in the unrecognized villages as a justified opposition to the Zionist goal of stealing lands from Bedouins and giving them to Jews. Public advocates used the term *sumud*, steadfastness, with its defiant connotations (Swedenburg 1990) more typically associated with Jolly's (1992) notion of resistance through persistence, to describe village residents' simple acts of dwelling. For example, the Communications Director of the environmental justice group Bustan wrote, "Over 70,000 Bedouin in unrecognized villages are daily engaged in *sumud*, steadfast struggle to stay on their lands in defiance of a process of internal transfer" (Manski 2006). In another document, as an argument for its proposed project in alternative farming techniques that would be less vulnerable to crop spraying, the leaders of Bustan described the project's ability to support the "*sumud*,' or political resistance" of the villagers. Because Palestinian nationalist aspirations have been narrated for many decades in terms of the *sumud* of the idealized Palestinian *fallah* (Swedenburg 1990; Bardenstein 1998), advocates' use of the term to describe Bedouin Arab residents implies not just defiance of unfair treatment of this group of citizens, but also a connection between all Palestinian Arabs, including Bedouin and *fallahin*. As in the case of the Palestinian poets, writers, and cultural workers who made the *fallah* into a symbol of *sumud*, here, too, cultural workers fashion the *sabr* of residents into the more politically provocative *sumud*.

In addition to the *sabr* or *sumud* of simply dwelling in the villages, many residents themselves have politicized their dwelling practices, enlisting public, proactive measures to push against the boundaries set by state government. Three tactics deployed in this public struggle over unrecognized villages have highlighted the entanglement of cultural

recognition and land-use management: insurgent building and planting, public advocacy in partnership with NGOs, and filing court cases. For analytical purposes, I will address each sort of measure in turn, but in practice, these measures are often blended.

To reach wide audiences through these tactics and more strongly leverage their moral claims against the government (Keck and Sikkink 1998), some residents have cultivated far-reaching alliances with national and (occasionally) international NGOs and tourists. These residents have built up “heterogeneous translocal articulations” (Moore 2005:19), networks bringing together national and international NGOs, the labor power of family members and international volunteers, Palestinian nationalism and claims of Bedouin cultural particularity, and multiple structures of authority including family, national government and military. These articulations demonstrate that even in those territorial struggles that seem most locally focused, participants deploy “essentializing assertions that link place and culture while mobilizing through translocal, spatially and culturally hybrid networks” (Moore 2005, 19-20; see also Escobar 2001). While participation with these heterogeneous and translocal articulations offers certain benefits, it also entails a number of double binds (Cooley and Ron 2002). It poses opportunities for residents to gain greater visibility, but it also demands compromises in village residents' messages.

Insurgent Building and Planting

Insurgent building and planting served as one measure to challenge the state government's authority to dictate land-use. In every village, residents planted crops and built homes simply because they needed shelter, food, and income and, like Sahr's brother, felt they had no choice but to plant and build without permits. Sometimes, this was done discretely, out of view of main roads or during times when Green Patrol officers are known not to be nearby. But at times, planters sought visibility: the manner of planting, the crops chosen, and the public attention sought for sowing and harvesting were meant to make bold, insurgent statements that conveyed political, legal, and moral messages. The repeated re-building of homes at Al Arakib, combined with residents' defiant statements to news reporters of their intentions to remain in place at all costs, offers one example of insurgent building.

These insurgent builders and planters, in their opposition to an entrenched power and their practical attempts to challenge exclusionary boundaries, resembled the mobilizers of insurgent citizenship that James Holston (2008) describes among working class residents in Brazil.¹⁷⁴ Holston argues that these residents have succeeded in destabilizing the “differentiated citizenship” that has shut out segments of the Brazilian population for centuries. Similarly, these Negev activists attempted to destabilize the Israeli land regime that excludes non-Jews. However, just as those engaged in insurgent citizenship simultaneously entrenched and perpetuated aspects of the historically dominant differential citizenship, such as a focus on private property, insurgent builders and planters also engaged some of the same environmental discourses that underlie the exclusionary land-use management against which they fought.

Jabbar's “eco-mosque” in Wadi al-Na‘am was, from its earliest stages, a similarly insurgent building effort. Jabbar, a Bedouin Arab, had moved into the planned township of Segev Shalom and volunteered for the Israel Defense Force (IDF) many years ago. Since then, he had become frustrated by the futility of either residential or military participation in state projects to help him raise his living standards closer to those of Jewish Israelis or gain acceptance in Israeli society. He had left Segev Shalom to join his elderly brother in Wadi al-Na‘am and was about to conduct his last period of *miluim*, reservist duty, for the IDF. Jabbar had also grown more religiously observant in these years, and he decided to build a mosque to affirm his commitments to Islam and strengthen the community in Wadi al-Na‘am.

He wanted to build in a way that would make the mosque both affordable and difficult for the state authorities to tear down. Having already cooperated with Bustan on some of the organization's previous projects, he had seen several strawbale and mud construction projects, and he knew of the strawbale clinic Bustan had constructed on the far side of his village.¹⁷⁵ Jabbar drew up plans for a strawbale mosque and asked for

174 On “insurgent planning,” see Yiftachel (2009b) and Meir (2005) in the context of the Negev and Sandercock (1999) and Sweet (2010) in other contexts.

175 Strawbale is a construction technique in which bales of straw are stacked against a rigid frame, and then straw and frame are both plastered with a mixture of mud and straw. Because it uses renewable materials, requires no concrete or plastics and very little wood or metal, and provides excellent insulation, it is hailed as an “eco-” or “green” form of building. As will be discussed further in the next chapter, such green building techniques have been central to Bustan's campaigns since the organization began working in the Naqab.

advice from expert eco-builders. After he and fellow residents built the mosque's frame during the summer of 2008, Bustan's volunteer coordinator began helping Jabbar find willing workers to hoist strawbales and sling mud plaster onto walls. Jabbar was soon served with demolition orders for the mosque, but he and the volunteers continued building.

Word circulated among environmental and Bedouin rights activists of the mosque and its threatened demolition. It would be far worse than simple bureaucratic stupidity, one blogger noted, "to destroy an inoffensive building erected under the directorship of an IDF veteran and citizen meant to serve an impoverished and embattled group" (ck 2008). This blogger for *Jewlicious* coined the name, "eco-mosque," and the catchy term helped speed along the spread of commentary among bloggers and news reporters. Whereas past demolitions of mosques had garnered little attention in the press, a brief flurry of articles protested these demolition orders. Articles frequently mentioned Jabbar's service in the military, demonstrating his loyalty to the state. Equally emphasized was the mosque's harmless, even benevolent, environmentally friendly form. Writers reversed the moral claims made by the state that it was maintaining law and order by contrasting Jabbar's environmental responsibility with the state's ignorant (or malevolent) destruction.

Though Jabbar asserted a defiant position that demanded just treatment for himself and fellow Bedouin Arabs from state authorities, he had consistently been careful not to depict himself as a rebel or an outlaw. As he continued leading the building effort, Jabbar also appealed the demolition order in court. By November, however, as the last layers of mud plaster were being applied to the mosque's walls, Jabbar's appeals had been exhausted, and he was warned that the arrival of the demolition crew was imminent. A small contingent of Israeli and international visitors gathered, taking turns accompanying Jabbar as he slept each night in the mosque so that they could bear witness to and protest against a demolition. I joined this demolition watch one night, part of a group of nine visitors who joined Jabbar's family for dinner and then arranged sleeping bags in the windowless and doorless shell of the mosque. By candlelight, Jabbar prepared us for the next day. Though he was hopeful that the day would be quiet, if the demolition crews were to come, he asked us to both tell and show them that we were making a positive

contribution by building this mosque, which would also serve as a community space for informal gatherings and afterschool children's programs when not in use for prayers. We were not standing against the state, he insisted, but rather, were “protecting this community building.”

The following day, one carload of police officers did arrive. After a lengthy, tense discussion with Jabbar, which was observed at a distance of a dozen meters by our group of visitors and recorded by the cameras of television news crews that had arrived early in the morning to cover the story, these officers left without summoning the demolition crew. Several weeks later, though, after the attention of advocacy allies had waned and groups had stopped accompanying Jabbar each night, the demolition crews did arrive and tore down the mosque. Jabbar's collaboration with extralocal actors entailed benefits and costs. Bustan's environmental justice network, appealing primarily to an Israeli and international Jewish community, had delayed but not prevented the mosque's destruction. However, this collaboration, I learned later, also discouraged more active participation from fellow Muslim men. The project had brought volunteers to Wadi al-Na‘am who did not adhere to Bedouin norms of gender segregation, dress, and comportment. After the demolition, Jabbar decided to rebuild quickly, using brick and cement and calling on local Muslims, rather than environmental activists, to support him. He and the RCUV hosted a prayer meeting and commemoration one week after the demolition to rally support for rebuilding, which drew two to three hundred men.

With homes and mosques, villagers attempted to assert not just their presence, but the legitimacy of their claims to village landscapes. Planting was also a symbolically powerful mode of claiming and creating belonging, which villagers deployed and governmental officials countered. As part of its efforts to curtail what it considers illegal land use, the Green Patrol, operating on behalf of the ILA, has destroyed many thousands of *dunams* of crops. This policy escalated in 2002, when they began spraying crops with herbicides from crop dusters (Abu-Saad 2005). In 2005, following a successful petition to the High Court filed by environmental and Bedouin advocacy groups to prohibit spraying due to the health hazards of this approach, the Green Patrol returned to the more labor intensive plowing-under of unauthorized crops.

In the village of Twayil Abu Jarwal, village leaders and the Recognition Forum held periodic publicity events around grain plantings to protest governmental practices of



Image 17: “Solidarity planting” of olive trees, east of Al Arakib

home and crop destruction.¹⁷⁶ In December, 2007, I attended a “Traditional Bedouin Sowing in the Negev” that was organized in response to the government's most recent home demolitions in an unrecognized village, and in anticipation of the winter rains. Publicity for the event promised that we would “sow about 100 *dunams* with wheat and barley in the manual sowing [that is] traditional of the area,” and that participants “will receive explanations about this method and will then be invited to try their own hand at it” [Recognition Forum and Bustan publicity materials, December 27, 2007].¹⁷⁷

On a windy winter day, the carloads of guests who had traveled to Twayil Abu Jarwal to take part in the planting were not led directly to the fields. Rather, we were invited into a tent made of black tarpaulin and burlap coffee sacks that had been set up especially for the occasion and offered sweet tea. We listened to speeches from community leaders and Knesset members, as young men from the village snapped pictures on their cell phones and several journalists photographed and filmed the gathering. We were then told that it was time for the planting and were led out of the tent and toward the fields. But after lingering along the edge of the fields and being carefully shooed out of the way of a tractor digging furrows, we were led back up to the tent for more speeches. The village sheik and another elder spoke of the injustice of home demolitions and the inequality Bedouins face in Israel. A Knesset member insisted that the residents of this village have a rightful claim to these lands because the Bedouin “are

¹⁷⁶ The Recognition Forum is a coalition of organizations working toward coexistence among Israeli Jews and Arabs and resolution of land conflict in the Negev. Their members include Bustan, Gush Shalom, The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, The Association for Support and Protection of the Rights of Bedouins in Israel, The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, and Rabbis for Human Rights, among other groups.

¹⁷⁷ For more on activism and the use of strategic essentialism, through discussion of this planting day event, see McKee (2010).

an integral part of nature here.” After a thank you and farewell, we visitors drove out of the village along the rutted dirt track and dispersed.

This planting event was a strategic display of identity tropes and deployment of environmental discourses. Symbols of Bedouin traditions like tea and tents, words about Bedouins' longterm belonging in these landscapes, and the whole event's focus on agriculture were designed to assert the rightful claims of Bedouin Arab villagers to these lands, but not through the discourse of Western property rights. Rather, they assembled an unstable coalition of the discourse of labor in land favored by Zionist movements and discourses of indigeneity and rights through longterm family residence that are so common in Bedouin counter narratives.

To convey convincing messages to large audiences, this coalition of Jews and Arabs advocating for Bedouin land rights relied on essentialized images for their publicity, a common trend among environmental and other social movements elsewhere, as well (Field 1999; Little 1999; Brosius 1999; Conklin and Graham 2009; Tidrick 2010). This strategic essentialism presented village residents with a double bind. It strengthened claims of Bedouins' rootedness in the land, and hence their continuing rights to use it (see also Barnard 2007). But the image used in this case, that of the indigenous Bedouin farmer, required two oversimplifications. First, it highlights a long heritage of farming while downplaying histories of shepherding. Though the image of the Bedouin as nomadic shepherd would link Bedouin culture to Naqab landscapes, it also emphasizes mobility, which would weaken land claims in Israeli society. Instead, land rights advocates drew upon environmental discourses that resonate with permanence and ownership in Israel, most notably “traditional farming.”

Second, this planting event painted “true” Bedouin identity as traditional, non-modern, and tied to landed subsistence strategies. Like “noble savage” depictions adopted in indigenous rights campaigns throughout the world (Brosius 1999), asserting a one-dimensional portrayal of traditional Bedouin rurality risks assigning Bedouin Arabs to an “indigenous slot” (Li 2000) that identifies them as a part of nature and denies them a space from which to advocate for themselves (Li 2003; Ramos 2003).¹⁷⁸ Presenting this

178 Renée Sylvain (2005) argues that the disempowering effects of tying land claims to cultural identity (in the case of San in southern Africa) are not inherent to these culture-based rights claims, but are due to limited understandings of indigeneity that exclude socioeconomic features.

image of Bedouin life, which residents expected would be attractive to a wider Israeli audience, meant presenting a truncated version of themselves and what they hoped for in the future. Residents chafed against restrictive definitions that contrast traditions and farming with modern lifestyles, technology, and education. As one Bedouin Arab member of this coalition explained to me, he can combine computers and agriculture. He can send his children to college and use new technology like mobile phones and wireless internet to make a more comfortable rural life for his family. The essentialism of the traditional Bedouin farmer (which will be discussed further, in relation to Bustan's work in the following chapter) risks perpetuating the very binaries of traditional versus modern and urban worker versus rural farmer to which many village residents object (see also Sylvain 2005).

NGO Advocacy and Court Cases

NGO assistance was central in many of these examples of insurgent building and planting. Several social justice organizations, such as The Negev Coexistence Forum, Gush Shalom, and the Association of Forty helped Al Arakib residents by gathering tents and other building materials. Following the fifth demolition of the village in 2010, these same organizations gathered materials and helped Al Arakib villagers host a work party to build a playground for the village's children. Beyond this material assistance, The Negev Coexistence Forum worked with villagers to amplify their message of steadfastness and linked Al Arakib's plight with that of all the unrecognized villages. They issued Hebrew press releases, such as the following excerpt, as well as newsletters and email announcements in Hebrew, Arabic, and English.

Despite the difficult days experienced by the village, its residents stand firm in the face of the danger of destruction and continue to rebuild each time. The struggle for Al-Arakib is a civil struggle shared by Arabs and Jews aspiring for true justice in the Negev and for the finding of a fair and appropriate solution for the unrecognized villages in general and for the village of Al-Arakib in particular.
[Dukium press release, Sept 17, 2010]

Similarly, in Wadi Al-Na'am, Bustan's provision of labor power and publicity and the efforts of sympathetic environmental activists to spread word of the threatened eco-mosque delayed the mosque's demolition and spurred public criticism of the government's actions in destroying it.

However, while these translocal articulations were valuable for their ability to amplify and more widely publicize villagers' messages, partnership with advocacy NGOs also introduced double binds for village residents. They required residents to work with organizations guided by their own goals and priorities. For example, following the Twayil Abu Jarwal planting day, my Bedouin Arab colleague commented on the drive home that he was pleased that journalists, politicians, and Bedouin rights advocates from Tel Aviv had come. But he was also frustrated that the event provided only a superficial look at the problems faced by Bedouin citizens of Israel, and had been exploited by Knesset candidates and a few powerful community men as a platform to give speeches. Various advocacy NGOs prioritize different aspects of recognition—some focusing on the attainment of formal recognition and rights, others focusing on the substantive realization of (more) equal citizenship and being less concerned with juridical rights. Some acquiesced to the state government's aculturalist conditions for recognition while others refused to compromise on a multicultural acceptance of Bedouin Arabs in Israel.

In some cases, residents of a single village coped with these double binds by working with several different NGOs, each with its own aim and political alignment. Residents of the unrecognized village of Khashm Zanna, forged ties with the Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation (AJEEC); with RCUV; and with Bustan. AJEEC, working in both recognized and unrecognized settlements, engages in education and enrichment for young Bedouin Arab children, economic efforts such as training for business entrepreneurs and a cooperative of sheep breeders, and collaborative Jewish-Arab volunteer projects. AJEEC prioritizes improving the quality of life in unrecognized villages and promotes collaboration between Jews and Bedouin Arabs and between residents and state government as the best way to achieve this. In contrast, the RCUV, as an alternative body of local leadership founded for the purpose of gaining political recognition for the villages and their residents, consistently foregrounds the attainment of equal rights in its advocacy efforts. Its publicity materials use forceful language to criticize the state government's discrimination against Arabs, and its leaders tend to express suspicion and skepticism about collaborative efforts. Bustan, founded with hybrid social and ecological goals, has shifted between avowedly political and

apolitical approaches in different campaigns.¹⁷⁹

Through the AJEEC partnership, Hassan, a resident of Khashm Zanna, led the effort in his section of the village to establish an educational activity center for children of all ages. AJEEC provided funding and coordinated the building of a playground and equipping of a classroom to host daily kindergarten classes and after-school activities. Village residents and AJEEC volunteers staffed the center. At the same time, Hassan had forged ties with the RCUV. He maintained a hospitality tent attached to his home as a small business, where he provided large groups with tea and lectured on Bedouin cultural traditions and contemporary life in the Naqab. His tent had become a regular stop on the RCUV's public educational tours of the unrecognized villages.

Though opposed to many of AJEEC's tactics, the RCUV actually lent its public support to the educational activity center. This seemingly incongruous support by two organizations with very different approaches to recognition makes sense when the environmental discourses involved in this project are examined more closely. The improvement of daily life in certain arenas, such as early childhood education, is less politically charged in Israeli society than practices directly linked to land-use, such as farming or home-building. In addition, High Court rulings have established the state's responsibility to provide compulsory primary education included all children ages 3–16, regardless of their place of residence (Abu-Saad 2008a). Yet, the AJEEC project also involved building permanent structures within an unrecognized village. Thus, the creation of the Khashm Zanna educational activity center could occupy an ambiguous political space, interpreted by some observers as a politically neutral and practically oriented provision of services that compliments those of the state, and by others as a defiant and material statement of the village's legitimacy and of the state's neglect of its Bedouin Arab citizens.

In addition to the vocal and widely circulating defiance of public advocacy, some residents focused more pointedly on advocating for land rights within the Israeli courts. Nuri El-Ukbi, whose narrative of his family's honorable history of residence in Al Arakib and the state's betrayal of Bedouin Arabs loyalties was discussed in chapter two, is one such resident. Beginning in 1973, he, his father, and his brothers returned to farming the

¹⁷⁹ Bustan's campaigns, including its shifting political approaches, will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter.

lands in which they had lived prior to their enforced relocation during the 1950s. Initially, they farmed on a temporary basis, requesting permission from the state each year to plant crops. They did not make any permanent changes to the land, such as planting trees, or home-building. In 2005, after his father died, Nuri feared that the state would simply wait until all those with memory of the land expropriations in 1948 had died and then sue residents of the unrecognized villages for illegal occupation, so he requested that the Department of Justice expedite his family's land claims case. He enlisted the help of a lawyer and compiled evidence of his family's longtime ownership. Meanwhile, Nuri decided to reassert their ownership claims physically and began living on these lands in 2006, sleeping in a tent and his car. The Green Patrol ordered him off these lands, leading to a repetition of evacuation and reoccupation over the next several years, and another set of court cases.

In court, or when repeating his court testimony to me, Nuri showed documents—tax records affirming that his family had paid since at least 1937, British Mandate era aerial photographs of Al Arakib showing stone houses, and maps published in books from the same era labeling these areas as “El-Okbi.” But here, too, is a double bind. To appeal to the powerful Israeli courts for justice, Nuri, and other residents who attempt to follow this route, must speak in the conceptualist terms (Shamir 1996) favored by the courts. Repeatedly during court proceedings, Nuri attempted to offer testimony based on traditions of Bedouin land ownership and moral evaluations of right and wrong, and repeatedly this testimony was deemed irrelevant, and he was admonished by judges and lawyers to “focus on the facts,” “take the political issues out of this hall,” and not discuss “if it is right or if it is not right.”¹⁸⁰ Like plaintiffs elsewhere trying to appeal for cultural rights through court systems, Nuri was censored for his “political” and ethical statements that explored events beyond the procedural boundaries set by Israeli law. The court deemed these not to be critical rational discourse and Nuri not to be behaving properly as an “autonomous, reasonable, and rational subject” (Povinelli 2002:10).

All of these public campaigns for social inclusion and land rights encountered double binds related to recognition. Some revolved around the challenges of asserting

¹⁸⁰ This analysis of Nuri's encounters with conceptualist legal logic is based on several interviews, my own attendance at one hearing, and the detailed notes of another hearing published online by a member of Gush Shalom (Keller 2009).

place-based identities, of negotiating between essentialism and localism (Escobar 2001; Brosius 1999). Self-representation as a shepherd invokes deep, place-based traditions, but also mobility. Showcasing Bedouin farming highlights the rootedness so important to Israeli land claims, but also a restrictive “traditional” image. Other double binds arose during residents' efforts to gain publicity and public support for their demands. Partnering with NGOs offered residents the opportunity to amplify their messages, but cost them control over these messages. These NGOs had already staked positions about the kind of recognition they prioritize—substantive or formal—and these priorities guided campaigns when they partnered with village residents. Those seeking recognition of land claims through the power of Israeli courts faced double binds, as well. In Israel, as in courts elsewhere, the conceptualist logic that governs evidentiary rules places severe limits on what is considered applicable. Land ties based on family histories, localized identity, or alternative understandings of ownership do not carry weight (Shamir 1996). Instead, residents were compelled to argue within the bounds of individual ownership laws designed to serve Israel's nation-building (Kedar 2003), and without the provisions available in some other multicultural settings for recognizing title on tribal, “aboriginal,” or cultural terms (Povinelli 2002; Nadasdy 2002).

On the one hand, “recognizing yourself” in Wafiq's terms requires asserting a set of necessary links between culture, landscape, and practices. Yet, as these struggles for recognition demonstrate, those who tried to do this using proactive measures like insurgent building and planting, public advocacy, and court cases found their efforts stymied by double binds. On the other hand, gaining recognition as passive state subjects, as Musa suggested, means trading in the historically formed relationships with landscapes and the comfort of familiar taskscapes that residents repeatedly emphasized as central to their communal identities in exchange for uncertain and partial recognition. Those who more fully complied with state demands, such as Jabber during military service and those who moved to planned townships, found that this compliance was no guarantee of substantive recognition.

Single-Family Farmsteads

Whereas the unrecognized villages house approximately 80,000 people, Jewish

single-family farmsteads house no more than 150 people. Yet, these few tiny settlements raised considerable attention in the news media beginning in 1999 and in the Knesset when their residents faced eviction. Rather than arguing their essential links to Negev landscapes, advocates of these farmsteads pleaded for their recognition as essential participants in Zionist projects, as Israel's new *chalutzim*. The journey that these farmsteads have taken from governmental favor to eviction notices, and finally to specially tailored legislation in their favor, demonstrates the very different paths toward legal recognition available to their residents, compared to residents of unrecognized villages. Yet, farmstead owners' own calls for recognition demonstrated heterogeneity, and many of them more closely resembled Bedouin village residents' claims than those of the farmsteads' most vocal public supporters. Many farmstead owners called for fairness and recognition of the taskscapes they had created through their farming, rather than strict judicial interpretation.

I first learned of the existence and threatened eviction of these farmsteads through newspaper articles and pointed references made by Bedouin land rights activists. These activists wryly noted the amount of public indignation generated on behalf of a handful of Jewish farmers facing eviction, versus the relative neglect of Bedouin Arabs facing demolition. Proponents of the farmsteads asserted the farmers' cooperation with the state, referring to them as *chalutzim*. The Jewish National Fund (JNF) website, for example, lauds farmstead owners as “a new breed of true pioneers, who are leaving the overcrowded center of the country...in order to merge wide open expanses with Zionist action” (JNF/KKL 2008). Newspaper editorials support this depiction of farmstead owners as modern pioneers poised to lift the Negev out of economic stagnancy and “stop the rapid spread of the Bedouin” (Golan 2008). Shmulik Rifman, a particularly vocal proponent and head of the Regional Council that houses most of the farmsteads, has asserted the farmers' pioneering spirit and their close connection to the JNF's overall plans for Negev development.

Advocates of Bedouin land rights also affirmed these farmers' collusion with state government, though as a moral wrong. They pointed out that, despite their questionable legal status, certain sectors within the state government had been assisting these farms through loans and the provision of infrastructure such as water and electricity. Surmised

one author in a widely circulated editorial, “it was assumed by all parties involved that, since the act of settling the land is deeply inherent to Zionist ideology, these farms would eventually be legalized by the authorities” (Tzfadia 2008b). Further, this and other authors and public commentators suggested, Jewish residents establishing individual farmsteads were acting as agents of a state security apparatus, “whose role is to contract and restrict Bedouin movement and development and to help the security forces keep an eye on the Negev's indigenous population” (Gordon and Tzfadia 2008).

Farmers' Perspectives

All the public commentary I had read seemed to affirm the farmstead owners' active role in enforcing state discipline on Bedouin Arabs' land use. I decided to visit several of these farmsteads to learn more about the environmental discourses and practices that gave rise to them. Driving south from Dganim and the *siyag* area with most of the unrecognized villages, along the highway away from Beersheba and toward Eilat, the desert landscapes became more sparsely populated (see map in Image 1]. Turn-off roads for settlements became fewer and more widely spaced, and the dry, rocky hills dominated my view. I mused about the upcoming interviews as I drove for an hour southward toward the first of the single-family farmsteads. I expected to learn about how individuals became so motivated by Zionist imperatives of settling the land and shaping themselves and the Jewish nation through agriculture that they left their home communities to establish these solitary farmsteads.

However, when I began speaking with these farmers, I found a much more complex web of motivations and environmental discourses. Some espoused Zionist dedication, while others denied it. All began explaining their decision to establish these farms as a personal matter, undertaken because they wanted an independent lifestyle. What I had not initially noticed in the media blitz surrounding the farmsteads and their potential dismantling was the lack of commentary from farmers themselves explicitly affirming pioneering, Zionist-driven goals. In fact, when the farmers' voices did appear in these articles, they most often spoke of the practical difficulties of farming in remote desert regions and their personal reasons for establishing these farmsteads.

This focus on the personal and little voicing (or even the active denial) of

ideological motivations for establishing farmsteads was common in my conversations with farmers. Many did not see themselves as agents of a state security apparatus (while others noted this as an ancillary role), but rather as working for a personal goal and moving where bureaucratic obstacles for establishing individual farmsteads seemed lightest. Though such farmers were not self-described Zionists, they did draw on some of the environmental discourses that have long underlain Zionist movements. They painted the Negev as empty frontier, relying on a dichotomized spatial conception (Zerubavel 2008), and espoused double-edged characterizations of Bedouins as romantically natural and dangerously uncivilized.



Image 18: Cafe catering to visitors on a single-family farmstead.

Elias raised a herd of goats in pens perched on the slope of a hill in the “Wine Route” area. Just above the goat pens, Elias, his wife, and two children lived in two caravans arranged in an L-shape around a small playground. Two railroad cars converted into a tiny store and cafe sat atop a promontory nearby, the large glass wall of the dining area overlooking a picturesque tableau of desert hills. Visitors to the farm could buy gourmet cheeses from the store and eat dishes featuring goat milk and cheese. As we sat in his caravan home, Elias told me of his dream to start a farm, and how he finally found the opportunity in this arid parcel of the Negev. Though opportunities existed for him and his wife to join a kibbutz or a moshav, Elias rejected these communal approaches,

saying he simply was not suited to them. “I grew up on a kibbutz; I won't return to a kibbutz,” he stated firmly. “The moshav,” he continued, “we two lived there and I also didn't like it. I prefer a place where nobody will bother me. I'm not in need of life in a community. It doesn't do well for me. And when the life in community also interferes with my working... I'm not so willing to accept that.” For Elias, this interference meant community decisions trumping market demands in determining what to raise and how to sell it, and complaints from neighbors who, though living on a moshav, had shifted away from an agricultural lifestyle and complained of the sounds and smells emanating from Elias's goats. Instead, he preferred living with his family and away from the annoyances of communal life.

As he finished explaining these personal motivations for establishing a single-family farmstead, I asked Elias, “was there also a piece that was ideological, or religious, or Zionist, or...” My voice trailed off as he shook his head.

Zionist, no. Definitely not. It's very disappointing to people that I say that. Listen, I'm not Zionist, I'm not a patriot. I was practically born here...from the age of about ten, I grew up in the Negev. I love the Negev, through living in the place, the climate, the area. So, that's it! I don't know...if I can speak of Zionism. If somebody thinks that because I don't live in the center, I live in the south, I'm a Zionist, ok, I won't attack him. But it's hard for me to come and say I came because of Zionism. I don't feel that.

Like Elias, a metal sculptor and wine maker named Alon, who founded his farmstead in 2005, shied away from any overt discussion of ideologies such as Zionism, warning me, “Don't enter into the political!” He spoke openly about social issues and asserted moral stances of right and wrong regarding land-use and governmental decisions, but he denied any overarching political affiliations. Though Elias and Alon flatly denied a Zionist drive, Dov responded to the same question about motivations by saying, “not religious; Zionist, you could say, yes, but religious, no.” Nir, a restaurateur who established his business of raising goats, making yogurt and hosting tourists at the age of forty, described his decision primarily as a welcome career change, secondarily as a change in lifestyle that allowed for more solitary time, and thirdly for “Zionist-settling” (*tzioni-hityashvuti*) reasons.¹⁸¹

181 It should be noted that individual “*chalutzim*” during all periods of British Mandate era and Israeli settlement have held many different motivations for their participation. As noted in chapter one, during the early 1900s, many immigrants to Palestine who were moving for economic and non-Zionist religious reasons were portrayed as early Zionist *chalutzim* by Zionist movement leaders in order to



Image 19: Grape vines and cactus garden on a single-family farmstead.

As another farmer, Shlomo, and I stood together in his valley fields, under the hot, white, midday sun and surrounded by rows upon rows of grape vines, he also told me of his and his wife's longtime dream of starting a small farm. They had been living in a moshav for some time, but they wanted to strike off on their own, and they had pondered doing so in Holland or southern France, as well as elsewhere in Israel. I asked Shlomo why he and his wife had eventually chosen the Negev. He smiled widely and let out a laugh, saying that he always tells people that this is just the farthest north he ever got from Eilat, where he was born. In the north of the country, he continued, it's too crowded. Plus, there is so much to do here in the Negev, so many possibilities for development, like tourism. Curious if broader, Zionist goals of Jewish settlement underlay these “possibilities for development,” I asked if he felt that, in founding this farm, he was also doing something to help the state. No, not really for the state, he replied. It is more about the potential, he explained. When a person sees a place like this, he sees enticing possibilities for developing something new, for starting something from scratch. Shlomo enjoyed the challenge.

Similarly, Dov, the owner of a wine-producing farmstead, was attracted to the Negev since the first time he visited during military duty because “[t]here's a lot of potential in places that have nothing. And there's nothing here.” Viewing the Negev landscapes around him as “having nothing” corresponds with a development ethos favoring productive landscapes, which long has underlaid Israeli settlement efforts (and broader Lockean notions of ownership). In this sense, Dov, Shlomo, and the other

gain support for their cause. Later, in the 1950s, many immigrants from “Oriental” places were compelled, due to their social and economic status, rather than a Zionist drive, to move to challenging and remote areas.

farmers are part of a decades-long effort following Ben Gurion's directive to “make the desert bloom.” This view of empty desert erases the sociality that Bedouin residents perceive and enact in these areas. At the same time, these farmers' motivations to establish agro-tourism settlements for personal gain, explicitly avoiding the communal forms of settlement used in the past to build a strong Jewish society, appear to depart from long-standing Zionist priorities.

Specifically regarding questions of Bedouin Arabs' land rights and land-use planning in the Negev, some of these farmers expressed views that many of their most vocal supporters would find distinctly threatening. These individuals all undertook dramatic lifestyle changes in order to move to these remote places, engage in physical labor in the land, and do agropastoral work they described as “creative” and “productive.” In this sense, their actions were very much in line with Zionist imperatives to develop the Negev. But several farmers drew parallels between their own and Bedouins' dwelling practices that deviate from dominant environmental discourses of Zionism. Some even suggested that the same settlement model—agro-tourism farmsteads—could be appropriate for both Jews and Bedouin Arabs. “They're citizens of the state of Israel,” Elias stated of the Bedouin. “Every citizen must be taken care of. You can't just throw people away like that.” He noted that although urban settlements have been built for them, these townships are full of problems. Besides, he continued, there are many who “don't want something urban. They want something more outside, in nature, rural.” If he can live this rural lifestyle, Elias wondered aloud, why can't they?

Shlomo stated his support of options for rural Bedouin settlements in even stronger terms. It is important, Shlomo insisted, for Israel not to repeat the mistakes that the United States made in dealing with Native Americans. Bedouins cannot keep all the lands they used to live on, he said, but “we need to include them in a solution.” Taking an unrecognized village of 200 people as an example, he suggested that rather than evacuating it, a model farm such as his combining agriculture and tourism could be established. This would “preserve” some of the Bedouins' lifeways and provide employment opportunities, which would have the added benefit of reducing theft and drug problems. “A Bedouin loves hosting,” Shlomo continued, citing Bedouin traditions such as the custom of inviting any visitor to stay for at least three days and elaborate

practices of coffee and tea service.¹⁸² Shlomo's comments acknowledge the aculturalist pressure that Bedouin Arabs face in Israel and suggest that forcing Bedouins to move out of landscapes they know and away from familiar ways of life creates social disruptions that reverberate within all of Israeli society.

Suggestions that Bedouin Arabs, like any other citizens, ought to be able to establish legal farmsteads supports the rooting rather than uprooting of Arabs from the land. This right could be based on a radically individualist interpretation of citizenship, but as Shlomo's comments make clear, this rooting is also valuable for protecting Bedouin collectivities and cultural identity. Though his comments are voiced simplistically, relying on a few metonyms to stand in for Bedouin culture, they also challenge common discourses of land and Jewish-Arab relations. Shlomo asserts a link between Bedouin culture and rural dwelling, implying a connection between landscape and a particular set of cultural practices, and he harkens back to earlier Zionist discourses that were more ambivalent about the now entrenched Jewish-Arab opposition.

Yet, while farmers' own motivations and their ideas on land-use among Jews and Bedouin Arabs contradict their depictions in media as the “new pioneers” of Zionism, most were baffled by the recent efforts to evict them. They told me that they did not see their actions as pushing against state authority. It took some farmers five to ten years to gain permission to establish these agro-tourism farmsteads. For example, Alon began seeking land for a farmstead in 1997 and began planting grapevines in his current location after gaining approval eight years later. As Elias described the process, he and his wife approached the local authorities in several places around Israel about establishing a farmstead in the early 1990s and were flatly denied. Then, with a new national government in 1996, in which Benjamin Netanyahu, of the Likud party, became prime minister and set up a conservative and religious coalition government, it was suddenly much easier for Elias to find financial and bureaucratic support for his venture. The JNF assisted farmers by flattening areas in the hills (e.g., for goat pens) and building dirt access roads connecting each farm to a highway, and the JA provided grants to cover

182 As with the above comments regarding motivations, individual settlers' understandings of Jewish-Arab relations and land use have diverged from dominant discourses throughout all periods of Zionist settlement. Settlers themselves often held more nuanced views than the images of romantic native or wildly dangerous Arabs espoused in dominant discourses.

some of the farmers' settlement costs. Because of the spoken assurances they received from some government officials, along with the material support of the JNF and the JA, farmers say they did not realize that they would be testing state authority by moving to the farms with their families (contravening the non-residential official zoning of the land).

Proponents and opponents of the farmsteads offer different accounts of why the official treatment of farmsteads shifted from supportive to confrontational. Opponents contend that, beginning in 1999, legal cases prepared by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) and the Israel Union for Environmental Defense (IUED) challenging the legality of these farmsteads served as a wake-up call regarding the environmental risk the farmsteads posed to open areas of wilderness in the desert, forcing governmental officials to invest more seriously in their oversight of the farmers' building. This oversight revealed land-use violations and raised questions about the fairness of governmental procedures for allocating these lands. Proponents of the farmsteads argue that monetary interests are at the heart of the government's reversal. Land prices are expected to rise as Negev development campaigns encourage building and the establishment of businesses, these parties suggest, and though the SPNI/IUED cases were unfounded, they offered the government an excuse to repossess the farmstead land and offer it for public tender. In either case, farmers were embroiled in a series of court cases culminating in the 2008 decision by the ILA ordering farmers to evacuate the farmsteads.

When I visited the farmsteads in 2009, residents were in the midst of a two-pronged campaign to gain legal recognition as residential farmsteads. Wine Route farmers had come together to file a joint appeal to their eviction in the courts. While pursuing their case in court, the group also formed a voluntary association with Dov as its head and pursued a campaign to raise public support for their continuation. They issued statements to the press, and Dov offered free bumper stickers to his farmstead's visitors. One evokes a famous quote by David Ben Gurion: "In the Negev the people of Israel shall be tested *despite* the Society for the Protection of Nature" (emphasis in the original).¹⁸³ A second reads, "Mani Mazuz. We are here and will not move." Mazuz was

¹⁸³ The slogan refers to Ben Gurion's quote celebrating the Negev as a Zionist frontier: "In the Negev shall be tested the capacity of the people of Israel for science and research" (בנגב ייבחנו כושר המדע והמחקר של) (העם בישראל).

the Deputy Attorney General at the time and signer of the farmsteads' evacuation orders. The stylized "M" in Mazuz's name offers a play on words, so that the bumper sticker defiantly commands Mani to *zuz*, or “move,” rather than the farmers (see Image 7). The sticker's blue stripes echo those of the Israeli flag, suggesting that farmstead owners are the true patriots in this dispute. In addition to these public efforts, on the farmsteads, my questions about environmental quality and controversies in the Negev elicited energetically defensive responses from several farmers. Alon described the increase in avian diversity around his farmstead, due to the greenery he had introduced. Elias and Shlomo listed the many environmentally friendly measures they had installed on their farmsteads, such as graywater recycling and composting. In the context of the SPNI/IUED petition, farmers showcased these features to visitors to counter claims that the farmsteads threatened Negev landscapes.



Image 20: Bumper sticker: “Mani Mazuz. We are here, and we will not move!”

Though engaged in this vigorous campaign, described by farmers as “a battle” or “a war,” the boundary challenging of these farmsteads was inadvertent. Farmers found themselves at odds with elements of the state government, despite having collaborated with other governmental bodies to realize their personal ambitions. Farmers were exasperated with the inconsistent behavior coming from different branches of the government, as some officials assured them they would receive approval for building homes, and others denied that approval. Not viewing “the state” as a monolith, they appreciated the regional council government, JNF, and JA as supportive while describing the ILA as having started “this war” with the farmsteads.

Despite their personal motivations and generally apolitical stances, these farmers

and their farmsteads were actors in the social, environmental, and political landscapes of the Negev. Though many wished simply to be left alone to farm, they were participating in the grounded socio-politics of the Negev in ways over which they did not have full control. In the placement of these farms, the material assistance they accepted from some state agencies, and their campaign for legal recognition in the context of the long unsettled dispute over recognition of Bedouin Arab villages, these farmsteads had an unintended but consequential impact on fellow Bedouin Arab residents of the Negev.

Legislative Developments

Legislative developments from 2009 to 2010 demonstrate that the farmers' decisions to establish residence on these farmsteads, if transgressive at one point, have become incorporated as state policy. As mentioned at the outset of the chapter, the Knesset passed an amendment to the NDA Law (which had first authorized non-residential agro-tourism farms) that provided for the retroactive legalization of the farmsteads as residences, including homes and some buildings for commercial use, such as bed-and-breakfast lodgings.¹⁸⁴ The amendment did not pass without considerable discussion, however, primarily based on the opposition of two Knesset members, Talab al-Sana, representative of the United Arab List, and Hana Sweid, a member of Hadash, the joint Jewish-Arab socialist party.¹⁸⁵ During debates, comments made by representatives favoring and opposing the amendments made clear the strategic value of these farmsteads for state policy and the connection between policies regarding single-family farmsteads and unrecognized villages, both of which remain implicit in the language of the law itself.

Early in the process of debating the bill, in October of 2009, al-Sana asserted that, in addition to contradicting the government's own Master Plan for the Negev, the Goldberg Commission's report, and other governmental rulings and plans, the amendment contravenes principles of distributive justice. He then challenged his fellow Knesset

¹⁸⁴ The amendment adds to the uses permitted in the original act for agriculture and tourism, "use for residence of the holder of this real estate for these stated purposes," and it expands the conditions and criteria of land use to include those "in relation to the economic feasibility of the project and on the matter of uses, including use of the real estate for agriculture and for tourism" (Knesset 2010).

¹⁸⁵ Analysis of Knesset debates regarding the NDA Amendment is based on transcripts of the Knesset proceedings.

members:

Why do we run to answer by law to 59 individual settlers and ignore 81,000 residents who live in 40 settlements, that don't have drinking water and have no roads, they have children and have no schools, no education and no welfare. Is this because these are Jews and these are Bedouins? Is this policy right? Is an individual Jew more important than tens of thousands of Bedouin residents?
[Knesset proceedings, Oct 26, 2009]

Other Knesset members objected that the case of Bedouin settlements and the case of the farmsteads are two separate matters and should be dealt with as such in the legislative process. However, al-Sana, and later Sweid and several citizens who appeared to testify in the proceedings, consistently highlighted connections between these matters.

In response to these comments by al-Sana, Robert Ilatuv, a representative for the nationalist-territorialist Yisrael Beitanu party, argued that there have already been many councils and resolutions to address “the Bedouin problem,” and that government-planned settlements were an adequate solution. But nothing has been done yet to help these Jews facing imminent eviction, he complained. Ilatuv's comments perform two important discursive moves. First, they depict “the Bedouin” as an undifferentiated population while upholding the specific needs of these Jews. Second, they separate Bedouin from Jewish needs, refusing to address the two with the same legislation, and lending support to a dual-society paradigm. Al-Sana, himself a Bedouin and a resident of the Negev, dismissed Ilatuv as ignorant of “the reality in the Negev,” and then countered Ilatuv's generalized depiction of the Bedouin by describing how government policy unfairly attempts to force Bedouin Arabs into a single mold:

In the Negev there are more than 120 settlements of Jews, which are diverse. There are kibbutzim; those who want can live in a *kibbutz*. There are agricultural settlements, there are community settlements, there are development towns, there are cities. There are 120 Jewish settlements. The Bedouins, who make up about 30 percent of Negev residents, have not been given settlements to this day, only seven settlements that are all of a particular type—an urban sort. There are no agricultural ones, no trade ones, no tourist ones. Therefore, this course has been deficient. Let's go together to find a solution to the problem. Let's put an end to the phenomenon of “you” and “us.” [Knesset proceedings, Oct 26, 2009]

Al-Sana finished this statement by once again asking to place Bedouin and Jewish residents of the Negev into the same legislative frame. Nonetheless, Ilatuv, responded by repeating a “you”/”us” distinction: “I think that we do give solutions. You do not accept

them” (Knesset Economics Committee 2009). Throughout these proceedings, al-Sana and Sweid proposed rejecting this amendment and devising a broader bill that would provide residential and development options for all Negev residents. Erez Tzfadia, testifying during the proceedings on behalf of the NGO Bimkom, proposed several revisions to the amendment that would place “generations-old traditional farming” under its purview, in addition to the narrowly defined model of NDA-approved agro-tourism farms that was written into the amendment.¹⁸⁶

However, these efforts were repeatedly rebuffed by other Knesset members, who argued that the problems of “the Bedouin sector” were too complex to solve immediately, and the farmstead residents were in need of speedy assistance. Over the next seven months, the amendment passed preliminary readings and moved closer to a final vote. Sweid and al-Sana shifted to advocating smaller revisions to the wording of the amendment and occasionally scoring rhetorical points regarding governmental mistreatment of Bedouin Arabs, but not advocating as energetically for a joint Jewish-Arab legislative approach.

Proponents of the amendment most frequently argued in its favor on the grounds that it would rectify a wrong done through clumsy bureaucracy. Farmstead owners were portrayed as *chalutzim* who acted in good faith and were now being victimized due to the “creative” practices of “authorities,” (i.e., inconsistencies between local and national governmental practices) (Knesset Economics Committee 2010). “We will do an injustice to people because they were called to settle, many years ago,” stated representative Yaakov Edri, of the centrist Kadima party. “This is an intolerable situation that, to people who settled quite a few years ago, we would say now: vacate” (Knesset Economics Committee 2009). Edri continued later, asserting that he had traveled to visit the farmsteads and saw that “they are doing something very important. And also a Zionist enterprise, this must be said out loud” (Knesset Economics Committee 2009). Sparking at the mention of “Zionist enterprise,” al-Sana asked for clarification of the term and insisted that this is a state with laws, and if a Bedouin transgresses the law, he is expelled, implying that no special treatment should be given to Jews. This explicit reference to

¹⁸⁶ Bimkom, “planners for planning rights,” is a non-profit organization that works through education, collaborative community planning, and public and legal advocacy to promote more just regional and urban planning in Israel.

Zionism was rare. Throughout the proceedings, most speakers made oblique references, but did not explicate how, precisely, these farms would further Zionist goals, except to mention the need to “settle the land (*ha-aretz*)” (Knesset Economics Committee 2009). At this moment in the proceedings, too, no clarification was offered, as al-Sana and Edri began shouting at one another.

Yet, the importance of these farmsteads' continued existence for state goals was made clear by the proceedings. At least three lengthy Knesset committee meetings, along with the many hours of preparatory work the meetings required, were invested in debating and revising the amendment. Additionally, political responsibility was taken by the bill's sponsors, and budgetary contributions were promised to the government offices responsible for assisting the farmsteads in the future. Why was the government investing so much to help a small group of citizens?

Budgetary and environmental concerns, as well as arguments about the insulting statement such an amendment would make to the region's Bedouin Arab residents, were put aside to meet a set of settlement, development, and symbolic imperatives. Representative Edri voiced the drive that was widely supported, though in more subtle ways by other representatives, to settle the desert, which meant both protecting what are considered to be state lands from unwanted encroachment and economic development of the region. This tailor-made legislation was specifically designed to protect the farmsteads as residences, rather than simply as viable business ventures. In addition to this residential focus, the amendment promotes a vision of neoliberal economic success that shifts away from communal ventures toward independent entrepreneurs. Evicting these farmers needed to be avoided because it would send a dampening message to other eager entrepreneurs. And finally, legislators appear to have been concerned to prevent the symbolically powerful act of governmental enforcers evicting Jewish citizens who were widely viewed as loyal pioneers.

Placing Single-Family Farmsteads within Israeli Settlement Trends

Settling civilians in remote areas in order to protect land is a practice with deep roots in Zionist movements, as in many other colonial projects. Likewise, farming settlements have long been used for this purpose. In the past, however, state resources

and statutory power (exercised through regional land-use planning, for example) supported community settlement. The legislative energy invested in saving single-family farmsteads demonstrates a shift in state policy, from encouraging community settlement to supporting individual settlement. This support comes not as a disjuncture, however, but as part of a long development.

From the strongly communal form of kibbutz settlement that was popular from the early 1900s, to an attenuation of this communalism in the moshav model that assigned *meshekim* to individual families, some focus on independent initiative has been growing even within the communal settlements movement. The Ministry of Agriculture's Village of 2000 plan, proposed during the 1990s, was part of a larger governmental shift toward more indirect assistance for settlement and the strengthening of rural communities. An overall move in Israeli society toward greater individualism was also reflected in the declining cultural status of the *chevremán* (“group guy”) and derogatory focus on the figure of the *freier*, as well as the withdrawal of institutional support for communal settlements following the fiscal crises of the 1980s. And on a personal level, valorization of the individual profit motive, such as that expressed by Chaim in chapter five, and the labeling of collectivist attitudes like Ephram's as touchingly “dinosaur”-like express this individualism, as well. In this context, single-family farmsteads are the end of a settlement spectrum, which I would posit, reflects a shift in Israeli society toward greater individualism and a move from socialist to capitalist economic organization and logic.

But the particular historical moment of these farmsteads' establishment has also caused difficulties for them. They were founded in the dying breaths of Israel's farming heyday, and powerful public and political voices turned against them. Opposition came from multiple political directions. From the environmentalists came concerns of ecological harm to the fragile desert ecosystems and a dangerous precedent of infringing on public open spaces for private gain. From the left, coexistence advocates deplored the hypocrisy of granting huge tracts of land to single Jewish families, while simultaneously denying the claims of large groups of Bedouins to lands and forcing their eviction. From the right, advocates of business development claimed that these lands should have been put up for public bidding in order to allow the free market to determine their most

efficient economic use. Yet, when framed as part of a mission to Judaize the Negev and “make the desert bloom,” the farmsteads proved to be unassailable. Whether eagerly or in spite of themselves, farmstead owners gained recognition through their identification with Zionist projects, an avenue closed to Bedouin Arab residents of unrecognized villages.

Conclusion

In this chapter, farmsteads and unrecognized villages have come together in two senses. First, they have been compared and contrasted in the discussions of farmstead owners, Knesset members, and some civilian Bedouin rights activists. These speakers attempted to forge links of rhetoric, legislation, and social obligation between these two types of settlement. Second, my own analysis brings these settlements into a shared analytic frame centered around recognition. This analytic framework focuses attention on the successes and failures of actors in Israel who have attempted to forge Jewish-Arab links, and it clarifies how the politics of recognition affect land claims in Israel.

For a brief window, it seemed the new legislation legalizing agro-tourism farms as residences might have opened space for legislative changes granting recognition for unrecognized Bedouin villages, too. As it turned out, Sweid's and al-Sana's attempts to perforate the legislative separation of Jews and Arabs were quickly pushed aside. However, the parallels between Bedouin and Jewish residents wishing to live rural lifestyles have not been drawn solely by vocal but marginalized voices on the left, like Sweid and al-Sana, but also by some of the farmstead owners themselves. Finding themselves placed unwittingly in opposition to state land-use planning, these farmers spoke of a right to choose one's livelihood as something due to all Israel's citizens, whether Jewish or Arab. Residents of unrecognized villages and their allies argued their case on the basis of citizenship, too, but even more so, on the basis of historical land ties that link particular desert landscapes, rural lifestyles, and Bedouin culture. Such voices challenge the acultural form of accommodation being demanded of Bedouin Arab residents in order to gain governmental recognition.

Placing the recognition struggles of unrecognized villages and single-family farmsteads within one analytic frame reveals the social constraints operating on Jewish

and Arab belonging. First, despite the challenges offered by some individuals, a dual-society paradigm remains strong. And this discourse continues to exert influence in ways that instantiate it as material reality, such as by guiding legislation and the provision of municipal services.

Second, Bedouins are pressured to conform, but *not* assimilate. The Jewish residents of farmsteads were eventually offered recognition specifically as Jewish participants in the cultural projects of Judaizing the Negev and continuing the pioneering tradition that helped to establish Israel as a Jewish state. This is a constraint of its own sort, as even those farmers who do not identify as Zionist are being hailed as such and expected to govern themselves as such. Bedouin Arabs' efforts to gain recognition as culturally Bedouin, on the other hand, have consistently been blocked. It is precisely the place-based character of the unrecognized villages' campaigns for recognition that is most objectionable for the state. Residents are promised recognition if they relinquish their ties to particular landscapes. However, as we have seen through the steadfast efforts of these village residents as well as the concerns about lost Bedouinness expressed among residents of townships, Bedouin culture is understood to be profoundly place-based—in the freedom of governing oneself in open landscapes, in the customs and traditions tied to desert dwelling, and in the honor and support of living in family groupings. Thus, as Wafiq stated so forcefully, many fear that giving up their places would also mean giving up their Bedouinness.

CHAPTER VIII

Environmental Justice Activism: De-naturalizing and Re-naturalizing for Coexistence and Sustainability

Noga stood at the front of the tour bus with a microphone in hand, introducing the work of Bustan l'Shalom (“Orchard for Peace,” commonly referred to simply as “Bustan”) to a group of about 50 American and Israeli students, most in their mid-twenties. Bustan is an environmental organization, she told them. In addition to green thinking in terms of recycling, and litter clean-up, though, Bustan approaches the environment as something social and ecological. Most of the students directed their gazes at Noga and had even removed the earphones connecting them to iPods and turned away from their cell phones as she continued in a firm tone, saying that “we” need to protect the environment by also keeping people in it and trying to make life good for them. It is in keeping with this kind of green thinking, she explained as we rolled along in the bus, that we at Bustan do this tour with Bedouin in the Negev. Noga left unspecified the membership of the “we” responsible for protecting, but her statement clearly contrasted Bustan with a strand of global environmentalism prominent in Israel, which seeks the conservation of pristine nature by protecting it *from* human influence.

These students were taking part in one of Bustan's Negev Unplugged Tours. Noga, an Israeli university student majoring jointly in Studies of the State of Israel and Middle Eastern Studies, had gone through Bustan's Green Guides training course so that she could lead tours like this one. In that course, she had learned about techniques—new and old—for sustainable desert living, new perspectives on the impact of economic development on Negev residents and environments, and the social inequalities faced by Bedouin Arab residents. Now, she aimed to expose the visitors on the bus to these aspects of the Negev, which are not highlighted in most mainstream tourist events. For the benefit of the American visitors, she began with basic information. She then moved

quickly into more contentious arenas.

“Does anyone know what the Negev is?” Noga asked the group as we rode out of Beersheba and passed by the rows of warehouses and malls that line the city's southern edge. There was a pause, and then Noga repeated into the microphone the first answer volunteered by a student. “The Negev is the desert at the bottom of Israel, that's right. And before the state of Israel, in the Negev, there were Bedouins living here,” she added. With this easy question out of the way, Noga moved on to what turned out to be a more difficult query. “Bedouin, does anyone know what this means?” This time, there was a longer pause. Then Noga repeated into the microphone the students' answers. “A group of people that travels by the needs of the group.” “Muslims.”

Noga smiled wryly and responded, “Okay, so I can talk a lot because you don't know much.” At this gentle challenge, several Israeli students chimed in in Hebrew, and Noga translated their answers into English for the American students. “People say they steal cars. They say this in Hebrew and only very quietly, but they say this.” Noga then took these comments as an opportunity to clarify common stereotypes and misconceptions of Bedouins and Bedouin culture.

Breaking away from the conversation to phone the host at the tour's first stop, a resident of the unrecognized village of Um Batin, Noga asked directions and relayed them to the driver. She then pointed out to the tour group that the village's lack of signs or paved entrance roads were signs of its unrecognized status. As the bus turned off the highway and onto Um Batin's pitted sand and stone entrance, a student raised a hand and asked Noga why there was so much garbage scattered about. And why, if Bustan is an environmental organization, does it not clean up the litter. Noga responded that the village had no garbage pick-up service because the government does not provide this or other typical municipal services, explaining that many residents cope by burning garbage, but that this introduces additional health problems. Noga used the question as an opportunity to call not simply for localized environmental clean-up, but for environmental justice.

Creating Possibilities at a Small Scale

Negev Unplugged Tours comprise one of the three campaigns that I will examine

in this chapter, which focuses on one environmental justice NGO's efforts to reshape the political and ethical frameworks upon which land claims are made. Arguing that the Negev's current land conflict is both ecologically and socially destructive, Bustan advocates a land ethic that prioritizes ecological and social sustainability.¹⁸⁷ This includes calls for distributive justice as a basic element of citizenship and attempts to expand the national "we" to include Jews and non-Jews. The group insists that "the Land" of Israel/Palestine is the joint responsibility of all its residents, Jewish and Arab, and not the property of either party.

In the previous chapter, I examined how boundaries can be challenged by placing Jewish farmsteads and Bedouin Arab villages within the same analytical framework and focusing on questions of recognition. Enacting this theoretical boundary crossing in practice, Bustan brings together Jews and Bedouin Arabs as co-participants in environmental projects (and speaks out against governmental and non-governmental actors who do not engage in such collaboration). This chapter considers empirical examples of Bustan's efforts to soften the Jewish-Bedouin division dominating land conflict in the Negev and to de-naturalize conflict and re-naturalize cooperation. Like the village residents, advocates, and Knesset members of the last chapter, Bustan works to unsettle the discursive frames that normalize Negev land conflict, but its projects specifically enlist nature, both in efforts to unsettle existing discourses and to propose alternatives. Through this analysis of Bustan members' aspirations and practices (practical, discursive, and phenomenological), I discuss their negotiation of environmental discourses and examine their role in changing Negev social relations.¹⁸⁸ This ethnographic discussion is valuable in particular for those involved in the Negev's land conflict because it explores alternatives to the contemporary stalemate. It holds wider significance as a practical demonstration of what the Foucauldian assertion that resistance and power are inherent to one another. As such, it serves both as a diagnostic of power (Abu-Lughod 1990) and an examination of how discursive change can occur through existing discursive fields.

187 Sustainability has become a popular term around the world, typically referring to ecological sustainability. As will become clear through this ethnography, Bustan's work deliberately attempts to widen the term's semantic domain to include people in interaction with each other and their landscapes.

188 I use the term "members" to refer to paid staff and longterm volunteers and supporters.

Bustan's work challenges dominant environmental discourses in Israel in two main ways. First, it questions the binaries of Arab/Jew, nature/society, and tradition/progress that “enframe” the conflict (Mitchell 1990). Bustan's projects advocate a holistic definition of environment, which includes all the inhabitants of a landscape, regardless of ethnic affiliation, and urges them toward collective stewardship. Elements of holistic environmental discourses have been evident in more mainstream Israeli contexts, as well.¹⁸⁹ However, as previous chapters have shown, a Jewish-Arab division has come to be more consistently drawn and vehemently policed in recent decades. Bustan's work counters this trend, and it also challenges boundaries by simultaneously blurring all these binaries, identifying interpenetration and causal connections between and among Jews, Arabs, nature, and society, and depicting both Jews and Arabs as participants in progress and tradition. For example, from its start, the Unplugged tour described above brought together land and people, instead of examining nature without people, and explicitly addressed political contentions. Billing these tours as being about the environment, Noga and the other Unplugged tour guides typically began by focusing on the Negev's inhabitants, particularly the Bedouin Arabs who are neglected in most standard tours of the region. These guides also highlighted the ways in which social conflict affects environmental quality, such as Um Batin's lack of garbage collection.

Second, Bustan's campaigns propose replacing Jewish-Arab conflict with joint opposition to a new threat: the socio-environmental devastation of over-consumption and shortsighted notions of “progress.” For example, Noga described her work with Bustan as, in part, an effort to raise awareness about the connection between the specific ecological problems facing the Negev and a broader contemporary problem of unreflective modernism. She characterized Bustan by contrast to its “opponents,” who

think that modernization is more important, progress, *kidma*, we say [in Hebrew], [who think] that you really need to step forward all the time, as if there is a final goal.... They think that you need to progress all the time and [that] you can't keep on living the way you live, because...for sure there's something wrong with it.

Rather than striving for an idealized modern solution for the problems of the present, Bustan urges participants to consider the harm being wrought in this striving toward

¹⁸⁹ As discussed in previous chapters, the Zionist drive to redeem the Jewish people by redeeming the land of Israel melds nature and society. And early immigrants and Zionist leaders viewed the region's Arabs ambivalently—as a threat, but also as their present-day link to the ancient tribes of Israel—and adopted elements of Palestinian cultural practices.

modernity and suggests that solutions may also be found in practices of the past.

Others in Bustan tied this notion of progress explicitly to Bedouin-Jewish conflict. In an article entitled *Self-Distracted from the Environmental Crisis*, Communications Director Rebecca Manski urged readers to realize that “the 'enemy' is not Arab:”

The depiction of Bedouin as environmental hazards represents the most insidious kind of greenwashing. It casts the very persistence of the Bedouin way of life as intrinsically harmful to the sanctity of the land. And it presents the Bedouin among the chief obstacles in the way of the Zionist dream of 'making the desert bloom'.... when in actuality the Bedouin presence mainly represents a threat to the Zionist reality of sprawling Jewish-only development. It goes without saying that the true 'hazard' is not the Bedouin, but factories and toxic waste dumps, and their efforts to keep a burgeoning environmental health crisis under [w]raps. [Manski 2006]

In Manski's argument, Zionism's preoccupation with establishing a modern Jewish state has encouraged unrestrained population growth, economic development, and increased consumption. Elsewhere in the article, she contends that the true threats to Israel come not from its Arab citizens, but from the unrestrained growth that has been encouraged to increase Jewish presence in all areas of the country.

Of course, Bustan's work to shift environmental discourses does not occur in a vacuum, but rather within the discursive fields explored throughout this dissertation. Efforts to challenge dominant discourses are caught up in actions of powerful institutions such as local and national governance, land-use planning, schooling, and family relations. These are not “inert discourses,” and Bustan members are not “all-powerful subjects[s] which manipulate them” (Foucault 1991:48). Activists operate within the discursive fields that are inseparable from their social worlds. They conduct activism by winning allies, by speaking a language that people can understand and buy into and by acting in ways that invite others to participate. Because these operations occur within existing fields of power, Bustan's members are pushed to tailor the tone and political vigor of their messages. At times they make these adjustments for mundane reasons such as their desire to reach a broad section of the Israeli public or to meet the perceived priorities and political limits of funding agencies, but they sometimes respond to fears of reprisal, as well. Working within such pressures, NGOs often reinforce the very structures of knowledge and power they try to resist (Rabinow 2002). Likewise, Bustan's campaigns relied on many of the dominant environmental discourses that undergird the land conflict

and social exclusion against which they have been struggling.

That Bustan's activism re-instantiates elements of dominant discourses that it is trying to topple is not surprising. Many scholars have built on Foucault's observation that resistance and power are inherent in one another to show, for example, that anti-colonial Zimbabweans operated through the same racialized discourses of territory to which they had objected under Rhodesian rule (Moore 2005), that both governmental and anti-governmental actors embroiled in conflict over plans for a massive development project may rely on nationalist ideology (Doane 2005), and that indigenous peoples' land rights advocacy may reify the identity expectations that marginalized them in the first place (Sylvain 2005). But resistance efforts do sometimes succeed in shifting operations of power and in redrawing or softening lines of conflict. I suggest that groups like Bustan can play a role in discursive change by simultaneously promoting a local politics of scale (Smith 1992) and participating in a "politics of possibility" (Gibson-Graham 2006:xxvii).

Bustan is a small NGO in terms of its staff size and operating budget, and local in its geographical area of focus. During fieldwork, the paid staff consisted of a group fluctuating between four and six people, which included a director of development and financial manager who lived in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, as well as the director, Green Center coordinator, and several community coordinators who were all based in the Negev. In addition, Bustan engaged long-term volunteers and interns from Israel and abroad and a number of consultants in permaculture design, desert ecology, architecture and green building, and solar energy on individual projects.¹⁹⁰

Critics disparage the NGO as a vehicle of social change for a variety of reason. Some argue that a political economy of competition and insecurity in the transnational NGO sector prevents NGOs from realizing their agendas and may even lead them to contribute to the very problems they attempt to solve (Cooley and Ron 2002; Rabinow 2002). Small grassroots NGOs in particular, other critics argue, are neither large nor powerful enough, particularly in comparison to the states and multinational corporations upon which they often strive to exert pressure, to effect meaningful change (Luong and Weinthal 1999). Indeed, leaders of Bustan and other small NGOs in the Negev

¹⁹⁰ Bustan's annual budget was also small, compared to other NGOs operating in the Negev. As a condition of my participation in planning meetings, I agreed not to disclose specific financial figures.

complained of practical constraints such as limited funding, various forms of indirect censorship from government bodies and other powerful organizations. Such constraints certainly would have made it difficult for Bustan to grow much larger.

However, Bustan also stays small as a political choice. I witnessed frequent discussions during staff meetings about how to raise a larger budget or whether to expand projects by hiring more staff or building wider networks of collaboration. But most Bustan members saw their small size as a strength. Operations at different scales involve different kinds of relationships (Escobar 2001; Swyngedouw and Heynen 2003; Harvey 1996a). States, multinational corporations, and powerful NGOs operating at a large, global scale reconfigure relations between land and people, even if with benign intentions, through coercive measures, often exacerbating existing power inequalities (Escobar 1995). Bustan leaders criticized the managerial and non-place-based approaches of the Israeli state that threatened to dehumanize people and sunder communities (see also Berry 1996). Instead, they sought change through a small, local scale approach, in which sustained, interpersonal relationships were possible.

This politics of the small scale places Bustan within a wider trend in both social movements and scholarship that questions the romance of the global (Appadurai 1996) and re-values the local (Escobar 2001). Local and slow food movements (Wilk 2006), a renewed interest in co-operative stores and economies (Gibson-Graham 2006), and New Urbanism, ecovillages and intentional communities (Peters, Fudge, and Jackson 2010) all share this politics of scale. While Bustan operated intentionally on a small, local scale, this work was not a case of "militant particularism;" it was not a conservative attachment to a place, fearful of change (Harvey 1996b). By focusing on participants' phenomenological interactions, it strove for an "anti-essentialist notion of place" that views landscapes always under construction. As Bustan's founder, Devorah Brous, explained,

I believe that that kind of...organic and visceral loving connection with the land is what opens us to want to care for it. Whereas a more rights-based kind of ownership, [a] possession kind of argument, like, 'this is mine by right; because of my blood, because of my bloodline'...leads us to more to a place of wanting to grab it and hold it and fight over it, and even divide it and exploit it in order to make sure that it's still mine at the end of the day.

David Harvey (1990) theorizes that the "annihilation of space by time," which is inherent

to the operations of global capitalism and accelerates with globalization, intensifies land conflicts and territorialism. Similarly, Arjun Appadurai (2006) contends that operations at a global scale exacerbate fearful territorialism particularly among majority groups with minorities in their midst. Bustan's deliberately small-scale politics aimed at "emplacement" (Escobar 2001) is meant to combat such exclusionary territorialism. Furthermore, members portrayed experiments in sustainable living in the Negev as potential models for other sites around the world, and looked to other states with disadvantaged minorities, such as Australia and the United States, to learn lessons.

A politics of possibility shares this articulation of local and global scales. Gibson-Graham (2006) proposed a politics of possibility as a way to move forward from the negativity and despair that had characterized radical critiques, including their own, of the exploitation and dysfunction of capitalist economic organization (Gibson-Graham 1996). Nourished by feminist theory and based on analysis of "locally based social movement interventions all over the world," Gibson-Graham outline a political approach geared toward proactive change that includes four stages: (1) "deconstructing the hegemony of capitalism" in order to open awareness to existing and potential non-capitalist economic practices; (2) "producing a language of economic difference" to illuminate what capitalism has obscured and allow for more effective communication and collaboration in developing alternatives; (3) "cultivating subjects" who would willingly thrive in non-capitalist economies; and (4) "building community economies" on the ground (2006:x).

Though focused on a different set of challenges and not framed in terms of Gibson-Graham's phases, Bustan engaged in a similar politics of possibility. Bustan's deconstruction focused on the hegemony of land conflict and its binary frames. The group worked to produce a critical language of environment, justice, and progress that would allow for critique and the envisioning of new possibilities. It aimed to cultivate multicultural and environmental subjects, and to begin building the ecologically and socially sustainable communities within which they would thrive. By no means were all of these goals accomplished. And rather than dividing them into temporally distinct phases, Bustan's activism tackled aspects of these phases simultaneously.

I draw on Gibson-Graham's approach to activism for two main reasons. First, though Gibson-Graham draw heavily from Marxist theory, this is not a traditional

Marxist analysis. Gibson-Graham avoid teleological predictions of working class uprising and look beyond class-based conflict. Scholars of “new social movements” propose identity politics as an alternative to class conflict as the mobilizing factor for much of today's social activism (Steinmetz 1994; Melucci 1980; Laraña, Johnston, and Gusfield 1994). However, while Bustan certainly engages in identity politics, this does not fully account for their mobilization. Rather than characterizing social movements with labels such as class-based or identity-based, which may be too restrictive to capture the actual complexity of their motivations and alliances (Calhoun 1994; Tucker 1991), Gibson-Graham categorize based on movements' approaches to problem solving.

Second, Gibson-Graham's approach takes seriously the interconnections between scholarship and activism that have shaped the practices of Bustan and so many other activist groups today, and it does so without assigning one to be the handmaid of the other. Theoretical innovations may come from both sides. Likewise, both picketers and expert witnesses may serve the tactical purposes of a movement (moreover, the same people may serve in both roles). This approach fits the sociopolitical atmosphere I found in the Negev and opens analysis to new ways of understanding problems and the solutions proposed through activism.

Bustan enacted these politics of scale and possibility through a particular practice of appropriation and reassembly. Lévi-Strauss (1966) refers to this practice, and the aesthetics associated with it, as *bricolage*. Applying the term to both material building and myth creation, Lévi-Strauss describes *bricolage* as a hands-on, common sense approach similar to the practical knowledge that Scott (1998) refers to as *mētis*. It is a creative process that, though using a limited, repertoire, can produce “brilliant unforeseen results” (Lévi-Strauss 1966:17). Beginning a “project” by first considering what he has, the *bricoleur* proceeds by resourcefully re-appropriating whatever is at hand. Because it calls for dialogue with existing tools and materials to consider how they might be re-signified for the project at hand, *bricolage* is a retrospective approach to building. Likewise, Bustan practiced *bricolage* in a material sense as it built gardens, mud-and-straw houses, and sustainability retro-fits for existing apartments and houses. At a fundamental level, Bustan also engaged in discursive *bricolage* by assembling existing ideas, practices, and rhetoric about Bedouins and Jews, sustainability, citizenship, and

nature into environmental discourses that are new in the internal disposition of their parts, though not in their raw materials or the tools of their making.

Similar to Scott's (1998) contrast between *mētis* as piecemeal and situationally dependent, and *techne* as the rigorous application of universal principles, Lévi-Strauss opposes bricolage with the practices of the scientist or engineer. While this contrast is too stark to stand up to ethnographic description of actual scientists (Latour 1987; Callon 1986), Lévi-Strauss identifies an important, hierarchical contrast in the social roles of different sorts of knowledge. The *bricoleur*, who is skilled at a wide variety of tasks but claims expertise in no single one, is seen pejoratively as making “raw” or “naive” products, while the engineer who specializes in one area of knowledge is valued for this expertise (see also Haraway 1988; Choy 2005). Bustan's projects engaged both sorts of knowledge, *bricolage*, or *mētis*, as well as engineering, or *techne*. What distinguished Bustan's relationship to *bricolage* was its celebration of a particular aesthetic. The group valued the subjectivities engendered through *bricolage*, as well as its unpolished and heterogeneous products.

In the following section, I provide a more detailed profile of Bustan and explain how it sits within the context of Israeli social movements and global environmental movements. Next, I examine Bustan's aspirations and their activist practices by profiling three of their campaigns. I conclude with a discussion of the potential of this sort of activism to add new associations and connotations to familiar, dominant discourses.

“Sustainable Community Action for Land & People”: A Profile of Bustan

Devorah Brous founded Bustan in 1999 out of a desire to shake up Israeli attitudes about Arab-Jewish conflict. As she told me over the course of several conversations about her work with Bustan and other activist groups, Devorah grew up in New Jersey in an “upper middle class family” of “assimilated American Jews.” When she went away to college at the University of Vermont, she became involved with students of Latino and African American descent who were organizing for greater diversity on campus. These activities were a turning point for Devorah because they “made me look within and realize I don't really have much of a connection at all with my own heritage and culture.” In 1993, Devorah traveled to Israel in search of a deeper

connection with her Jewish heritage. She fell in love with the landscapes there and the people she met, but felt heartbroken that both were being torn apart and degraded as they were being fought over. From this heartbreak came her focus on sustainability.

Soon after reaching Israel, Devorah began working in the Occupied Palestinian Territories on coexistence campaigns and providing humanitarian aid. But she became disillusioned with these “cosmetic dialogue projects” (Brous, in Johal 2008) and superficial provisioning of supplies. Using a metaphor of fire to convey the violent and fearsome rage of the conflict and the impotence she and fellow activists felt to quell it, she told me, “we were not moving forward at all. We were racing around and putting out fires while people were throwing buckets, gallons of fuel onto these little fires that were being set all around the country. And...we were coming with a little spoon of water to pour on the fires.”

Devorah shifted gears. She chose to start Bustan in the Negev both for tactical reasons and because she had established relationships in Bedouin communities since arriving in Israel. Devorah hoped her work in the Negev would make more of an impact on people's consciences than had working with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, who were still seen by many Israelis as purely external enemies. She wanted to show the Jewish Israeli public how unjustly Arabs were being treated, despite their being Israeli citizens. Founded on this tactical decision, Bustan has always treated citizenship as a core of its work. The organization calls for a multicultural standard of citizenship that would recognize Bedouin Arabs and Jews, often drawing parallels between the Negev and indigenous movements for multicultural recognition elsewhere in the world (see Yashar 2005).

Beginning as a small group of Jewish Israeli activists, Bustan aimed to become an organization jointly run by Jews and Arabs. In the early years, it focused on creating partnerships with Bedouin communities to implement projects in sustainability, and advocating outside the Negev for a change in policies regarding Bedouin Arabs and their application. Bustan took on many small projects, such as creating gardens, running workshops, giving tours, and organizing a festival. Their largest project of these years was the building of a mud-and-straw healthcare clinic in the unrecognized village of Wadi al-Na‘am in 2003. The village had been involved for nine years in appeals through

the Israeli courts to gain local access to the national healthcare system. The Medwed Clinic was designed by Jewish Israeli permaculture specialists from the north in consultation with one large family in Wadi al-Na‘am and financed through a two-year-long fundraising effort. During a week-long work-camp, an eclectic mix of Americans and Israelis, which included hippies, conservative Jews and Muslims, travelers and locals, built the clinic. Devorah described the clinic as a “direct action protest” (because building in the unrecognized village was not legal) that aimed to supply the village with primary healthcare when none was provided by the government. Bustan used the clinic to exert “moral leverage” (Keck and Sikkink 1998) against the national government by targeting it with a message of shame for not caring for a large group of its citizens.



Image 21: Medwed clinic in the village of Wadi al-Na‘am.

The structure was successfully finished during the work-camp, and it has not been demolished, despite its unauthorized status. However, initial efforts to staff the clinic faltered as physicians in the national healthcare network avoided the unauthorized clinic for fear of losing their jobs, and private physicians who were then hired quite due to death threats.¹⁹¹ Yet, just a year after the Medwed clinic's completion, the government provided and staffed an official clinic in Wadi al-Na‘am, and Bustan members contend that their insurgent building helped pressure the government to act.

The Medwed clinic became a lesson on both the strengths and shortcomings of Bustan's approach during its early years, and it has become a key feature of organizational lore and pedagogy. Even those members who were not involved at the time evaluate new projects with the Medwed clinic in mind. One strength identified in

¹⁹¹ Devorah reported these death threats during an interview, but did not specify their source. As far as I can learn, no physical harm came to anyone involved.

the project was its ability to bring together a broad spectrum of participants to work toward practical goals. This became “a founding principle” of Bustan's approach. As Devorah put it,

We don't want to have just a homogenous group of activists that have already converted so we can sit down and sing songs like we're part of a choir. We didn't want to work in that way. We wanted to try to forge new ground with this project. So, we were looking for people that had never been inside a Bedouin village to get involved. We were looking for people with different skill sets that could take on some responsibility, that could actually be involved with the planning.

Devorah's dismissive comment about sitting together to sing songs expressed a sentiment common to many left-wing activists, a weariness from years of “co-existence” efforts that focused on understanding and dialogue but did not seem to produce any tangible improvement. The focus on productive projects through sustained cooperative action that she describes as a reaction to this frustration has remained central to Bustan's work.

A commonly cited shortcoming of the project was the speed with which the partnership between Wadi al-Na‘am residents and Bustan crumbled. Village residents complained that Bustan came and left without any real, long-term commitment, moving on to projects in other communities and leaving the clinic empty. Bustan members complained that village residents did not take on responsibility for maintaining the clinic and protecting it from vandals. Commentators from both positions agreed that Bustan's status as a group of Jewish activists entering a Bedouin village, despite its ultimate goal of being a joint-led organization, made the formation of a truly equitable partnership more difficult.

In 2007, Bustan underwent two dramatic changes. First, the organization inaugurated its Green Center. This apartment in Beersheba was designed to be a community center and living space for volunteers that would gradually be retrofitted as a demonstration site for environmentally sustainable practices, including an organic garden that had been planted in the courtyard. For the next one and a half years, the Green Center served as Bustan's office, housed volunteers, including this volunteer-anthropologist, and hosted workshops and movie-screenings, gardening events, and a permaculture course.

Second, and even more significantly, Devorah handed leadership of Bustan to a new director, a Bedouin Arab resident of Tel Sheva named Ra'ed Al-Mikawi. Over the

course of 2007, the outgoing and incoming directors worked together to plan Bustan's future trajectory. Devorah and Ra'ed toured North America together during the fall, both to raise money and introduce Ra'ed to the network of environmental and social justice activists Devorah had cultivated there. I first met Ra'ed in December of that year, just a few months after he had officially taken over Bustan's leadership. He spoke of refocusing Bustan's limited energy and resources on a smaller number of initiatives that would be based on long-term partnerships, consciously addressing the critiques of the Medwed project. Though Bustan struggled over the following year to adapt to its new base in the Green Center and new leadership, the group did focus on three main projects—the Negev Unplugged Tours, the Children's Power Project, and a permaculture class.

Bustan's Context of Activism

The avenues and obstacles facing Bustan's work as a small, socio-environmental NGO in Israel have been shaped both by the political economy of NGOs into which Bustan inserted itself and the history of environmentalism that preceded its work. Israel is part of a wider phenomenon involving the withdrawal of state agencies from the provisioning of social services, and even land-use planning, and their replacement by private companies and non-profit NGOs (Ebrahim 2003; Ong 2006). This has been a particularly striking transition in Israel since the 1980s, as the formerly centralized welfare state has increasingly privatized (Shafir and Peled 2000b; Seidman 2010). Israel now has a plethora of NGOs that range from politically radical to conservative, and from grassroots to deeply symbiotic with government and business leaders. Their agendas range from the provision of services to new immigrants and routine citizen monitoring of government activities (e.g., pollution prevention, the fair allocation of budgetary resources, and curtailing political corruption) to more radical questioning of Zionism as the basis of the state and cooperation with Palestinian groups in opposition to the occupation of the Palestinian Territories. However, analysts question the effectiveness of those liberal NGOs pushing for change at a large-scale, national level, finding that they must temper and tailor their messages to court funding bodies, and their successes tend to be procedural, rather than fundamental policy changes (Yacobi 2007).

In the realm of Israeli environmental politics, many contemporary movements for

environmental protection and preservation draw heavily from the genealogy of Zionist environmental discourses traced in chapter one. Preservationist efforts during the early twentieth century were predominantly led by Ashkenazi Jews and answered Zionist motivations to redeem areas viewed variously as neglected wilderness or landscapes overused by Palestinian shepherds and Ottoman deforestation (Tal 2002). The Jewish National Fund (JNF), an international Zionist organization that has become both a land acquisition body and the world's largest Jewish environmental organization, was launched at this time in order to obtain land collectively and rehabilitate many areas. Both prior to state-formation, and later in concert with the Israeli government, the JNF has planted millions of trees with an aim toward environmental improvement, but even more significantly, as a way of efficiently staking claim to large areas of land (Tal 2002; Braverman 2009). In 1948, the creation of an Israeli state allowed the Zionist government to exercise managerial environment policies. Prior relationships of “reclamation” and “rehabilitation” became subsumed under the priorities of nation-building, such as absorption and employment of new immigrants and rapid agricultural and industrial development.

Following Israeli statehood, legislative measures made the JNF manager of more than two million *dunams* of “Absentee Properties” formerly held by Palestinians. This reassignment of lands to the JNF dispossessed many Palestinians and stripped those who remained of the power to manage these land (Kedar 2003). By 1957, despite being a semi-private entity, the JNF administered approximately 15 percent of the country’s area, and by 1964 it controlled all national forestry matters (Tal 2002:89). The JNF also was active in Israel’s wars, building roads and supporting isolated settlements (Lehn and Davis 1988). Thus, a hallmark institution of the Zionist movements came to control most state land and dominate land-use planning for rural areas. In recent years, despite the JNF's re-branding as an environmental organization, many Israeli residents continue to see it primarily as a bureaucratic institution of nation-building.¹⁹²

Although a number of writers have detailed the environmental degradation wrought in Israel by Zionist state-building (Benstein 2003; Tal 2002), mainstream Jewish Israeli environmentalists throughout Israel’s history also have described themselves as

192 For additional discussion of nationalist movements drawing upon environmental rhetoric and practices, see Hamilton (2002).

Zionists and professed their dedication to the Jewish state as the motivation for their activism (Glazer and Glazer 1998). Several national environmental organizations were initiated in the 1950s that urged a tempering of the young state's rapid industrial development and called for more stringent legislative and citizens' participatory protection of nature. During the 1960s and 1970s, more significant numbers of Israelis began to engage in direct environmental advocacy, often as a measure of dedication to the Israeli nation-state (Tal 2002).

For example, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), founded in 1953 and now the largest environmental preservation organization in Israel, has strong historical and ongoing ties to the Israeli military and state government. Its practices emerged out of the *Palmach* (a pre-state Jewish paramilitary organization), and service as one of its park rangers satisfies Israel's mandatory military service requirement (Ben-David 1997).¹⁹³ Initially, SPNI carried out many of the environmental inspection and enforcement tasks that later became the purview of the state government's Nature Reserves Authority (NRA). It also cooperated with the NRA to lead the campaign to protect endangered wildflowers that many Israelis view as an exemplar of successful environmentalism.

The SPNI and other mainstream organizations concentrated their efforts on the preservation of endangered floral and faunal species (Tal 2002). These organizations operated with a “biocentric” and “apolitical” paradigm, meaning that although their activities had political consequences, the organizations avoided explicit discussion of political issues (Benstein 2005, 2003). Environmental efforts became increasingly institutionalized as the Nature Reserves Authority and the Environmental Protection Service were founded, and their methods of mapping and planning resembled the measures of statecraft used by the ILA and other governmental bodies in planning settlements (Scott 1998; Brosius 2006). In this atmosphere of environmentalism so dominated by Zionism, and yet not avowedly political, calls for conservation euphemized (often violent) power relations by masking the systematic costs they exacted from Arab citizens, such as the expropriation of their lands to create national parks. During this time, relatively few Palestinian citizens of Israel participated in environmental

193 The Hebrew name, *Hevra l'Haganat haTeva*, more directly translates to “The Society for the Defense of Nature,” further intimating military ties.

campaigns. As Alon Tal explains, “[d]uring most of the country’s history, relations between Israeli Arabs and Israel’s mainstream environmental institutions were best characterized by relative degrees of alienation” (2002:339).

During the 1980s, activists began to adopt an “anthropocentric” and “civil-egalitarian” paradigm (Benstein 2005). As Israel’s rapidly built cities and their pollution problems captured people’s attention, and as Palestinian citizens’ protests against their unequal treatment grew louder, environmental activists increasingly addressed environmental quality and the fair distribution of state resources (Benstein 2003). During this time, Palestinian Israelis became active in environmentalism, as well. In Israel’s north, organizations such as the Palestinian-led Galilee Society and the jointly Jewish- and Palestinian-led LINK for the Environment, engaged in environmental campaigns of this type during the 1980s and 1990s. However, in the Negev, no such campaigns had begun before Bustan’s founding. Consistent with popular calls to “think globally, act locally,” many of these activists joined in pollution prevention and clean-up campaigns as participants in a rising international environmental movement (Tal 2002).

Yet, environmentalist endeavors that might be politically mainstream elsewhere, such as limiting suburban sprawl and curbing new settlement in rural areas, or promoting family planning to limit population growth, are highly contentious in Israel because of their implications for *hityashvut* (the Zionist settlement drive) and the demographic ratio of Jews and Arabs. The sociopolitical context within which environmental campaigns must operate has a profound impact on how activists frame their arguments and mobilize support. To be successful, activists must not only convince the Israeli public that their causes warrant attention, but also that they pose no national security threat (Glazer and Glazer 1998). Indeed, the majority of environmental campaigns in Israel carefully avoid issues that might be perceived as threatening security by, for example, campaigning for the protection of “open spaces” in Israel, but ignoring the military’s control and use of 38 percent of Israel’s nature reserves (Tal 2002:179) and more than half of its overall territory (Oren 2007). This can be particularly challenging for campaigns dealing with Palestinian Israelis, who are often suspected of being a “fifth column” in Israeli society (Tal 2002). In fact, Glazer and Glazer claim that “[o]nly in a less tense political atmosphere will Arabs achieve full environmental and social rights and will the

environment in general become a major focus of Israel's still embattled population" (1998:48). However, some activists, including a handful of environmental justice groups, contend that ecological concerns and struggles for environmental parity between Palestinian and Jewish citizens cannot wait for a peace process to move forward.¹⁹⁴ Bustan's work proceeds from this same viewpoint, but goes further to argue that the environmental injustice faced by Israel's Palestinian, and specifically the Negev's Bedouin Arabs, worsens Arab-Israeli conflict by alienating this portion of Israeli society.

Recent trends in Israeli environmentalism continue to be tied to broader contexts of global environmentalism and other social movements. The keywords of sustainability (both on its own and in connection with sustainable development) and global warming that have become so influential in global politics at all scales, from grassroots mobilizations to state governments' policies and international summits, are also gaining attention in Israel. Throughout its work, Bustan, too, has been transnational, drawing on this upsurge in global environmental concerns and the cosmopolitan image of environmentalism, both in finding funders and in convincing fellow Israelis of the urgency of their concerns. Ideologically, it was founded on the multicultural activism of Devorah's American college years. And Bustan has continued to draw tactically and ideologically from international environmentalism and link Negev socio-environmental problems to global concerns of consumerism and unsustainable lifestyles. Many American and European volunteers have visited Bustan to exchange ideas and practices, as well as their labor power, with Negev residents.

Within this international network, Bustan identifies itself as both an environmental and social organization. In the links they draw between security of tenure and environmental stewardship, Bustan resembles related movements in the global south described by analysts as "environmentalism of the poor" (Broad 1994; Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997). Their focus on ethnically delineated disparities in exposure to

¹⁹⁴ Examples of projects organized in an environmental justice and/or civil-egalitarian framework include the Galilee Society's use of litigation and publicity campaigns to close or curtail stone quarries, solid waste incinerators, and industrial parks (all which they argue are disproportionately sited close to Palestinian communities) and force the government to remove asbestos from Palestinian schools; Life and Environment's "Environmental (In) Justice" reports, which have been presented in testimony to the Knesset; SHATIL's Environmental Justice initiatives, which include environmental leadership workshops and presentations to the Knesset; and the Heschel Center's Environmental Fellows leadership program.

environmental hazards aligns Bustan with the environmental justice movement that originated in the United States during the 1980s.¹⁹⁵ With its mobilization of identity politics, Bustan also fits among the “new social movements” (della Porta et al. 2006).

This simultaneous identification with both social justice movements and environmental movements was frequently noted, by both Bustan insiders and external commentators on Negev politics, to be a weakness and a strength. Though sometimes feeling stretched thin between competing priorities, Bustan members also drew creatively from the language and tactics of both social and environmental frames as social movements *bricoleurs*. When addressing different audiences, they used this flexibility to negotiate Israel's tense political climate. This ideological flexibility also helped Bustan seek funding from a broad spectrum of donors. It drew on contributions from environmentally concerned American Jews in its early years and later won grants from European foundations such as Forum ZFD (in Germany) and the World Social Forum.

Bustan arose amidst an overall proliferation of NGOs in Israel since the 1980s (Yacobi 2007). Responding to the decentralization of state institutions and ideologies described in chapter one, many of these NGOs have taken part in the splintering of competing Zionist ideologies. They have contributed to social movements invested in the issues of personhood, body, identity, and environment that did not garner much public debate before the 1980s (Ben Eliezer 2004). Some scholars celebrate this proliferation of NGOs as a sign that Israel is shifting from a restrictive and homogenizing society to one that is more inclusive and open to difference (Shafir and Peled 2000b). Others warn that these organizations are not truly expanding participation in civil society because long-standing hierarchies of power continue to prevail (Ben Eliezer 2004:276). Leadership consists disproportionately of highly educated Ashkenazim from middle upper class families, rather than Palestinian citizens, Mizrahim, or working class participants (Ben Eliezer 2004; Yacobi 2007). In addition, as in other areas of Israeli society, Arab and Jewish NGOs usually operate separately (Jamal 2008). In this sociopolitical milieu, Bustan and other small, grassroots NGOs hold potential for contributions not in terms of

195 Most environmental groups of this sort in Israel take their lead from environmental justice efforts in the United States. For example, the founders of three of the most prominent organizations engaging an environmental justice frame in Israel grew up in the United States: LINK for the Environment, the Heschel Center, and Bustan.

large policy shifts or the removal of economic disparities, but in fostering more civil, egalitarian modes of interpersonal relations and in keeping challenging issues, like Jewish-Arab relations, substantive citizenship, and environmental rights and responsibilities, in public discussion.

Calling for Multicultural Citizenship in a Multicultural Landscape

Bustan's campaigns call for the recognition of both Jews and Arabs as belonging equally within Israeli landscapes and society. Two of their projects, the Negev Unplugged Tours and the Children's Power Project (CPP) demonstrated their efforts to deconstruct dominant discourses of land and conflict and forward a language of justice, environment, and progress. These projects urged participants and a wider Israeli public to recognize Bedouin Arabs in Israel not just as nominal citizens whose belonging is contingent on acultural accommodation, but as full citizens with cultural rights as well. Further, they proposed that achieving this requires also embracing landscapes as multicultural, rather than using the notion of ownership to claim them as being either Jewish or Bedouin.

These projects engaged in discursive *bricolage* by drawing upon discourses of multiculturalism and citizenship that circulate widely in relation to Jewish Israelis, and insisting on their application to Arabs, as well. In an effort to avoid redress some of the structural violence and discrimination of assimilationist policies applied to previous non-Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants, contemporary absorption policies addressing such immigrants now work to balance pressures for accommodation to Israeli norms with support for culturally specific rights and practices. Though these efforts may do their own sort of harm by imposing dilemmas of authenticity (Povinelli 2002) or privileging the dominant group's norms even as it allows for immigrant alternatives (Connolly 1996), Bustan and other advocates sought similar modes of accommodation for Bedouins. Like popular pride in Israel's multicultural Jewish population, the civil rights accorded to Israeli citizens and Israel's claimed status as "the only democracy in the Middle East" is an important element of Israeli nationalism. Bustan's projects point out the graduated citizenship (Ong 2006) that actually discriminates between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens and challenges Israelis to align juridical and substantive citizenship.

Negev Unplugged Tours

The Unplugged tours have constituted one of Bustan's primary and longest-running activities, and have engaged a wide range of participants from international tourists to Israeli high school students. Though tours were tailored to a particular group's interests, all focused on sustainability and the impact of economic development on Negev residents, and there was a heavy emphasis on “the Bedouin community.” Bustan's publicity for the tours states that,

By going beyond the standard “Camels, Carpets and Coffee” we expose students, human rights activists, journalists, medical workers, and residents from the Negev, all of Israel and international visitors to the reality of life and the ecology of the region, and the interplay between development and sustainability. We visit unrecognized villages, chemical plants, development towns, farms, and forests and through a process of critical questioning, led by local guides, look at divides between environment and industry, tradition and modernity, and ethnicity/religion/class divides in the region. [bustan.org]

The tours attempted to deconstruct Zionist narratives of the Negev and assemble narratives of multicultural citizens in multicultural landscapes. Specifically, they aimed to give visibility and credence to alternative understandings and experiences of place that challenged dominant narratives, such as accounts of state land ownership and Bedouin squatters, and their underlying discourses of Jewish-Arab separation, territorialism, and modern progress. The tours guided visitors through landscapes, arranging interpersonal encounters across lines of cultural and ethnic difference, and foregrounding local expertise. A return to the tour that opened this chapter explores in more detail how Bustan approached these goals.

By moving visitors through the landscape and narrating a particular social interpretation along the way, Noga's tour and others I observed helped students read

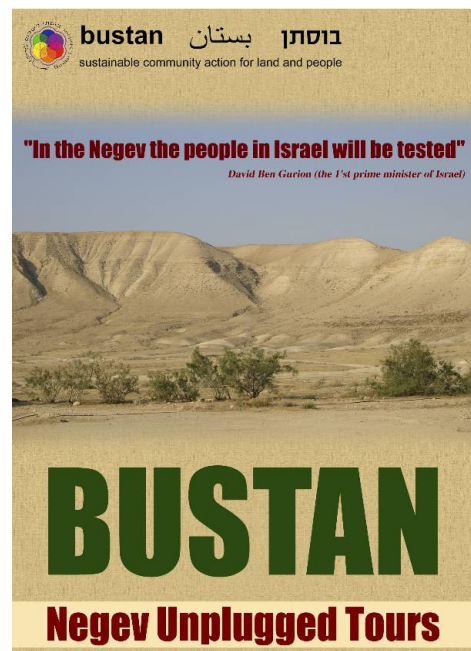


Image 22: Front page of a brochure advertising Negev Unplugged Tours

inequalities in the landscape. For instance, as we passed Omer, Noga identified it as an affluent Jewish town and pointed out the unrecognized village across the road. On a route designed to include stark inequalities between citizens with and without cultural rights, with and without recognition of land rights, she left the students to observe and note particular contrasts on their own.

After turning into the village of Um Batin, the bus bucked up the pitted access road and stopped in a clearing of hard-packed dirt in the midst of houses. We all climbed off the bus and into the sun and chilly wind. As we walked past a few houses made of concrete and tin, several curious children peered around corners to observe the big group. To our right, sheep in pens bleated against the wind. We walked up to a raised point so we could see the surrounding area, including several other Bedouin villages and Omer, and were joined by Anwar, our host and the head of the village. Anwar began speaking to us in Hebrew about life in the village, and Noga translated to English. He raised these sheep, he said, pointing to the pen, and had learned agriculture from his father. But this had been a very dry winter. Life in the Negev is often not easy, but the best months are March, April, and May.

Turning, then, to survey the view, Anwar named the settlements we could see, and Noga pointed out the forest of Omer. “If we had the conditions of Omer, we would have a forest, too,” Salah told us, once again bringing the students' attention to inequalities manifested in the landscape. “They have internet; we don't have electricity or water,” Anwar continued. Pointing this time in the other direction, across the road, Anwar informed the group of a water treatment plant that is planned to clean the polluted and garbage-strewn Hebron River that now runs along the village's edge. The plant is slated to be built on “Um Batin's land” but would send “only 10 percent” of the cleaned water back to Um Batin. Noga supplemented these narrated landscapes of inequality with a specific focus on citizenship. When Anwar pointed out the dirt path leading to the village's elementary school, Noga added that although the state government did not recognize this and other villages as legitimate residences, the High Court had ruled that Bedouins, as citizens, have certain rights, and among these is the right to state-provided primary education. Noga later shared with me how important it is to her that tour participants learn to understand and speak of Bedouins as citizens, as many arrive to her

tours not even aware of this legal status.

Most participants of this tour, like others that I observed, were either ignorant about Bedouin Arabs or were aware only of elements of Bedouin culture that are most typically placed “on display” (Shryock 2004b), such as “coffee, tents, camels, and the kuffiye,” as Noga summarized.¹⁹⁶ But, she insisted, these emblems do not capture the depth of Bedouin culture, which is “a whole way of life that involves great respect for the earth.” Conscious of Bedouin heritage tourism that often simply reinforces preexisting stereotypes (Dinero 2002; 2010), Unplugged tour guides attempted to confront and preempt stereotype formation. Noga, for example, encouraged the students to observe both the kuffiyes and the jeans among village residents' attire. Like other displays of culture, these tours constituted a particular Bedouin heritage as much as they reflected one (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). Noga attempted to depict Negev Bedouins as both traditional and modern members of society—speaking simultaneously of their rights as citizens and their cultural specificity—but struggled to do so without invoking the metonymic objects of Bedouin culture that might be familiar to her audience.

In an effort to move beyond fetishized emblems of Bedouin culture and convey the holistic interconnections that encompass landscapes, people, and culture, Bustan arranged opportunities to sit and talk with Bedouin Arab residents, often in their homes. On this tour, after narrating the social landscape from atop the rise, Anwar ushered us out of the chilly wind and onto the patio beside his home, where several women were setting up plastic chairs for us. As we perched on chairs and a low concrete wall, another young woman passed around hot tea in little plastic cups while Anwar began to answer questions from the group. Conversation flowed easily, rather than as a formal question and answer session, with Noga translating when necessary between Hebrew and English.

Students asked about Anwar's hopes for his children's generation, what difficulties young people from the community face, and whether young Bedouins are dedicated to living in these villages or if they are moving out to cities. On the one hand, Anwar spoke of how limited were the choices for Bedouins in terms of employment opportunities and place of residence. On the other hand, he complained, individual young people have too little respect now, and they do not know how to handle themselves or uphold traditions.

¹⁹⁶ A *kuffiye* is a piece of cloth men may wear on their heads, often held in place with a heavy circle of black rope (*agal*).

Noga encouraged the conversation towards this discussion of traditions, asking Anwar what this traditional society had been like. “We had great value for the person. You don't harm other people.” If someone was harmed, he could go to the head of the *hamula* (clan). Anwar portrayed Bedouin customs and structures of authority as having once been in balance with a dispersed and independent Bedouin society, but the residential constraint and superimposed government of the Israeli state had thrown this out of balance. He expressed great disappointment about the young generation, saying that between the weakened structures of Bedouin society and the exclusion they faced from Israeli society, the youth did not get quality education about what is right and wrong. At this point, Noga ushered the group back onto the bus in order to move to our next stop on the tour.

No comment was made of Anwar's particular generational and gendered viewpoint as an elder man. Several women and young men stood along the outskirts of the group on the patio, observing, but their opinions were not solicited. This brief and introductory tour addressed the intricacies of a holistic landscape-culture-citizen complex, but the complication of intergenerational struggles was beyond its scope. In this case, “the Bedouin community” was described socially by just one representative, giving an impression of cohesion and leaving social hierarchies unquestioned (Joseph 2002).

But this uniform depiction of Bedouins was not the norm for Unplugged tours. An emphasis on situated knowledge (Haraway 1988) was central to the politics of the Negev Unplugged project, and the tours' planners and guides attempted to enact these politics. Tour guides exercised significant authority in introducing visitors to the tour, framing it in Bustan's language of justice, environment, and citizenship, and providing explanations in between stops. However, the tours revolved around visits with paid local experts who spoke and showed the experiential truths of their exclusion from governmental plans, budgets, and social belonging. Noga's tour was shorter than most, including just two stops, one with Anwar and one at an overlook further south, where a representative from the Association of Forty gave the group an overview of political developments related to land rights and settlement recognition and answered questions

about the surrounding Bedouin villages.¹⁹⁷ Other tours made more stops, often visiting Sarah's garden in 'Ayn al-'Azim. There, complexities of gendered and generational relationships were often discussed, along with talk of the interconnections between a rise in chronic diseases among Bedouin Arabs, sedentarism and urbanization, changing diets, and the decline of herbal medicinal practices. Other experts with situated knowledge included residents of other unrecognized villages, Bedouin Arab residents who were also community organizers and small business owners.¹⁹⁸

Certain narratives were conspicuous in their absence from these tours, being disciplined by exclusion. Early tours had included discussions with local government officials and representatives of Ramat Hovav (the complex of chemical factories and hazardous waste facilities across the road from the unrecognized village of Wadi al-Na'am), for example. However, such representatives were no longer included among the Negev Unplugged cast of experts. One tour guide criticized this change in itineraries as not showing "the picture as it is from both sides." Bustan decision-makers deemed these presentations to be undermining their politics. Ramat Hovav's pollution mitigation programs, they contended, were primarily a publicity move of "greenwashing," disingenuously claiming to engage in environmental improvement while actually perpetuating both ecological and social damage. And Bustan leaders objected to governmental officials' reinforcement of land conflict through accusatory discourses of Bedouin squatters. Rather than giving more exposure to narratives that they viewed as misleading, and that already had powerful industrial and governmental backing, Bustan leaders excluded these narratives from future tours.

In their use of group touring to foster and give meaning to certain relationships between people and landscapes, the Unplugged tours drew on a familiar "repertoire of contention" in Israeli society (Tarrow 1998). Heritage tourism linked to Israeli-Palestinian landscapes has a long history of use specifically for bolstering land claims. Since the *tiyulim* of the British Mandate era, when young Jews hiked through Palestine in

197 The Association of Forty is a committee formed in the north of Israel in 1988 to work toward recognition of unrecognized Arab settlements throughout Israel.

198 As will be seen in discussion of Bustan's permaculture course, local expertise was not the only form of valued knowledge. But efforts were made to ascribe greater value to it, to put practical expertise in conversation with universalist knowledge (*techne*) on a more equal footing. On dilemmas of local and circulating expertise in NGO work, see Choy (2005).

order to learn and claim its landscapes as part of their Jewish heritage, tours in Israel have been imbued with nationalist significance. Currently, the SPNI is the largest provider of environmental tours. Subsidized largely by the Ministry of Education and requiring past army service of all its trained guides, the SPNI's nature tours work to instill a sense of Jewish historical continuity in the land and erase Arab presences (Selwyn 1995).¹⁹⁹

The tour, as a repertoire of contention, held risks and benefits. Displaying injustice with the goal of instigating sociopolitical action can shade into voyeurism, depending on participants' intentions. Some critics dismiss tours such as these as “voluntourism” that only commoditizes suffering by selling a “pain and poverty” narrative that “not... many Negev bedouin willingly embrace,” (Dinero 2010:178). Yet, local experts and the two Bedouin Arab guides I spoke with expressed satisfaction in being able to educate people about the Negev's social problems and their aspirations. These tours were able to move people through landscapes, taking individuals across the normally rigid boundaries between Jewish and Bedouin Arab social spaces. Whereas the SPNI's nature tours include physical exertion in “nature” in order to “to strengthen the link of the Jewish people to their land” (Ben-David 1997:143), Unplugged tours focused on peopled landscapes. Buses shuttled participants from place to place so that more time could be spent talking with the place's inhabitants. By bringing uninformed outsiders to learn from Bedouin residents positioned as local experts, these tours participated in the deconstruction of these binary frames of social relations in the Negev. Further, these tours displayed the links that non-Jewish citizens of Israel have to its landscapes and tied recognition of these links to full realization of substantive citizenship.²⁰⁰

Children's Power Project

During Negev Unplugged Tours, Bustan exercised considerable control over its message and framing. But these tours reached only small groups of people who were willing to pay to cover its costs. Another campaign, the Children's Power Project (CPP),

199 Selwyn (1995) reports that between 40 and 60 percent of the SPNI's budget derives from the state government in the form of subsidies for school children's trips.

200 The Negev Coexistence Forum (a group of Jewish and Arab residents of the Negev working through education and publicity campaigns to achieve greater equity for Jews and Arabs) also ran tours of Bedouin Arab towns and village as part of its public lecture series, “The Bedouins of the Negev.” These tours similarly addressed problems of unequal citizenship, though without Bustan's environmental focus.

sought to reach a wider audience with its call for recognition of Bedouin Arabs as equal citizens. However, Bustan's reliance on mainstream media to spread this message risked their being co-opted by the dominant discursive and moral frameworks against which Bustan was attempting to argue.

The practical work of the CPP involved providing solar-powered equipment to families who lived in unrecognized villages, without access to electricity, but whose children needed electricity for medical reasons. The CPP began as a one-time project to help Inas Al-Atrash, a three-year-old diagnosed with cancer. In order for her to be released from the hospital, her family needed a refrigerator to store her medicine, but living in an unrecognized village, they had access to electricity for only a few hours each night, through a diesel generator. Inas's parents petitioned the high court to be connected to the electricity grid as a "special circumstance," but their petition was rejected and the parents' argument of Inas's right to health was denied because her "parents chose to live in an unrecognized village knowing they will have no electricity."²⁰¹ Bustan raised funds to install a solar-powered refrigerator in the Al-Atrash's home. When Inas's cancer went into remission, the solar equipment was passed on to another family to power an oxygen machine for a child with severe sleep apnea. Bustan leaders then decided to extend this project with the help of an anonymous donation for the purchase and installation of ten photovoltaic systems in homes among the unrecognized villages where children had similar medical needs.

In extending the project, Bustan leaders were concerned not only with the wellbeing of the ten children they could afford to help, but with conveying a wider message about the responsibility that Israeli society holds for these children who, whether Bedouin or Jewish, are Israeli citizens. As Bustan's director, Ra'ed, explained during our first conversation, these parents with ill children needing electricity faced an excruciating choice:

Because they wanted their children to survive, [parents] will do one of two things. [One possibility is] to move and to relocate themselves inside a Bedouin township, and that means they are giving up all their lands... The other thing is to keep their home at their land and to rent a house in a different place and just to pay the [extra] rent and the costs, all these things just because of the electricity. [This] is not sustainable for these families because they are coming from a

201 H.C. 8062/05, *Enass Al-Atrash, et. al. vs. The Ministry of Health, et. Al*, 2005.

very...hard background, socioeconomic background. So what we are doing...is to say to them you don't have to do that critical change and to give up all these things. Because we really want you to stay and keep your land because this is the real connection between the earth and the people, which is...which is one of the roles of Bustan.

Governmental strategies of resettlement relied on the provision of basic services only to government-planned townships to compel residents to move away from their rural villages. Bustan's campaign attempted to weaken that strategy by demonstrating one way that families could remain steadfast on their lands.²⁰² Further, a staff member I call Ruth explained, this project demonstrated that the needs of this group of citizens could be met with clean energy, rather than being part of “the polluting grid,” so that they could act as examples for other Israelis. Ruth saw these solar installations as valuable examples of how higher standards of living could be achieved without relying on the typical model of development that entails unrestrained growth and increased consumption of non-renewable resources.²⁰³ In a framework of socio-environmental sustainability, recognition of cultural rights in land could be paired with technological innovation that curtails fossil fuel consumption. Thus, the CPP aimed to foster a notion of multicultural citizenship that included recognition of Bedouin Arabs' cultural and historical connections to landscapes as a basic component of citizenship rights (such as access to the basic municipal services of electricity, water, and sewage systems).

After installing the solar equipment, Bustan leaders planned to seek out media coverage to spread CPP's citizenship message. However, they were concerned that coverage of the CPP would portray it as a “humanitarian” project, missing the “political” message they wished to convey. They were distressed that by focusing on the project as “humanitarian,” the coverage would side-step issues of Bedouin inclusion in Israeli society, equal citizenship, and land rights. This aversion to framing the CPP as a humanitarian project reflects a concern recently recognized by social researchers.

202 Statements by government officials and pamphlets distributed in Arabic and Hebrew argued that this settlement policy was for the good of all, but emphasized in particular the necessity of protecting state lands. In a context of zero-sum competition over land, Bustan leaders worried that their advocacy and practical support for Bedouin Arabs to remain in rural villages would be too threatening for a wider Israeli public to accept. They were concerned that reporters and other readers would interpret the project as a humanitarian project in order to avoid this more substantive challenge to Israeli environmental discourses.

203 Coal constitutes the vast majority of fuel used in the power plants of the Israel Electric Corporation (the state-owned and primary provider of electricity in Israel) (<http://www.iec.co.il>).

Humanitarianism, when substituted for political rights, can be violently exclusionary because it entails a “limited version of what it means to be human,” while claiming to be universal (Ticktin 2006:34). Bustan organizers did not want the CPP to normalize the provision of services to Bedouin Arabs as a charity because they worried that this would only reinforce their second-class citizenship status in Israel.

As I arrived to work with Bustan and began attending weekly staff meetings, impromptu planning sessions, and field projects, the extended phase of the CPP project was getting underway. Two coordinators from Bustan met with social workers at Soroka Hospital in Beersheba to learn about children who could benefit from the solar installations and to meet with interested parents. Children considered included, for example, one with a permanent nutritional deficiency who required refrigerated nutritional supplements and siblings with a nervous system disorder (CIPA) requiring refrigerated medicines and external regulation of the children's ambient temperature. One coordinator from Bustan travelled to the families' villages with the technician in charge of solar installations to examine the technical requirements at their homes. Over the next two months, while several of the solar generators were installed, Bustan staff members worked to plan a public launch of the CPP project. They arranged a five-hour tour and invited reporters from Israeli and international news outlets.

On the day of the tour, Bustan staff and volunteers gathered with approximately a dozen reporters on a small bus in Beersheba. From there, we all drove together to the village of Um Batin, where we sat on blankets and cushions in the shade as opening remarks were given by a citizens' rights activist and guide of Negev Unplugged Tours (Sliman Abu Zaedi), Bustan's director (Ra'ed Al-Mickawi), Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Ben Gurion University (Shaul Sofer), the installer of the CPP's solar equipment, and the fathers of two children who had received solar-powered medical equipment. Reporters were given time to view the solar installation and conduct interviews. We then climbed back aboard the bus and rode to Wadi al-Na'am. Standing underneath the high-tension electrical lines of the power plant that sits in the midst of the village but provides no electricity to its residents, we overlooked the industrial waste facilities across the road. Sliman and a village leader spoke about the elevated rates of cancer, asthma, and miscarriages afflicting this unrecognized village. Finally, the group

rode to the village of Kasir Assir to visit another family that had received CPP solar equipment. The tour's participants sat on mats and cushions laid out in front of the family's concrete and tin-roofed home and ate lunch together before listening to closing remarks and taking more time to interview and photograph this family.

A closer look at the planning process behind this press tour reveals Bustan's intended messages and how they attempted to convey these within Israel's discursive field. At staff meetings over the course of the previous two months, we had discussed how best to tackle the projects' challenges. Some of these were technical and monetary hurdles in installing the solar devices, but the most troubling involved agreeing on the projects' main intentions and how to convey Bustan's desired messages. As one staff member stated with concern to me privately, "The CPP is not a project. It's a good deed, but it's not a project." The humanitarian value was apparent, but the political point was unclear, this staff member declared; "it's not being made." Similar concerns surfaced throughout planning of the project and continued as members found and analyzed media coverage.

This project's focus on using the media to more widely spread a message about environmental justice was new for Bustan. Previously, the group had focused its projects on tangible accomplishments through cooperative efforts. Leaders had written in newspapers and online venues, appeared on radio programs, and done public speaking events, but these had been treated as important parallel efforts, which referred to projects in the field, but did not guide those projects. Early staff discussions of the CPP centered on whether the project's launch should be primarily a community event (of village families, leaders, and local social justice activists) in which Bustan concentrated on building community relations and to which reporters were invited, or if it should be primarily a press conference in which Bustan concentrated on getting its messages across to reporters. In the end, it was decided unanimously to install the first several solar generators and then hold a press conference to launch the CPP into Israel's public arena.

The next major questions, then, revolved around where the press tour would go and who reporters would meet. What landscape of encounter would display the inequalities faced by Israel's Bedouin citizens, but also allow audiences to relate to its Bedouin residents as fellow Israelis? And what kind of Bedouin persons would be

sympathetic to a primarily Jewish Israeli audience?

For many Israelis, unrecognized villages represent landscapes that are wild and dangerous, and largely unknown. Even one of Bustan's Jewish staff members was worried about visiting these villages after dark, citing their unlit roads and other unspecified anxieties about their “danger.” When these fears were stated at a planning meeting, other staff members quickly censored what they interpreted as a stereotype of Bedouins and an assertion of Jewish-Arab separation. One reminded everyone that this staff member had actually been to a village at night before and insisted that Bedouin villages were no less safe than Jewish towns. Deconstructing frames of opposition and conflict was an ongoing task, with which Bustan members themselves struggled. This was a politics in process and not an enlightened group spreading its message to the masses. Voices raised in argument until another staff member redirected our attention to the practical problem of unlit roads and proposed that we visit the villages but begin the tour much earlier so as to finish before dark.

Eventually, staff members agreed that reporters should be taken to these unrecognized landscapes, despite logistical difficulties, rather than holding a press conference at the Green Center, for example. The tour aimed to familiarize the Israeli public with these villages, emphasizing both their place within Israeli society and the hardships they face. Poverty was evident in the villages, but the tour was also careful to show the human beings who make their lives there. They carefully arranged to meet with at least one resident in each village on the tour, and the final stop included a leisurely lunch with time to mingle and talk. At this last stop, the hospitality so strongly associated with Bedouin culture was on display, but it was choreographed to show the similarity of a common Israeliness. For example, the foods served at lunch could just as easily have been found in a Jewish or Arab home: pita bread, hummus, sliced cucumbers and tomatoes, olives, french fries,



Image 23: Lunch on the CPP tour.

fruit soda and Coca Cola. The people and landscapes of the tour depicted Israeli citizens seeking equal treatment from the state.

Among the identities highlighted among the Bedouin Arabs chosen to represent the CPP, two were most visible: children and military servicemen. These were deemed to be sympathetic representatives to the Israeli public. By pointing to the needs of sick children, Bustan leaders hoped to inspire empathy that would “break through some of those stereotypes about Bedouins,” as Karen put it, and “open” people to hearing about the issues. “It really brings out what it means to not have electricity, what it means to be an unrecognized village, how that affects your life in profound ways and also the most superficial ways.” As innocents who suffered because of their status as Bedouins in Israel, rather than any wrongdoing of their own, these sick children were held up as examples of the unfairness of differential citizenship.

Bedouin volunteers in the Israeli military represent a different notion of citizenship, one based on the reciprocity of services and loyalties. The event's treatment of military service is notable because this is commonly noted as a primary duty to the country and is shared by almost all Jewish citizens, but often divides Jews from Arabs. When, during one staff meeting, a CPP coordinator mentioned that the father of one family slated to receive a solar-powered refrigerator was an officer in the army, a second staff member responded excitedly. “Really, the father's in the army? That's perfect.” This was ideal for publicity of the project's political message, she elaborated, because it foregrounded the irony of a man volunteering his life for the state, but then being prevented by the state from accessing electricity in order to care for his children. As planning continued, this father made clear that he did not want to draw attention to his military status, wary of repercussions for speaking out politically. Yet, staff members agreed that he would be a good representative of the CPP families and requested that his house be the final stop on the press tour. He agreed, hosted the lunch, and spoke of his son's and niece's medical conditions, leaving it to speakers from Bustan to place a political frame around the event. At the tour's first stop, another father revealed that he “served a long time in the IDF and am partially disabled as a result,” and at least one newspaper report noted this detail as part of the father's “simple and eloquent” address (Waldoks 2008).

While aiming for empathy with fellow citizens, the project sought to provoke action from the government through the moral leverage of shame (Keck and Sikkink 1998). This message of shame was conveyed repeatedly during the CPP press day by multiple, differently situated actors. Professor Shaul Sofer stated that he was “embarrassed because of the lack of basic infrastructure in the unrecognized villages” (Almadar 2008) and declared that the state must provide these residents with infrastructure because they are “citizens of the state and they live here” (Yahav 2008). Ra'ed, a Bedouin Arab citizen and Bustan's director, stated, “we began a campaign saying that the government is responsible, and it's the government's duty to provide this kind of service to its own citizens” (Gradstein 2008). And Atia Abu Kaaf, father of one child benefitting from a solar power system, invoked an unspecified collective “we” to assign blame: “We are disappointed by the authorities and angry at the government,” he said, because they “left us out to dry” (Yahav 2008).

These messages of empathy and shame were included in broadcasts and newspaper coverage from a variety of sources in Hebrew, Arabic, and English, and Bustan staff members were initially pleased with the CPP's media coverage. However, as time passed, Bustan members wondered about the efficacy of the CPP. Media coverage lasted only a few days after the event, and there was no evidence of its widening Bustan's reach within Israeli society, nor of normalizing a discourse of multicultural citizenship. I later interviewed two reporters who had participated in the CPP tour, asking what they learned from the day and how they evaluated the project's successes and shortcomings. Both recognized the sociopolitical message that Bustan was attempting to convey, but they also acknowledged softening it or only partially including it in their articles. As one reporter explained,

Well, there was, I mean, there was both a political



מהשבוע שני הילדים הקטנים של משפחת אל-הואאשה יכולים לחיות בתנאים מעט יותר טובים.

Image 24: Excerpt from CPP media coverage.

message. That was very obvious, which is one of the main points that I got, but which, to a certain extent I ignored. My thing is not fighting the fight for the unrecognized Bedouins and improving their rights. That's not my... to be perfectly blunt, that's not my beat. My beat is...environmental stuff. There's a social justice...part that appeals to me about it. But I'm not explicitly, you know, and when I wrote about it afterwards, did not stress. I mean, I put it in, but I did not stress that element. [EJP interview]

This reporter described the tour as being full of new information and eye-opening, and he saw “the Bustan experience” as an important part of his “knowledge base” as a relatively new reporter. But the issues with which Bustan dealt in the CPP remained stubbornly compartmentalized. The discursive norms guiding this and other newspapers in Israel separate discussions of environment from discussions of society.²⁰⁴ This reporter's story mentioned Bustan's argument about citizenship and state provision of services, but it focused on the project as an innovative new use of solar energy technology. There is a separate person at his newspaper, the reporter explained, who would deal with stories about Bedouins and unrecognized villages—the legal affairs reporter.

Among the staff, enthusiasm for the CPP faded, and no similarly media-focused projects have been initiated. In 2009, as part of a reevaluation of Bustan's priorities and projects, Ra'ed announced, “we came to the realization that the expense of each solar-system makes it impracticable. To continue making an impact, it would have to either grow enormously and become a humanitarian alternative to the lack of electricity in unrecognized villages, or turn towards advocacy in the Knesset to change these conditions, neither of which fall within our area of expertise.” Furthermore, Bustan aimed to pressure the Israeli government to take responsibility for providing for its Bedouin citizens, not to reduce this pressure by replacing the state in providing electricity. Staff members also commented that they felt long-term partnerships with particular communities were more likely to lead to meaningful improvements than public advocacy, given Bustan's small size and limited resources. Realizing that its strength lay in fostering discourses and subjectivities on a more intimate level, Bustan returned to projects that would work through personal and longer-term interactions.²⁰⁵

204 Environmental stories at this newspaper, for instance, deal with issues like recycling, legal enforcement against polluters, and trends in green building, but they rarely address disparities between social groups.

205 The CPP's effort to address government through media coincided with the last year of a coalition government that included the middle-right Kadima party and left-of-center Labour party. Subsequently, a more conservative government took over, generally acknowledged to be more supportive of

Permaculture Class: Learning Social and Ecological Sustainability

Bustan's Permaculture Class, in addition to the efforts it shared with Negev Unplugged Tours and the CPP of breaking down binary divisions of Arab/Jew and nature/culture, sought to reconfigure Israeli discourses of progress and sustainability. “Permaculture” is a term coined by two agriculturalists and environmentalists from Australia, Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, to denote “an integrated, evolving system of perennial or self-perpetuating plant and animal species useful to man” (Mollison and Holmgren 1987:1). Since gaining traction in Australia, permaculture has become a movement of students, teachers, and practitioners around the world, and the concepts and practices pioneered by Mollison and Holmgren for rural farming have also been extended to urban and suburban settings and adapted to a wide variety of climates. Contemporary permaculturists engage in projects ranging from the design of home gardens to consulting with urban planners and establishing new farming communities. Stability and diversity are central principles of permaculture. This means taking a longterm view that values stability more than quick profits and fostering diversity as an inherent set of ecological checks and balances, recognizing that any element within an environment serves multiple functions and allowing any function to be served by multiple elements.²⁰⁶

In 2008, Bustan initiated a long-standing goal of introducing the ideas and practices of permaculture to Bedouin communities in the Negev by hosting a course in permaculture design. Advertisements for the course announced,

As in other trainings, participants in this three-month course will meet weekly to learn the principles and application of permaculture through theory and hands-on practice. However, the course is unique in being the first of its kind to be undertaken within the Bedouin community in Israel. The course will be attuned to both the desert ecology and the current political context of the Negev, so that participants will gain tools of analysis and planning to respond to local issues.
[Bustan publicity materials]

Judaization projects and harsher defenders against Bedouin “encroachment” on state lands. It may be that Bustan's opting not to continue on this media-focused route was also prompted by an expectation that public acknowledgment of Bedouin Arab's substantive citizenship rights would be less likely under the new government.

206 For example, the food scraps that might otherwise be thought of as “waste” are useful as fodder for goats and the raw materials of compost. Conversely, the function of feeding goats could be fulfilled by these food scraps, or a variety of flora species that are planted or allowed to grow within their reach. For foundational texts on the principles and practices of permaculture, see Mollison and Holmgren 1987; Mollison 1987; Bell 2004.

Permaculture had already been gaining popularity among small pockets of Jewish Israelis. These enthusiasts tended to use permaculture as part of an apolitical approach to bringing more environmentally sound practices into their communities, but Bustan leaders aimed to apply permaculture's analytic and practical tools directly to politically vexed socio-environmental challenges. They hoped these tools would help Negev residents, and Bedouin Arab residents of unrecognized villages in particular, to create better lives by narrowing the large gap in living standards between Jews and Bedouins (as well as between residents in the Negev and in Israel's center and north) without creating the longterm problems they identified in traditional development (e.g., pollution, over-consumption, and disconnected communities).

With its first three-month-long class, Bustan hoped to begin fostering a group of permaculture experts in the Negev who would eventually catalyze further socio-environmental projects independently of Bustan. During the class, Bustan planned to raise money and help students investigate potential sites for “model 'green' projects” within Bedouin communities “that can be replicated throughout the region.”²⁰⁷ These projects would constitute phase two of the permaculture initiative, which the students would carry out individually, with supervision from the course instructors. Engaged as a part-time, volunteer staff member, my main duty with Bustan was to coordinate this permaculture initiative. I participated in staff meetings where we established the goals of the course and the strategy for recruiting funding and participants, met with the three co-instructors as they designed the class and drew up a budget, drafted and edited advertisements and a newsletter article, strategized with the community organizer who recruited participants, gathered materials and prepared the class space, and eventually, participated in and observed classes and workshops with the students.

Beginning in April of 2008, the class gathered each Tuesday night in the Green Center. Guided by one of the three co-instructors who travelled by train from the north of Israel, we listened to explanations of the complex ecology of trees, permaculture's planning system of zones and sectors, and chemical-free solutions to household needs such as cleaning and pest control. We discussed the consumption of energy and material

²⁰⁷ These were not envisioned as models of the micro-ordered sort Scott (1998:41) describes among thwarted but dogged high modernists, but rather, inspirational models built from the ground up, as Gibson-Graham (2006) describe.

goods in our homes and did group exercises in household design. And we gathered in the garden to practice close observation, dig more efficient irrigation channels, and try our hands at several green building techniques. All the class participants were adults with busy lives of work and family, and though a core group of participants arrived regularly, class attendance and completion of homework exercises never reached a level of consistency that the instructors had hoped for. Core participants included four Bedouin Arab men, two Bedouin Arab women, and three Jewish women, and an additional six participants attended classes with less regularity. A large portion of these participants were also students in architecture at a local college, as one man had become interested in the Bustan course and then spread word to his classmates. Most attendees took part energetically in discussions and practicums.



Image 25: Learning of environmental interconnections in Bustan's Permaculture Course.

Through these courses, students participated personally in practices that challenged their prior understandings of social and ecological boundaries. Course instructors modeled the practices and aesthetic sensibilities of *bricolage*, and through exercises ranging from thought experiments to bench-building, they engaged students in *bricolage*, as well. Students reacted with varying levels of enthusiasm or reluctance. Most were comfortable with and adept in physical practices of *bricolage*, for example, in re-appropriating second-hand materials to build a compost bin or a sand-sifter. However,

the particular environmental discourses and ideology of knowledge proposed by Bustan through this course proved to be more unfamiliar, and even threatening to some. To understand these classes as part of Bustan's overall sociopolitical project, it is important to examine both the content of the permaculture material taught, and the embodied practices in which students participated. First, I discuss some of the ways in which a particular discourse—that of progress through tradition—was cultivated through the class. Next, I turn to the course's fostering of a particular way of knowing and being.

Progress through Tradition

One Tuesday evening in June, an instructor, Talia, began the class by discussing “green building.” We viewed slides showing several examples of architecture from around the world, and Talia challenged students to explain what makes them green. After some discussion, she suggested that green building is not a style that we can necessarily see with our eyes, but rather an approach to building that may look either “conventional” or “alternative.” She explained that “green design” certification schemes, such as the internationally recognized LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) system, help to make this green process visible and create market demand for “alternative” building techniques that may initially be more expensive but save in energy and other environmental resources in the longterm.

Much of this was already familiar material for the class participants who were also studying architecture, but Talia then brought Bedouins into this discussion of environmental leadership. Today's “alternative building” draws from the principles common to all “traditional building,” she told the class, “which never brought materials from far away.” Talia then used the Bedouin tent as a prime example of traditional building, which relied on that which was available locally—goat and camel hair—rather than transporting special building materials. Today, we have been caught up in ideas of progress that push us constantly to seek out the new and different, she lamented, and this notion of progress has brought us problems such as pollution and global warming. While Talia described certification systems like LEED as providing international legitimacy for environmentally sound building techniques, she cast traditional builders such as Bedouins as the forerunners and inspiration for this complex and progressive

international system.

Talia's enlisting of Bedouin tent-making to represent tradition, but also to highlight the commonalities between such traditions and today's "alternative" or "green" techniques was just one example of a common practice within Bustan (and particularly within the permaculture class): promoting a discourse of the ecologically progressive Bedouin. For example, during an information night promoting the course to potential participants, a second instructor, Eitan, explained the concept of a carbon footprint and outlined some of the many efforts of environmentalists around the world to reduce our growing individual and collective carbon footprints. But, Eitan said, we could learn a great deal from traditional Bedouin practices. This began a discussion in which Bedouin Arab participants described the environmentally friendly practices of their grandparents. One participant explained how his grandmother used to make full use of every part of a slaughtered sheep and another discussed former practices of olive production that were more sustainable and less polluting than current methods. However, both lamented, these practices are extremely difficult to maintain today for families living in unrecognized villages and crowded towns. Striving for higher standards of living, yet denied full participation in planning their towns and villages, participants described a set of dilemmas in their communities. No specific solutions to these dilemmas were offered that night, but course instructors suggested that training in permaculture could help participants address them by combining "traditional Bedouin knowledge" with new materials and planning techniques.

This focus on Bedouin traditions was not always comfortable for participants. During an early meeting of the course, Hava, a third instructor, was explaining the importance of careful observation of both natural and cultural factors in applying permaculture planning to a new setting. She asked the class, "For example, what mistake could a planner who comes to plan a Bedouin area make if he doesn't know the Bedouin culture?" When Faris, a young Bedouin man who also worked frequently on projects with Bustan, began to respond, "let's say we're talking about a tent," he was immediately countered by another Bedouin man in the class. "No, we're not talking about a tent!" Samad declared, as a small chorus of other voices agreed. "We'll talk about a house, a stone house." A third Bedouin participant then referred to a such a house to respond to

the original question, suggesting that a kitchen must be separated from the living room so that women can work out of view of visitors.

Samad's objection to the tent example seemed to stem from his aversion to a pigeon-holing of Bedouin Arabs as traditional, not modern like other Israelis. This was not the first time that day that Faris had commented on Bedouin practices that are considered traditional and backwards by most Israelis. Earlier, when Hava described organic practices for raising poultry, Faris had called out excitedly that this was “*baladi*,” and the instructor readily agreed. Translated literally as indigenous or native, for my Arab-speaking interlocutors in the Naqab, *baladi* connoted “all-natural,” rustic, and traditional when it was applied to food. Later, Hava was introducing the importance of observation for planning, and the class was brainstorming aspects of a territory that needed to be considered before building on it (e.g., prevailing winds and plants indicating soil fertility or aridity, or the buildings of neighbors that might create windbreaks or alter a plot's sunny spots). Hava mentioned several methods Bedouins used to choose a location for their tents, and Faris began a longer discussion of traditional practices for citing and building a Bedouin tent. Throughout these comments, Faris spoke proudly of Bedouin traditions as wise and environmentally responsible. However, for participants like Samad, who were unfamiliar with Bustan's praiseful treatment of tradition but more accustomed to the derogatory references to Bedouin backwardness that were common in the Israeli public sphere, these frequent descriptions of Bedouin tradition could easily be interpreted as a threat to Bedouins' status as modern.

Some participants continued to display discomfort with Bustan's focus on tradition in its discourse of the ecologically progressive Bedouin. For instance, Samad and Bashir were quick to correct instructors or other participants if they spoke of past practices as if they were still common among Bedouin Arabs today. But other participants appreciated the course's emphasis on melding progress with tradition. When I spoke with Hiba, a Bedouin Arab young woman from the city of Rahat, five months after the class had finished, I asked her if any aspects of the course continued to be relevant to her daily life. She replied, “Today we live like we're trying to be developed, or modern....When I took this class, they told us that we must return to long ago (*min zamaan*). Life long ago was better.” She explained that life was better in terms of the

healthy food they ate, the way they made use of everything around them, rather than wasting, and their former protection of nature. Hiba likes the Bedouin lifestyle of living more simply, she confided as we sat in her well-appointed living room with the television on and sipping lemonade, but also enjoys the conveniences of hot showers, electricity, and television. “Maybe the best, what I'd like, is to put some pieces of that life together with the modern,” she said, giving the *tanur* as an example. She described a mud oven similar to the traditional *tanur* that she planned to build beside her house because it didn't require the use of expensive electricity. Hiba appreciated the new vocabulary she had learned from Bustan's discourse of the ecologically progressive Bedouin, and she described conversations she had had with friends in which she had used this vocabulary to share information from the permaculture class.

Bricolage Sensibilities

The lessons which the permaculture class sought to impart were not limited to cerebral interpretations and vocabulary, but encompassed a particular mode of engaging with the world. Classes fostered *bricolage*, in part, through the type of knowledge they encouraged. Permaculture design calls for an integration of the gradually accrued lessons of long-term interaction with a place and of universal lessons. These two ways of knowing correspond closely with what Scott (1998) identifies as the contrasting pair of *mētis* and *techne*. By integrating the two, permaculture planning attempts to avoid some of the follies Scott identifies in high modernism, such as its failed efforts to fix, simplify, and regulate vast places and groups according to universal principles. By emphasizing *mētis*, but also recognizing a place for *techne*, permaculture planning attempts to provide people who have not grown into and gradually learned the emplaced lessons of *mētis* with the tools to more quickly acquire this local and practical knowledge.

Full-bodied learning was an important part of this *bricolage* approach to knowledge. During one class in May, after a lecture in the Green Center, the group stepped outside to the garden for a lesson on building with cob, which is a mixture of sand, soil, water, and straw. The participants decided together to build a platform for the wooden bench seat that a Bustan volunteer had begun constructing. To begin, we needed to determine the ideal ratio of sand and soil. Because grain size and moisture content

vary from place to place, this ratio must be determined at each building site. In a small bucket, two students mixed sand, soil, and water. Dipping her hand in the mud and grasping a glob, Talia then lifted her hand so the mud hung below. When the glob stayed stuck to her hand for ten seconds, the proportions of sand and dirt were right. We then used these proportions to mix a larger batch in a plastic bathtub found amongst a pile of abandoned articles at the edge of the garden. Bashir and Amir procured an old rabbit cage from this pile and used it to sift the sand and soil free of rocks, demonstrating the creative reappropriation of objects at hand that is valued in permaculture practice. Ra'ed and Adi mixed the sand and soil together and then added water.

Tal told the class that often, this mixing is done with bare feet. I volunteered, took off my sandals and rolled up my pants, and hopped in. A few of the students giggled at first as I, a grown woman, began mucking about in the mud with my bare feet, but others chided them, saying that of course it makes sense to use your feet. Talia reframed the practical benefits of this method in more technical terms; my bodyweight helped me put more force on the mud, with less effort, than if I were using just my hands. The rest of the class joked and suggested singing as my feet squelched through the mud. I continued treading while Adi and Amir scraped the sides of the bathtub and turned over new areas my feet weren't reaching. When this mixing was done, Talia picked up a ball of the mud and demonstrated another test. Squeezing and releasing the ball, one hears the squelching sound of water and the raspiness of sand. If you hear both, she told us, and one does not block out the other, the mud mixture is ready for the straw to be added. Our mixture passed this test, and classmates began tossing in handfuls of straw as I continued stomping. Talia then demonstrated another test, this time to determine if enough straw had been added. Taking a chunk of the mixture, she rolled a lumpy oval, held one end, and asked a student to hold the other end. If it is very difficult to pull the oval apart, the mixture is ready for building. Several pairs of students tried the test and pulled the lumps easily apart. Amir and Ra'ed added more straw as I continued treading. As more and more straw was added, the treading got harder. As I leaned into my steps, my shirt lifted a bit to reveal the small notebook I had tucked into my back pocket. Yael laughed and pointed to the notebook. "Ah," said Talia, "she thought she was going to come out and learn some theoretical things to write down. But she's learning more this way."

Indeed, this sort of embodied learning was a mainstay of the permaculture class. It required us to engage all our senses. Sound, touch, and sight were all needed to test for the proper consistency of the building mixture, just as at other times, the instructors asked students to use every sense from smell to sight in order to observe before drawing up plans for a plot. This style of learning fostered articulated knowledge (Choy 2005) that brought together *mētis* and *techne*. Rather than identifying an ideal blend of sand and soil that could be standardized and brought from elsewhere, Talia taught students practical experiments for creating a strong mixture from the materials they found in the field. Rather than reducing the complexity of a multi-variable situation, as in Taylorism, scientific agriculture, or other forms of regulation that rely primarily on *techne*, *mētis* makes the most of instability and contingency because it includes an intimate (and largely implicit) knowledge of how these variables interact (Scott 1998). Yet, the universally applicable techniques of observation and planning and standard benchmarks such as ideal soil pH and nitrogen levels also included in course material promoted the value of *techne*, as well.

As Li (2005:389) notes, “practical knowledge of the kind [Scott] identifies is at work everywhere, at all times,” even in the high modernism Scott describes. But in modernist ideologies, this *mētis* is hidden or discouraged. Furthermore, high modernist and other planning-oriented ideologies disparage the products of *mētis* or *bricolage*. A modernist aesthetic values sleek lines



Image 26: Permaculture participants learn to make a building material from recycled paper.

and unobtrusive seams, whereas *bricolage* produces projects that are often less polished, and with the outlines of original components still visible. In contrast, the permaculture class sought to raise the prestige of *mētis* as a mode of engaging with the world. And during visits to permaculture farms or slide viewings gardens and homes made through permaculture design, instructors praised the “organic” appearance of these products.

Bustan leaders hoped that this course would build a cohesive group of permaculture experts residing in the Negev who would undertake community projects and teach permaculture techniques to others. Permaculture had appealed to Bustan leaders for several reasons. First, it places sociality at the center of ecology, or in Bustan's vocabulary, supports solving the Negev's environmental problems in tandem with its social problems. This recognition of social ecology requires that any “development” undertaken be resident-centered, rather than encouraging the kind of development typical of the Negev's past (e.g., quarries, hazardous chemical facilities, and military testing grounds), which treated the Negev as a dumping ground for the more populous areas of central and northern Israel. Second, permaculture focuses on sustainability, and because sociality exists within ecology, this sustainability strives for the cultural and ecological well-being that has been central to Bustan's work since Devorah's founding of it. With the desert's aridity and marginal soil fertility, ecological sustainability was already a widely appreciated concept among Negev residents. Permaculture provided Bustan with a vocabulary, network of practitioners and sophisticated curriculum that could help adjust this existing environmental discourse to include cultural sustainability, too. Third, Bustan leaders believed permaculture's emphasis on making the most with what one has could empower Bedouin citizens of Israel by helping them leverage the resources they already had. This was not a matter of making do with less and being satisfied, Devorah clarified, but of helping those in Israeli society with the least to “make themselves strong and gain more resources.”

In addition, the permaculture curriculum fostered the aesthetic, practical, and intellectual sensibilities that have been implicit in much of Bustan's work. By prioritizing complexity and sustainability over visual order, and by striving for *mētis*, permaculture encourages a kind of personhood that resembles Bustan leaders' depiction of a person who attends to long-term goals and is comfortable with the mess and improvisation of a politics of possibility. And finally, as permaculture had already been accepted as a innovative environmental model by international environmental activists, it had cachet within Israel. Bustan members could draw from permaculture's already robust and widely accepted body of environmental discourses in their efforts to improve Israeli environmental discourses.

Because of attendance and funding problems, Bustan and the course instructors modified their original goals by the end of the course. Rather than completing community projects on the ground, students worked in teams to design, but not complete, a permaculture refurbishment of their own homes. At the final course meeting and graduation dinner, students presented these plans to demonstrate their knowledge of the course material, but no community projects had been initiated. Bustan had offered fund-matching for students who raised part of the costs for a final project, but students were unwilling or unable to raise these funds. Several students told me later that they were disappointed Bustan had not done more to make the projects happen, and Bustan staff members were frustrated that class participants had not shown more “initiative.”

If one were to evaluate Bustan's permaculture course based on the originally stated objectives, it might be considered unsuccessful. Students of the course did not complete permaculture projects in Bedouin communities, nor have they taken a visible leadership role in furthering a permaculture movement in the Negev. Participants' comments during and after the course illuminate the limitations that obstructed Bustan from the practical realization of these original goals. Permaculture practices entail long-term residence and investment in a place, and great initial labor and capital are needed to build homes and gardens that would eventually return that investment. But many Negev residents, especially those whom Bustan most wished to reach—residents of unrecognized villages—do not possess secure, long-term ties to land. Further, the sensibilities of permaculture were difficult for some participants to embrace. When visiting practicing permaculture farms or viewing slides, for example, some class members contradicted instructors by objecting to their cobbled together and eclectic appearance. And for architecture students trained in conventional methods of planning that began with the blank slate of a computer screen or piece of paper, permaculture's approach of slow observation and incorporation into landscapes was intriguing but difficult to fully adopt.

However, the course did take place. And for seven months, it served as a site for fostering new possibilities of interaction—between Jews and Arabs and between people and their landscapes. The course fostered new associations for existing environmental discourses, namely an approach to progress that incorporates tradition, and an

understanding of Bedouin Arabs as environmental stewards, rather than hazards. Some participants found this association troublingly anachronistic, like Samad as he resisted consistent association of Bedouins with tents. Although embracing Bedouin traditions as valuable and progressive, this image of the ecological Bedouin risks alienating contemporary Bedouin Arabs by seeming to value only Bedouin practices that have largely been lost. Others, like Hiba, appreciated these associations and discussed them with friends outside the class. Course participants had put something of themselves into the boundary challenging practices of the course, and they had experienced a comfortably interacting group of Jews and Arabs. In *bricolage* fashion, Bustan leaders treated the original goals as a sketch of aspirations, rather than a fixed plan, accepting the benefits that came from participation in a politics of possibility and the *bricoleur* subjectivities it fostered.

Conclusion

Socio-environmental change of the type toward which Bustan strives takes time, and even if this research covered a long enough stretch of time to record such change, the causes could not be simplified enough to identify the “effectiveness” of one NGO. Rather, this chapter has investigated the micro-practices of Bustan as one group of discursive *bricoleurs*, fostering new possibilities made of re-appropriated pieces.

Bustan has engaged in a politics of possibility, struggling along the way, sometimes stumbling, and adjusting course. There are significant limitations to their *bricolage* activism, imposed by dominant environmental discourses and a well-entrenched oppositional frame of Jewish-Arab social relations. Activists cannot simply re-appropriate terms, concepts, and materials at will and choose freely how to deconstruct and recombine them. To reach a wide audience with the CPP, for example, Bustan leaders used particular subgroups—children and military servicemen—to stand in for all Bedouin Arabs because they thought these would be sympathetically received by an imagined Israeli public. Other elements that are equally present among Bedouin Arab communities, such as Islamic faith, polygamy, or families with many children were not available for re-appropriation in these calls for substantive citizenship because such elements possess dominant connotations of threat (demographic and existential) to Israel

as a Jewish state.

The material realities of mobility and insecure land rights intervened in Bustan's efforts through the permaculture class to cultivate longterm relationships between people and particular landscapes. Several Jewish residents living in wealthy neighborhoods of Omer declined to implement the permaculture redesigns of their homes because they did not want to risk lowering the resale value of their houses if and when they decided to move. Bedouin Arab residents of unrecognized villages did not have the option of securing longterm land tenure and investing in permaculture projects that might not reap benefits for several years.

Yet, aware of these limitations, Bustan members engaged in a politics of possibility, simultaneously undertaking several of the phases Gibson-Graham (2006) identify. They worked to deconstruct the hegemony of land conflict by highlighting the binary oppositions that enframe social relations in the Negev and make conflict over land seem inevitable. Operating in a pessimistic atmosphere in which many residents responded to my questions about resolving land conflict with statement such as “I think it's not possible,” this deconstruction work is necessary for Bustan's goals. Negev Unplugged Tours peopled the desert landscapes that are typically displayed to tourists as wilderness landscapes, and they asserted the integral place of land in social relations. The CPP highlighted the real consequences of political frames that divide Jews from Bedouins, cutting sick children off from adequate healthcare because of their position on the “wrong” side of this division. The permaculture class deconstructed binaries of Jew versus Bedouin and progress versus tradition by casting Bedouin traditions as a common heritage from which all desert residents could draw in fashioning sustainable futures.

Bustan's activism also proposed a new language of environment, justice, and progress that facilitated this illumination of binary frames and would facilitate the envisioning of new socio-political possibilities. This language was not developed through the invention of new terms, but by re-appropriating existing language and creating new combinations and adding connotations. The ecologically progressive Bedouin combines a discourse of redemption through nature, which has been common to Zionist and European enlightenment movements, with a discourse of Bedouins as part of nature and environmentalist discourses of stewardship. Multicultural citizenship draws

on notions of Israel as the representative democracy of the Middle East and the multiculturalism valued (if not fully achieved) among Jewish Israelis of multiple heritages, and applies it to Jews and Arabs. Discussions and lessons in sustainability address social sustainability as being equally important as and entwined with ecological sustainability. If environments are not cared for, Bustan argues, the people and cultural practices attached to these environments cannot be sustained. Likewise, a community pushed to live on the margins of society and without acknowledged land rights will have difficulty practicing environmental sustainability.

This focus on the micro-practices of activism demonstrates the shaping of discourses, not simply on a grand scale of building towns or knocking down houses, but also on the intimate scale of personhood. Bustan's activism relied not simply on rhetorical persuasion, but on fostering particular behaviors, thoughts, and attitudes and discouraging others. As Gibson-Graham suggest, to enable a politics of possibility, “we need to foster a 'love of the world,' as Arendt says, rather than masterful knowing, or melancholy or moralistic detachment” (2006:6). Particularly through the longer and more personal project of the permaculture class, Bustan cultivated subjectivities that would help people thrive as multicultural citizens in multicultural landscapes. This included comfort with Jewish-Bedouin cooperation and a sense of physical and emotional involvement with Negev landscapes. It also meant not only using *bricolage*, but becoming comfortable with its contingency and unpredictability and cultivating an aesthetic esteem for the motley collections, irregularity, and often unpolished facades of its products. This comfort with *bricolage* entailed appreciating *mētis* as a form of knowledge with authoritative weight to match *techne* and be combined with it.

The practical building of socially and ecologically sustainable communities has proven to be the most challenging phase of a politics of possibility for Bustan. They made small attempts, such as training permaculture leaders to undertake such projects, cooperating to build the straw-and-mud medical clinic in Wadi al-Na‘am, and conducting numerous smaller workshops and garden-planting activities. However, this stage remained largely aspirational, perhaps requiring a more robust realization of the other three phases. Following the end of my fieldwork period, Bustan again adjusted its plans and decided to refocus its efforts in a single village to create “a model for an

environmentally friendly community center in the Bedouin community of Qasr al-Sir.” As Ra'ed told me excitedly, this village, which was recently granted provisional governmental recognition as part of the Abu Basma Regional Council but has not yet seen substantive changes in infrastructure, seemed to be an ideal site for the material realization of social and environmental sustainability. Ra'ed had spoken with village leaders and reported that between villagers' historical and emotional attachment to the landscapes of Qasr al-Sir and the new promise of permanence offered by recognition, the community was eager to work with Bustan in creating an “eco-village.”

Though not perfectly matching its own goals, Bustan's activism engages a politics of possibilities in the face of abundant cause for pessimism. In the political economy of Israeli NGOs, this focus and their operation on a small scale, entails benefits and challenges. Facing vested interests among political leaders to maintain a status quo of Jewish-Arab separation, Zionist territorialism, and simmering conflict, small NGOs may be better able to challenge conventions because they escape close scrutiny. Yet, to make a difference on a wider scale, such groups also strive to reach a broad public audience, and in so doing, they often tailor their campaigns and curtail possibilities to match dominant discourses.

There is a shade of insurgence in this bricolage, but Bustan, like the insurgent planters and builders in unrecognized villages, was not simply resisting “the State” or opposing Israeli society. Rather, on behalf of all Jewish and Bedouin Arab residents of the Negev, they were selectively invoking and seeking admission to these powerful imagined communities. While their actions challenge the legitimacy of the discriminatory practices that favor Jewish residents over Bedouin Arabs, they also help to construct “the State” (Rabinow 2002), resisting through engaging with state power. In calling out to it for recognition, they also affirm its legitimacy. However, Bustan participants are hailing a particular mode of governance, resisting operations of discipline, but calling for more state involvement in the lives of Negev residents through pastoral care (Foucault 1991).

Conclusion

The afternoon was wearing on, and Ahmed Abu Assa's son and daughter were running into the salon more frequently to ask their father questions and request pocket money for treats from the corner store. Ahmed and I had been talking for about an hour, seated on a bright yellow and green sofa in his mother's house. Ahmed was an insightful man who shared my interest in anthropology, and I always enjoyed hearing his analyses of social interactions. We had discussed Ahmed's childhood life in an unrecognized village and the family's move to 'Ayn al-'Azim, environmentalism in Israel, and his views on land conflict in the Negev. His experiences as a teacher in several nearby schools had directed much of our conversation to inter-generational issues among Naqab Arabs and the educational challenges he had encountered.

As we wrapped up this interview, I asked him what, when I return to the United States to write about my research, "is the most important thing that people there need to learn about the situation here?" He paused for a pensive moment and replied, "It's hard, and I'll tell you why. When you have a person who is sick all over, wherever you touch, it hurts." Ahmed went on to list problems facing Negev Bedouins in education, economics, politics, and residential space, all of which seem broad and overwhelming. But, he continued,

the biggest problem, that needs a solution first, is the land problem with the State, and building [of homes]. That's the first problem. Destroying houses, and... Anyone who doesn't have land, there is no stability, no stable people—I mean, I don't know, if I build a house and I don't know if I'll be able to live on our land—[then] there's nothing else. If there isn't stability, there is no education. There aren't sound economics. There's not trust. There are always conflicts.

Ahmed then gave an example of how a lack of stability in land rights brews conflict. He cited the case of the Tarabin al-Sana tribe of Bedouin Arabs living in an unrecognized village immediately next to Omer, one of Israel's wealthiest Jewish towns. Many Omer residents, most vocally led by their mayor, accused the Tarabin of constant thievery and depicted them as a malicious, criminal group. But, explained Ahmed, "when a person

lives in poverty, and he doesn't have the possibilities to live, and he sees his neighbor who is only a couple hundred meters away living the sweetest life, and even on the land that belongs to him; that's what causes [social] problems.” The Tarabin had already been relocated several times by the government to different areas within what they claimed as their tribal lands, and a contentious eviction driven by the mayor of Omer was underway in 2009.

“That's the big problem today in my opinion,” Ahmed concluded, “the land problem. There are many other problems that are also big, but they must come at a later stage.” Ahmed's diagnosis of the problem resembled another discussion that I had two months later: the conversation with Oren, recounted in the introduction, in which he contrasted Jewish and Bedouin settlements in the Negev. Drawing from his experience as a former Bedouin Authority administrator, as well as many years of residence on his Negev kibbutz, Oren described the region-wide problem of inequality between Bedouin Arabs and Jews. Both Ahmed and Oren pointed to stark political and economic disparities responsible for social rifts between Jewish and Bedouin communities, and both believed in the power of education to enrich lives and improve living standards. However, Oren pointed to formal education and economic development as core solutions and asserted that other problems such as land disputes would resolve themselves along the way, whereas Ahmed reversed the diagnosis. He pointed to instability of land rights as the main problem in need of a solution. Other domains of life cannot be meaningfully improved, he suggested, if the instability of unrecognized land claims is not first remedied.

Though these two accounts align in many respects, their disagreement over an underlying cause is important. Descriptions of the conflict such as that offered by Oren rest on the assumption that relationships to land can be divided into ties based on land's “real” material importance, on the one hand, and supposedly less critical emotional or ideological attachments, on the other hand. This has been the most common approach of governmental interventions. However, the lived experiences of residents belie such an ideological-material split. Negev residents, both Jewish and Bedouin, have demonstrated that in addition to being of economic use, their ties to landscapes fulfill emotional, ethical, and legal needs and support collective, cultural identities. Furthermore, these

multiple ties forged by Bedouin Arab and Jewish residents are important beyond their particular lived experiences, as they feed and draw from flows of capital, rhetoric, and ideology extending far beyond the Negev.

This dissertation is about the socio-environmental relations of the Negev, and one of its main goals has been to clarify the cacophony of claims and counter-claims in this particular conflict zone. I have explored how struggles over land are also about the belonging and exclusion of nation-building, differential structures of governance, and the establishment of economic privileges. The study has provided insights into how lines of opposition between Jews and Arabs have come to seem so inevitable in Israel, even natural. And I have examined the efforts of people engaged in the difficult work of softening these lines of conflict.

But the themes explored in these Negev hills and towns also resonate across other contexts of socio-environmental conflict. In North America, denial of land rights recognition has impinged on Native groups' possibilities of communal life, on their cultural and religious practices, and on the environmental quality of the landscapes within which many live and die (Kosek 2006; Clifford 1988; Nadasdy 2002). In Zimbabwe, agrarian livelihoods, property ownership, and structures of local and national governance continue to be shaped by the racialized oppositions drawn during the colonial era to demarcate people and places (Moore 2005). In Egypt, enframing processes that privileged a particular notion of planned and regimented progress facilitated the acutely unequal distribution of land and wealth in Egyptian society during the colonial era and beyond (Mitchell 2002), with massive sociopolitical repercussions today. In these and countless other areas of the world, the reverberations of which Ahmed spoke, from unstable land rights to many other realms of life, have also caused deep social strife. In these places, too, struggles over land access and control have been both the means and the outcomes of drawing exclusionary social divisions between groups. This dissertation offers tools for understanding such conflicts by attending holistically to environmental discourses that frame social relations between and amongst landscapes and people.

Naturalizing Conflict

Multi-sited research has been crucial for this approach to conflict study. Both

physically during fieldwork, and analytically in this text, I have traveled back and forth across boundaries in an effort to examine them from multiple angles. By tracing environmental discourses across the typically separate domains of unrecognized villages and single-family farmsteads, planned towns for Jews and Bedouin Arabs, Knesset hearings, news media, and activist projects, this dissertation has shown the pervasiveness of binary enframing. Consistent oppositions between Jews and Arabs, culture and nature, and progress and tradition have become nested in a single division that (seems to) give order and clarity to the world. These discursive binaries guide how Negev residents think, talk, interact with one another, build homes, govern, and are governed. These same oppositional discourses also place heavy blinders on how people understand the world, limiting the possibilities they can imagine for other, less conflictive social and environmental relations.

Examination across time reveals these discursive fields to be socially constructed, yet materially consequential. In Israel, a dual society paradigm formed gradually within the Zionist movement, from ambivalent understandings of Jewish-Arab relations and shared heritage in the early 1900s to a more absolute sense of separation in recent decades. As the Israeli state has been built, these lines of opposition have been carved into the material environment. Particular environmental discourses have varied over time, such as the primacy of agricultural labor in redeeming land and people that once dominated Israeli society but has more recently been in decline. But basic binary divisions have remained consistent for decades. For example, in contemporary Israel, aside from a handful of “mixed” cities (and even these tend to be divided at the neighborhood level), residential space in Israel is strictly segregated.

This dissertation also contributes to understandings of socio-environmental conflict by demonstrating the operations of power in landscapes. It does so by combining a genealogical investigation of discourse (Foucault 1990) with attention to the material, phenomenological experiences of dwelling in landscapes (Ingold 2000). This approach reveals taskscapes to be full of institutional, extralocal actors. In the Negev, these extralocal actors include governmental agencies like the ILA, transnational organizations like the JNF, and economic networks like the international flower market. These institutions shift and morph through different historical moments, such as, for example,

with the change from centralized Zionist institutions to de-centered, neoliberal guidance. It is through these changing extralocal actors that large-scale historical and structural factors come to matter for people dwelling in landscapes. For example, for Ephram, the decision to continue farming roses in Dganim was an ethical and emotional reaction to the decline of Labor Zionism as much as a financial calculation. Governmental agencies played a powerful and shifting role in Dganim's taskscapes, and Ephram, in reacting to these interventions, participated in these taskscapes, as well. Attending to these extralocal actors allows analysts employing a dwelling perspective to better observe the operations of power and large scale historical changes in local landscapes. This puts a “sense of historical particularity” (Bender 1998:37) into a dwelling perspective. This attention to historical moment is necessary for placing the sensual individual into the context of sociopolitical relations that so shape an individual's experience of being-in-the-world.

With this theoretical intervention, a dwelling perspective becomes useful for complex landscapes of conflict and rapidly changing global economic and political circumstances. Dwelling has been discussed most often in relation to rural, seemingly isolated places and groups of people (Ingold 2000; Cloke and Jones 2001; Gray 1999; Roth 2009). As such, the concept is often depicted as a symbiotic relationship with other elements of nature practiced by idealized hunter-gatherer tribes or peasant farmers (Bender 1998). However, dwelling need not be harmonious or rural. We all engage with (build and are built by) the landscapes within which we live.

As this examination of the Negev highlights, dwelling can involve domination and exclusion. Most starkly, different forms of governance are applied to different places to create striated landscapes of power, such as the “administering” of a *moshav olim*, the more indirect assistance through retroactive endorsement of single-family farms, or the harsh disciplining of unrecognized villages. But sociopolitical divisions are drawn by institutional actors and local residents alike, as dwelling practices involve determining who belongs in a landscape and who does not. For example, operating within the Negev's oppositional discursive field, the neighborhood boys in ‘Ayn al-‘Azm and the rental application reviewing committee in Dganim both reinforced familiar social boundaries and defended territory. Differentiated modes of governance such as these

become part of a landscape. By association, the groups of people living there become legal or illegal, independent and progressive or backward, helping to naturalize the divisions used to justify differential governance in the first place. These sociopolitical lines of demarcation create different possibilities of mobility and stability for differently marked residents. As Ahmed observed, such instability provokes deep-seeded and broad-reaching social conflict.

It is largely through the mechanism of recognition and non-recognition that these governmental differentiations are made. Building on other studies demonstrating the dilemmas of recognition (e.g., Povinelli 2002; Clifford 1988; Cattelino 2010), this research shows the intertwining of the legal, the cultural, and the social, such that recognition of one sort depends upon recognition of the others. The vulnerabilities imposed by non-recognition resound across these realms, holding consequences for individuals, groups, and land rights and placing Bedouin Arabs in a series of double binds (Fortun 2001). Lacking legal or social recognition of their cultural rights, Bedouin Arabs' land-use and other practices are deemed illegitimate, and they are unable to attain legal recognition of land tenure (as did single-family farmstead owners, for instance). Without recognition of land rights, those living in unrecognized villages cannot gain recognition as law-abiding citizens and full members of society. Governmental promises of recognition are used to pressure Bedouin residents to accommodate themselves to Israel's nation-building plans. However, even those who follow state promptings and move to recognized townships, relinquishing land rights, find that they do not gain inclusion in Israeli society. Abiding the law is not enough. This dissertation's consideration of power relations and dwelling practices reveals how recognition and non-recognition matter for different residents' abilities to shape landscapes according to their priorities.

Through selective recognition, the co-participation of local and extralocal actors in taskscapes, and the underlying power of binary discourses to enframe social relations, lines of conflict and structures of inequality are being entrenched in Israeli society. This study of the Negev has shown conflicts, like tumultuous social dramas for Victor Turner (1957), to be not isolated events disrupting social life, but part of the ongoing process by which society constantly renews itself. The environmental discourses and underlying binaries that steer land conflict have shaped both the narratives and institutions of the

Zionist movement and those voices and efforts raised against this movement. Naqab counter narratives, insurgent plantings, and environmental justice activist campaigns have all been constrained by these dominant discourses.

Softening Boundaries

Yet, this study does more than document the hardening of opposition lines. These binaries are not simply given, *a priori* elements of social life. They were and continue to be constructed, and some Negev residents are trying to alter them. As such, I have explored possibilities for change in the status quo of simmering conflict and repressive inequalities. This study suggests that despite (or perhaps because of) the central role of state institutions in shaping this conflict, those interested in conflict resolution must look outside these institutions. Though policy changes, the drafting of new legislation, or the transfer of property could dramatically improve the status of subordinate groups in Israel, these arenas may well be too fixed within discursive binaries for meaningful change in power hierarchies to occur there.

Alternatively, change initiated through a politics of the small scale may be more likely. Bustan operates deliberately at a local scale, attempting to avoid the authoritarian power relations of engineering and large-scale social planning (Harvey 1996a; Scott 1998). Instead, the group attempts to foster interpersonal connections that might bridge binary oppositions and counter inequalities based on valued and less valued forms of progress and modes of knowledge.

Because these efforts occur within discursive fields, and its participants, too, dwell in the Negev's segregated landscapes, they do not escape binary enframing. At times, Bustan's projects re-inscribed the dualisms they wished to counteract, and at times projects floundered because of the material force of Arab-Jewish opposition in the lives of those people their projects wished to reach (such as the lack of permanence that would enable unrecognized village residents to reap the rewards of permaculture projects). However, by engaging in a politics of possibility (Gibson-Graham 2006) that involves social critique and the development of a critical language of socio-environmental relations, participants in social activism are identifying the causes and consequences of these discursive divisions and imagining alternatives.

This is the change not of radical revolutions, but of incremental modification through unexpected juxtapositions of and small additions to dominant discourses. These are attempts to soften boundaries, not tear them apart. By striving to unsettle binary oppositions between nature and culture, tradition and progress, Arab and Jew, Bustan's projects seek not to erase difference but to multiply it and open possibilities for exchange and learning across what are currently rigid social boundaries in the Negev. As Ardener notes in his essay on "remote areas," showing the actual processes creating remoteness can help to peel back the "comforting drifting layers of binary oppositions: development/underdevelopment, traditional/modern, centre/periphery" (1989:216) that obscure social relations. Remoteness has played an important role in the Negev's land conflict—both in the vacillating prioritization and neglect its residents have faced within Israeli society as it has alternated between frontier and periphery and in the remoteness constructed between fellow Negev residents. These efforts to soften boundaries are also efforts to remove the "drifting layers of binary oppositions" that euphemize exclusion as remoteness and perpetuate social hierarchies.

Social activism is, in many ways, a privileged practice. For those able to take part, it facilitates access to transnational networks of funding, political backing, and expertise. As a collective endeavor, it can also cultivate affective stances and new languages that help reveal the taken-for-granted and even naturalized elements of one's social world (Gibson-Graham 2006). Organized activism such as Bustan's is also part of a larger social context of such practices, mutually learning from efforts outside their own campaigns in direct and indirect ways and nurturing (and sometimes competing with) these outside efforts.

By researching across social realms and traveling through relationships linked to NGO work, this study demonstrates the similarities and direct interconnections between Bustan's projects, 'Ayn al-'Azm's culture workers and those unrecognized village residents engaging NGO networks. This approach goes beyond studying "people whom the social movement would like to mobilize" as a supplement to those already actively committed to a cause in order to understand how social movements build, as some researchers have called for (Burdick 1995:368). It opens analysis to practices of resistance or social change not formulated as activism.

Many Negev residents are working out their own life projects in association with activist groups. For example, Sarah constructed her herbal garden and Jabber built the “eco-mosque” through financial support and volunteer labor coordinated by Bustan. These and other collaborations between residents and organized activist groups contain their own double binds, but many residents have sought them out for the expansion of resources they provide. Conversely, Bustan leaders sought to learn from some of the practices of making-do and insurgency that they observed in townships and unrecognized villages, such as the use of animal waste as bio-fuel or healing through herbal medicine. Bustan projects drew upon these practices in their discursive bricolage, framing them as modern traditions of desert living worth emulating, and promoted them to both Arab and Jewish residents.

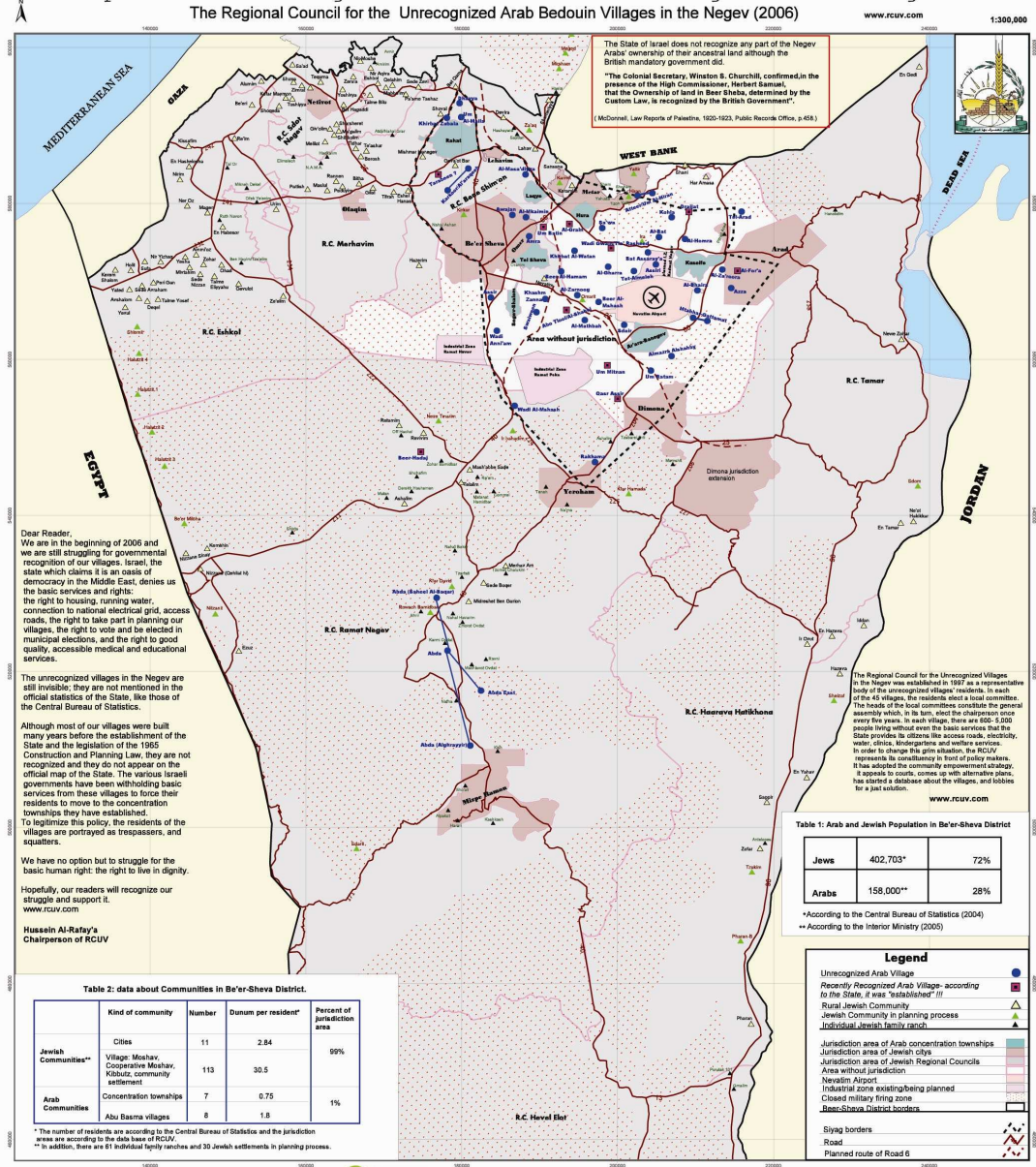
Other links among disparate efforts to challenge dominant discourses are less direct. In terms of process, the piecemeal, experimental, ever-evolving methods of *bricolage* resemble other practices among Negev residents that I have described as “making do” (de Certeau 1984), “persistence through resistance” (Jolly 1992), *sumud* (steadfastness), insurgent building and planting, and *mētis*. In their own ways, many of these residents are also participating in efforts to soften social divisions. Bedouin residents of ‘Ayn al-‘Azm, like Mufid with his mud-and-tire house, were engaged in *bricolage* as they experimented with new possibilities for improving their lives within the uncomfortable structures imposed on their landscapes by state planning. Sarah, with her desert botanicals venture of education, marketing, and heritage tourism, was a more change-oriented culture worker. She, too, engaged in the resourceful re-appropriation and retrospective building typical of *bricolage*.

Some residents also engaged in discursive *bricolage*. For example, through innovative juxtapositions, insurgent planters in Twayil Abu Jarwal creatively re-appropriated and added new connotations to existing symbols of farming, Bedouin tradition, and rootedness. In doing so, they worked to reposition themselves as landowners, producers, and citizens—as farmers who could “green the desert,” like other Israelis. In fact, *bricolage* is what many disadvantaged members of society do (even more so than privileged members) precisely because it makes something new out of a limited set of materials or choices.

In social contexts like Israel's, a politics of softening may, paradoxically, be harder to sustain and more radical than a seemingly more rebellious combative politics. Efforts to soften the binary oppositions between Jews and Arabs are far from superficial. As this study has shown, these oppositions firmly frame Negev social relations. Yet, such a politics faces critics arguing that any efforts not actively aimed at overthrowing a system are, in effect, working to sustain it. In addition, without strong ideological barriers of its own, such a politics risks losing its direction, sliding from the incremental softening of fundamental social divisions to incremental amelioration on a more superficial level. However, combative politics, in a social context where conflict is already so embedded in the norms of social relations, may not achieve its goals if it simply becomes part of the ongoing process by which Israeli society defines itself. In this sense, the effort to soften boundaries rather than eliminate an opponent is a more radical approach in such social contexts.

APPENDIX

Map of the Unrecognized Arab Bedouin Villages in the Negev The Regional Council for the Unrecognized Arab Bedouin Villages in the Negev (2006)



The State of Israel does not recognize any part of the Negev Arabs' ownership of their ancestral land although the British mandatory government did.
"The Colonial Secretary, Winston S. Churchill, confirmed in the presence of the High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel, that the Ownership of land in Beer Sheva, determined by the Custom Law, is recognized by the British Government".
(McDonnell, Law Reports of Palestine, 1920-1923, Public Records Office, p. 458.)

Dear Reader,
We are in the beginning of 2006 and we are still struggling for governmental recognition of our villages. Israel, the state which claims it is an oasis of democracy in the Middle East, denies us the basic services and rights: the right to housing, running water, connection to national electrical grid, access roads, the right to take part in planning our villages, the right to vote and be elected in municipal elections, and the right to good quality, accessible medical and educational services.

The unrecognized villages in the Negev are still invisible: they are not mentioned in the official statistics of the State, like those of the Central Bureau of Statistics.

Although most of our villages were built many years before the establishment of the State and the legislation of the 1955 Construction and Planning Law, they are not recognized and they do not appear on the official map of the State. The various Israeli governments have been withholding basic services from these villages to force their residents to move to the concentration townships they have established.

To legitimize this policy, the residents of the villages are portrayed as trespassers, and squatters.

We have no option but to struggle for the basic human right: the right to live in dignity.

Hopefully, our readers will recognize our struggle and support it.
www.rcuv.com

Hussain Al-Rafay's
Chairperson of RCUV

The Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev was established in 1997 as a representative body of the unrecognized villages' residents. In each of the 48 villages, the residents elect a local committee. The heads of the local committees constitute the general assembly which, in its turn, elects the chairperson once every five years. In each village, there are 600-5,000 people living without even the basic services that the State provides its citizens like access roads, electricity, water, clinics, kindergarten and welfare services. In order to change this grim situation, the RCUV represents its constituents in front of policy makers. It has adopted the community empowerment strategy. It speaks in courts, comes up with alternative plans, has started a database about the villages, and lobbies for a just solution.
www.rcuv.com

Table 1: Arab and Jewish Population in Be'er-Sheva District

Jews	402,703*	72%
Arabs	158,000**	28%

*According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2004)
**According to the Interior Ministry (2005)

Table 2: data about Communities in Be'er-Sheva District.

	Kind of community	Number	Dunum per resident*	Percent of jurisdiction area
Jewish Communities**	Cities	11	2.84	99%
	Village: Moshav, Cooperative Moshav, Kibbutz, community settlement	113	30.5	
	Concentration townships	7	0.75	
Arab Communities	Abu Basma villages	8	1.8	1%

* The number of residents are according to the Central Bureau of Statistics and the jurisdiction areas are according to the data base of RCUV.
** In addition, there are 61 individual family ranches and 30 Jewish settlements in planning process.

Legend

- Unrecognized Arab Village
- Recently Recognized Arab Village- according to the State, it was "established" !!!
- Rural Jewish Community
- Jewish Community in planning process
- Individual Jewish family ranch
- Jurisdiction area of Arab concentration townships
- Jurisdiction area of Jewish cities
- Jurisdiction area of Jewish Regional Councils
- Area without jurisdiction
- Negev Airport
- Industrial zone existing/being planned
- Closed military firing zone
- Beer-Sheva District borders
- Siyag borders
- Road
- Planned route of Road 6

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