

Bedouin identity study

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Introduction

This Bedouin identity study has been conducted in Israel from September 2017 to May 2018. Totally independent, it follows previous studies about Identity of Israel, Druze, Israeli Arabs.

Identity

-Another word is "personality".

Some anthropologists or sociologists speak of "the soul of a nation".

-It applies to what makes a person, a company, a country, specific, unique, distinct from others.

-It comes from "idem", and defines what stay permanent through changes and time.

-Identity is not only conceptual. It is a force.

It is not static and passive, it is dynamic and active.

It is faithful to the past, it boosts the present and conducts the future.

Study

-This study is non-academic, it is an operational one.

That means that it does not only describe the situation of the Bedouin identity in Israel but has an operational objective : to offer to the Bedouin community an objective representation of its present situation and an help and recommendation to improve it and to optimize it for the future.

-It is not quantitative, it is a qualitative study.

-it is based upon around 30 confidential, open interviews, internal and external to Bedouin community and to exams of articles, books, web site, films and videos, precedent studies.

It includes 4 successive phases: observation, interpretation, creation, application

1 - Observation

Characteristics

- from a total of 250 000 Israeli Bedouins, 170 000 in the South are living in 1 city, Arat, 6 in villages like Hura, 10 in villages being built, and 25 to 30 non recognized villages.
- North more developed than South,
- the average age is 14 years, related to 31 for the Israeli one, and 60% are under 20 years old,
- 83% of Bedouins were born after 1948,
- marriage, is at 23/25 for men and 18/22 for women,
- two main forces that characterized Bedouin life, religion and tradition,
- society in transition
- Bedouin language is a kind of Arabic slang, but not exactly the same in the North and in the South,
- strong connection to nature still existing
- Bedouins are and remain globally very tough people, as the necessity of desert life has historically enforces, with a perpetuation of the custom of killing is still the proof of it,
- community in big mutation,
- Bedouins are a component of the 4th Tribes, President Rivlin describes as constitutive of the Israeli society; Jewish, Israeli Arabs, Druze and Bedouins, the poorest one,
- In the Bedouin society, there are authentic Bedouins, and non-authentic ones, the fellashim, initially Arab farmers,
- representing 25% of the Negev population, Bedouins are most affected by misery,
- every Bayt (tent or house) represents a family and the connected families form an Aela (clan). All members of the same Aela consider each other of one blood (Dam) and within the Aela, unconditional loyalty rules. A number of kindred Aela form the Qabilah (tribe), the major family unit which serve as a major source of identity, psycho-social support and social status,
- the leaders of the Bayt and Aela form a council of elders, who is powerful but has not absolute authority,
- the Shaykh is the leader of a tribe,

- Negev Bedouins are by far Israel's most disadvantaged community in terms of per capita income, unemployment and poverty rates, level of education and nonexistent or substandard public infrastructure,
- they have the highest reproduction rate in Israel with families consisting of 6,5 children on average and a median age of 16,
- used to work in agriculture,
- the world of desert and of the Bedouin tribes feeds the Western imagination as an ungrateful but purifying environment, an elementary but integrated and independent way of life, for a rough society but preserving the values of pride, solidarity, hospitality, sense of honor and bravery.
- today, Bedouins are almost 3% of the population of Israel, but in the stark Negev desert, Bedouins make up 1/4 of residents,
- 66% of Bedouins live in recognized towns and villages, the Bedouins have a growth rate of 3,7%, making them the fastest growing demographic in Israel. 59% are under the age of 20

Education

- still weak, a new system being developed,
- in Arat, every year a new school is opened,
- primary schools are mixed boys and girls,
- language studies apply to Arabic, Hebrew and English,
- the difficulty when opening schools, is the lack of Bedouins teachers. The Arabs teachers coming are mostly women, around 25 years old, nor married, who marry Bedouins as second wife and stop teaching,
- students are often finishing their studies in foreign countries, such as Romania, for financial reasons,
- coming back to Bedouins society is very difficult, until conducting educated students to even change their name,
- girls go to University before to get married, they could not go afterward,
- barriers to university access, through difficulty to pass psychotechnique tests,
- after university, a woman has to be married with a choose man, preferably from the family;
- a special school has been created to educate and form the future Bedouin leaders, but it will take time until it will be efficiently operational,
- all indicators remain flat, at the lowest level, because of the depth of the gap between Bedouins and the others "Israeli tribes",
- the gap is linked to low level of teachers and the lack of good principals,
- Bedouin women students face many difficulties in the largely conservative, patriarchal society in which they grew up, opposed to the more open and liberal academic world where they study,
- a college education is the key to reducing income gaps and to create social mobility, for employment and for integration into Israeli society,
- just 850 Bedouins students were enrolled at institutes of higher education in 2016. However,

- the council has set the goal of increasing that number by 75% over the 5 next years, with a special emphasis on math, sciences, engineering, architecture, medicine and para medical professions,
- the key to Bedouin community for transformation and development is through superior education. It will prevent the high drop-out rate and the risky behaviors, it will teach young ones to become responsible, ethical, and committed citizens.
This process must begin in infancy, combating the gaps between Arabs and Jews that begins at birth and continues on through the lifecycle,
- the Bedouin community suffers from serious gap in education resulting from a weak education infrastructure. The high school drop-out rate is 35%, while fewer than 30% of students earn a full diploma. Worse yet, only 5% of the population is qualified to study at the university level,
- in 2014, only 30% of Bedouins completed the 12th grade and earned a matriculation certificate, compared with 46% of Israeli ARABS STUDENTS AND 46% OF Jewish students. Only 4,9% of Bedouin were studying in higher education institutions, as compared with 8,4% of all Israeli Arab citizens,
- there are 133 Bedouin schools in the Negev, 94 of which serve elementary school students, 67 serve middle school students and 47 serve high school students. Around 76000 students studied in the schools,

Problems

- land is the major problem. An ongoing dispute exists between the State and the Negev Bedouins,
- the Begin-Praxer Plan which tried to solve the problem is criticized by Bedouin and Civil Rights organizations who claim it violates Bedouins rights, and from right wing organizations that claim it is too lenient,
- transition from a stable agricultural type of life to an instable projection into modernity,
- polygamy still 26% of the population,
- polygamy is illegal and carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, but very few indictments were ever issued in practice. A estimated 30 to 40 percent of Bedouin families in the Negev are polygamous, and this number has been slowly but steadily rising,
- unstable situation because of the long lasting problem of land confiscation,
- 4 major factors: employment, security, agriculture, women,
- numerous obstacles to access to modernity: traditions, bad economic situation, family and tribe predominance in public organization and life,
- the Bedouins' demography makes that the population doubles every 7 years,
- violent society, linked to legal system, with "blood revenge", with in regard, not enough Israeli police involvement ,
- society in tension, with Israeli society, with Arabs and between themselves. The inside pressure is the strongest one,
- the Israeli government has no real strategic approach of Bedouins situation, it counts on

- police action plus economic development to get the Bedouin community to settle into the whole Israeli society,, which will not be sufficient to succeed,
- "honor" killings are a common practice in the Negev, regularly women "disappear",
- the growth of women going to university is more stimulated by the family economic need than by the recognition of their right to education and culture,
- in a sense, the Bedouins form a number of "nations", group of families united by common ancestry. For centuries these (nations and their leaders operated in the ecological and political shifting landscape. Borders, papers and politics are experienced as strange and it damaged the foundations of their society They are forced to adopt a new basis for identification with their "nations" and their leaders,
- confrontation between families is a long story, still going on. As an example, in Hura, the most modern Bedouin city, members of different families study in separate schools due to conflicts between them,
- the problem of the land still rots the relation Israel/Bedouins, due to strong frustration feeling,
- Bedouin in the unrecognized villages prefer not to move to towns designed by the Israeli government , because the air is cleaner there, summer has a meaning like all others seasons,
- In unrecognized villages, ones cannot have the water flowing, it has to be bought, quite a lot,
- Bedouins kids constitute only 1% of Israeli society, but they represent 23%of all children who died from accidents over the past years,
- Infant mortality rates in Bedouin society, 12 per 1000 instances, is more than three times higher than in Jewish society, and are in part attributed to congenital malformations related to high rates of marriages within family groups,

Culture

- part of the global Arabs community,
 - specific life style attached to living in the desert,
 - It is the Arabic term "el-badya", the steppe, which has given its name to its inhabitants, the Bedouins, "el-badou",
 - it is no more a culture of poor people,
 - Bedouins think naturally short term, in opposition to Israelis mentality, oriented long term,
 - Bedouins stay Bedouins, with their own laws, with intermarriages,
 - tradition related to parents life, with elders' authority that tolerates no discussion, and limits women liberty,
 - Bedouin lifestyle is a community life,
 - mentality still determined by the different tribes,
 - collective style of life that predominates on individual behavior,
 - cultural heritage from previous life in the desert, including external factors like food and clothing, and internal components such as respect, spirituality, solidarity,
 - violence is still an active component of Bedouin life particularly concerning the relationship men/women,
 - living in desert has favored the creation of a very beautiful Bedouin poetry of oral tradition, which is no more created since the transition to a writing culture has broken its source,
 - preservation of its culture is difficult because of growing modernization of Bedouin community, which creates tensions internally,
 - culture is linked to agricultural economy and lifestyle, proximity of nature, natural medicine, and belonging to a tribe, and to the family,
 - desert life heritage gives tolerance, hospitality,
 - Bedouin notion of time is particular, slow as compared to the speed of modern life,
 - the project of development of tourism within the Bedouins community, will favor the recognition of the main Bedouin cultural characteristics,
 - Bedouins do not exalt their historical primitive way of life, but their tradition, their roots, such as high social and moral values, bravery, generosity, solidarity, hospitality, elements of honor in the Mediterranean meaning of the term,
 - the tribal traditions don't subsist only in villages, it concerns every social class,
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- Bedouins live for centuries in harmony with nature in one of the least forgiving environments on earth and whose deep and abiding love for the land is reflected in their music, traditions and stories,

History

- the Bedouins nomadism was mainly conditioned by two factors: the pastoral economy and the tribal social structure,
- Bedouins arrived to the Negev around 1800. They were a semi-nomadic society that had been through a process of sedentarization since the Ottoman rule of the region. The administration of the British mandate did not provide a legal framework to justify and preserve land ownership. Israel land policy was adapted to a large extent from the Ottoman land regulation of 1858 as the only preceding legal framework. This enabled Israel to nationalize most of the Negev lands using the state land regulation of 1969,
- Bedouins spent in barely thirty years from a traditional, almost autarkic way of life to an autarkic lifestyle
- stuck between the temptations of consumption and a very low standard of living, some of the Bedouins have embarked on traffic of all kinds. The low presence of municipal services, and in particular the virtual absence of police, facilitated crime and drug use.
- living under the same roof, grandparents faithful to a traditional way of life are confronted by their great grandchildren wanting to live as young people of the 21st century. To make matters worse, religious radicalization has also appeared,
- the use of resources and the way of occupying space was mainly conditioned by two factors, the pastoral economy and the tribal social structure,
- most of the Bedouins in the Negev hail from the Hejaz, a region in the north of the Arabian peninsula from where they migrated between the 14th and 18th centuries, making them relatively recent arrivals in this ancient land,
- in the 19th and early 20th centuries, neither Turkish or British occupiers could conceive any kind of modern life in the desert, so the Bedouins were largely left to their own devices,
- at 1948 Israel's War of independence, 90 000 Bedouins fled to Egypt and to Jordan, only 11 000 remained in the southern Israel,
- the newly independent Jewish State saw the Negev as a potential area for growth and development, and give little thought to the Bedouins living there. In this respect, the Israeli government was continuing a policy that began in the colonial period when the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandatory authorities did not accept Bedouin claims of land ownership, which were based on the fact that Bedouin clans have lived on the land for generations.
Since the Negev constitutes 60% of Israel's total land mass, it is not surprising that every Israeli government since 1948 has tried to preserve desert land for future development, and ignored Bedouin claims to the area,
- the first permanent settlement in the south of Israel was founded in the biblical town of Beer Sheva by the Ottoman Empire in 1900 as part of a sedentarization program for the Bedouins,
- with the establishment of the state in 1948, the Bedouins were under severe limitation of movement. In 1951, they were forced to move to an area between Dimona, Arad and Beer Sheva, where they lived in groups of tents, shacks and stone houses. Legislation of Land purchasing in 1953 caused the Bedouins to lose all rights on their lands outside their living area, for purpose of establishing Jewish settlements, nature reserves and military camps and firing zones,

Specificities

- possession and nomadism on free land was the major specificity,
- original values, such as freedom, respect,
- traditions, such as clothes, food,
- issued from the life in desert, under tents, life in common,
- early marriages , around 16 years old for women,
- toughness of desert life made toughness of Bedouin people,
- Bedouin language is quite different from usual Arabic pronunciation,
- Bedouin society is a small society, in which codes are stronger than in bigger ones,
- Bedouin specific set of laws constitute a social and legal system, totally different from the Israeli one, with a code of honor which allow murder for the honor'' crime'',
- Women have no legal rights, a woman is the father 's property, who has full power to decide for her life, such as choosing her future husband,
- the ''blood revenge'' tradition is still active in Bedouin society, and will not change only by the simple effect of modernization,
- the proportion of multi-gamy in Bedouin population is still important (around 30%), on the contrary of Arabs and Druze population, due to tradition but also due to financial reason. The husband keeps money received from the state,
- women craft originality and quality is a strong specificity,
- Bedouin are more a way of life than an identity,
- Bedouin law , under tribal customary justice, more specific than Arabs law,

- Bedouins family, of patriarchal type, represents the basic economic unit, including the householder, his wife and their single children, one or two co-wives and their children, married son still not independent, the aged householder parents.
They live within a village or neighboring houses gathering the whole clan,
- three values have and continued to drive the contemporary Bedouins authorities, to achieve the maximum level of education, possible, to consolidate families, and to support those families development,
- many Israeli demographers warn that the "Bedouin problem" in the Negev threatens the stability of Israel's southern region, laying out a dire scenario, pointing to security problems, crime, drug dealing, and extortion of Negev business owners and farmers by Bedouin gangs,
- as citizens, Bedouin are eligible for benefits from Israel's quasi-welfare state. In Rahat, 80% of residents receive welfare payments, mostly unemployment benefits. Israel encourages large families and awards an allowance for every child born to an Israeli citizen, grants very common in Rahat, where 65% of the population is under 18,
- the Bedouin population is in the lowest socio-economic rung of the Israeli society
Government expenditure on local Arab authorities is approximately 30% lower than on their Jewish counterparts. Over 40% of the Bedouin of the recognized towns earn less than minimum wage, an estimated 4 500 compared to NIS 11 000,
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Habitat

- Bedouins live in new villages, without real planning, structured around family blocks, in a quite anarchist common organization and urbanism, with streets unnamed and houses without numbers, shaky roads, unfinished houses,
- the bad situation in villages is also caused by receiving not enough money from the administrative authorities,
- the urbanization process of the Bedouin society will not impact the specific Bedouin 's law system, which is too strongly attached to this collectivity, it will impact the cultural tradition by modifying the style life,
- tens of thousands Bedouins still living in non recognized villages which makes the land dispute long lasting,
- Israel's long standing strategy attempts to urbanize the Bedouin population. In the late 1960s and early 1970s the Israeli government began to push the Bedouin to settle in seven towns in the northern Negev. Israel's goal was to make it easier to provide basic services and modernize the population, as well as try to prevent the Bedouin to spreading out over the negev, and blocking development of new Jewish communities,
- Around 70% the Bedouin people of the Negev live in towns, which were built without careful planning or input from the Bedouin leaders, while the 30% remaining prefer to continue to live a traditional lifestyle, in dismal conditions in around 50 unrecognized villages, which are hocked up to the national electric , sewage, or water system,
- today, many Israeli politicians and intelligence officials regard the Bedouin with alarm, as their towns have become breeding grounds for crime as well as rising Islamic fundamentalism,
- although the 1998 development plan for Beer Sheva, defined the city and its surrounding as a bi national metropolis, it does not exist any plan for future development of the existing Bedouin villages,
- the Israeli authorities for planning did not pay much attention to the Bedouin cultural needs, particularly to their will to bring together the big family in one group, on order to preserve the parental structures, social control and to solve conflicts,
- moving to a township in most cases entailed receiving land free of charge for building a house but on the condition of withdrawing any demand from the state to recognize any other land claim,
- today, there are seven recognized Bedouin villages in which 75 000 people reside officially: Arar, Hura, Kseife, Lakia, Rahat, Segev Shalom and Tel Sheva
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- women are not allowed to leave their villages unescorted by a man
- the more oppressed man may oppress another human being, his wife. She is the proletarian of the proletarian,
- women are subjected to the Sharia court for divorce and marriage, where the interpretation of the Islamic law is applied through the Bedouin tribal traditions,
- the parental authority goes to the father for the boys above 5 years old and for the girl above 8 years old,
- when a Bedouin woman divorces, she suddenly finds herself fighting two heart-breaking battles: against the Sharia, Muslim court to get her children back, and against the State of Israel which considers her an illegal resident and denies her protection,
- the fathers still have full authority upon their daughters, and take profit on them by selling them to a future husband,
- getting access to work is changing the dependence of women on men, as the inner process in the Bedouin society is growing up and as the government is pushing for it,
- the wives superseded by their husband's bigamy, come apart psychologically, they have to take medications and receive psychiatric follow-up,

Religion

- mainly individual, more than collective,
- it does not play an important role in public life,
- the true Muslim religion, as written in Koran and the Mohamed words, fix the rules of life, such as fasting, prayer five time a day, help to poor people, and freedom for women, respect, welcome, help,
- it is a main factor of division. Bedouins don't think that their belongings, Muslim, Arab, Bedouin, Palestinian, Israeli, can dialog but only fight together
education failed to make them feel that it could be a richness,
they are, in a way, afraid of that multiplicity. Different approaches, like music, or sport, could be a way to facilitate acceptance of unity,
- before the creation of Israel, the place of religion was not as important as it becomes after,
- Bedouins are Muslims, essentially through social aspect, without the radical elements from Islam which do not fit Bedouin culture,
- there is ambivalence between Koran rules and family rules,
- religion is imposing decreasing of polygamy, as non conform to Muslim law,
- Islamism is growing in the Bedouin South population, as Islamism is recognized , on the contrary of the North Bedouin population,
- In the last 20 years, the Islamic religious movement took more and more place, by bringing services the authorities did not bring,
- traditionally, Islam was never a prevalent factor in Bedouin life since Islam stresses that one's number one allegiance should be to Allah, whereas Bedouin primary allegiance has always be to the tribe. It is only in recent years that this has begun to change, as radical Islamists have seen in the rapidly growing Bedouin population an opportunity to expand their reach within Israel's borders,
- because of the lack of sufficient government 's investment in the land of Bedouin community, a vacuum produces that opens a free way to religion. People got inside most often in the more radical expression of Islamism,

Generations

- new generations are more and more educated, as opposed to older uneducated ones,
- there is not such an opposition between old and new generation as it happens with Israeli Arabs or Druze.
In fact, the new generation combines evolution towards modernity with preservation of tradition,
- they are changes in 15 years time, which make for instance that 700 girls are doing a civil services, equivalent to the army service,
- new generation feels better connected to Israeli society than the oldest ones,
- new Bedouin generation is at risk of becoming more radical, because of Islamic religion pressure, un-employment and low economic level,
- modernization and globalization processes leave no room for a local culture associated with the land. This means young Bedouins are disregarding their heritage, as it seems irrelevant for those who want to be part of modern society,
- young Bedouins are quickly losing the ideal of their heritage relating to lifestyle, abilities and life skills that their ancestors clung to for hundred of years,
- youth are invisible, this fact plus poverty, lack of life perspective, nobody help, make them, frustrated, very unhappy,
- youngsters learn poor Hebrew at elementary and secondary schools, which make them shocked when they go from their village to upper classes at Beer Sheva and they discover the gap and their handicap. This becomes even more dramatic when they go to university, which makes them quit school,
- there is a growing gap with their parents, which are suspicious about the way young people are entering into modernity,

Positive/Negative

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high level of corruption
killing tradition
inferior status of women
violence
loss of environment knowledge
modern life incompatibility
looking backward
frustration
closeness
tribal
lack of ambition
unemployment
fear of change
lack of responsibility

+

not afraid
family/clan solidarity
respect
tribe solidarity
amazing culture
smart people
belonging
tolerance
solidarity
friendly
respect
new generation

Economy

- there is a government economic program addressed to development of the economic development of the minorities,
- a 5 years, 2016/2020, plan for the development of the Bedouin South community concerns 20 villages with 900 million shekels.
It is based on a process of identification of needs, a research for solutions and the corresponding budgets with ministers, local public organizations, private sources. It covers needs in housing, roads, transport, education, social, health, self security, Annual surveys are conducted, with corrections, new needs integration,
- there is a move to make the women to work, to improve the family revenue,
- women works located mainly at home for practical and cultural reasons,
- activities oriented toward craft, cooking,
- investment by the Israeli government to sustain development of women work,
- 90 % of the Bedouin economy is black economy,
- modern economy has a rhythm not quite compatible with the time conscience of Bedouins,
- numerous projects has been and are created, such as the groundbreaking initiative of a Bedouin community in the Negev desert, establishing a model of a sustainable farm that combines Bedouin traditional values, know-how and experience with the Sustainability Laboratory's integrated, holistic approach to development, relevant to the local community to the region, and to other arid zones around the world,
- the socio-economic rating of all Bedouin towns and villages is 1, the lowest on Israel 1-10 scale, the unemployment rates are some of the highest in the country, and the average earned income is the lowest

Evolution

- it's now a transitional phase between simple free life and complex modern life,,
- the power lies now into urban society,
- Bedouins living in cities are happy to live there, with everything easier, school, transport, consuming,
- major factor: acceleration of evolution
- two forces are conflicting, tradition and modernity,
- the Israeli government realizes that bigamy has to be stopped, for demographic and social reasons,
- increasing of the level of education,
- women status will change, because of their strong will and motivation to get a better life,
- women are changing, but not the men, and as they are the rulers of Bedouins life, this change will not produce a real emancipation for them,
- the modernization process is in fact very low, because cultural evolution takes always time and because the Bedouin culture has very strong specificities,
- 100 young Bedouins are in the army this year, in decline compared previous years, because of the overall tension between Israeli authorities and Bedouins,
- pressure newly made by the government , after a long period of let it go, to prohibit polygamy,
- by developing the traditional activity of embroidery, mothers can teach patience, art of colors, and mental calculation,
- more Bedouin women will dispense their knowledge and help others to become financially independent,
- the social pressure is a product of the tension that characterizes processes of changes in the social balance between men and women. This pressure is liable to to become exacerbated as young Bedouin women assume positions of power and demonstrate independence,

- the improvements come from encouraging higher education, (the number of Bedouin doctors will increase from 2 to 1,000 in five years) and the involvement of more women in the economy, making them more self-reliant in the family ,
- they want to stay Bedouin, in opposite to Arabs and Druzeask for better integration in the Israeli society,
- settlement creates a conflict because cutting Bedouins from their properties, their lifestyle and the enjoyment with it.
- education and employment are the two keys to solve the problems of women independent status, of traditional violence, and of polygamy,
- education, employment, and leadership are the key elements helping children, young adults, and families as a whole rise out of poverty to become informed, and engaged citizens in civil society,
- the unwritten culture of the nomadic Bedouins has become irrelevant to them and is rapidly disappearing, along with their unique identity. This loss is exacerbated by their poor economic situation and neglect in recognized and unrecognized settlements, leading to alienation and hostility towards the state. This alienation has found expression in an increase in crime and in feelings of discrimination and oppression in everyday life,
- very simple life has been replaced for Bedouin by a very complex and chaotic situation that put them in a destabilized, uncertain, controversial position,
- the young academics don't forget their Bedouin origin, but they articulate it with a more politic and national identity. For them to be Bedouin is linked to territorial anchorage and attachment to their land, and to Palestinian identity which draws them to an historical, nationalist, protester struggle of wider dimension,

Future

- next problems with the Israeli society will come from the Bedouins from South,
- biggest challenge, to persuade internally the Bedouin population that everything is possible,
- the other challenge is to re emphasize values of humanity, respect in the Bedouins population, particularly within the new generations Life school is already working at that,
- Bedouin society has to catch its retard, to get rid of most of its ancestral traditions,
- will and efforts to keep alive a set of traditions, and to maintain their differences from others minorities,
- urbanization will change culture, but not change fundamentally the Bedouin social system,
- Israel needs to impose more than education if it wants that Bedouins society observes public duties as they receive rights,
- if the Israeli authorities do not make drastic actions, the specific basic rules which organize Bedouins life will stay on,
- tension and opposition to the Israeli authorities will not change, as long that the land problem will not be treated in a cooperative way,
- future is quit looming because of Bedouin very strong culture, poorness of the community, lack of leaderships,
- changes in the Bedouins society have to be impulsed, with the difficulty not to do it too quickly,
- success of female students will have positive consequences on Bedouin society in the near future in term of social integration and contribution to the economy,
- the Israeli State has to think deeply and quickly about how not to put Bedouins under its dependence with the process of settling them in towns together with cutting them out of their land income,
- the village Bedouin mode should be protected and developed alongside with settlement in towns, in an original way, mixing modernity and tradition,
- getting some free area and support for generalized computer knowledge should be developed by Israeli authorities,
- building relationships with people from other cultures, and bridges across others backgrounds, across geographies, can open up a whole new world of opportunities for young Bedouins, bringing them new horizon for the future and helping better navigate the rocky path between tradition and modernity,
- in some decades, they will be no more Bedouins in the Negev. Their traditional world will no more exist, all will settle in towns, they will lose the lifestyle and the traditions that make them initially specific within the Israeli society, they will become ordinary Israeli Arab citizens.

This transformation is a good thing, since it will make disappear the bad things attached to Bedouin tradition, violence, blood honor, men domination,

Constraints

- lack of basic services in no regular villages, water, electricity....and no education, main constraints to development of women's economic activities,
- thinking short term plus lack of education make difficulty to take into account, administrative, financial, social rules and necessities,
- phenomena of rumor, which plays an important role in a community style of life, and is an impediment to emancipation of women,
- the conflict between modernization and Bedouin tradition cannot be solved easily, because Bedouin society is border line, they don't like authority, they are use to freedom, to have their own laws,
- difficulty to make the agents of the different Israeli authorities, aware of the reality of the Bedouins society, out of the usual clichés ,

Opportunities

- educated women will facilitate the overall development of the society,
- restraining of polygamy will be socially beneficial, even if it will cause social adaptation problems,
- to introduce and to develop trust between the Israeli authorities and society and the Bedouin community,
- the passage from traditional and agricultural life to urban and modern life could get out of frustration feeling and low level life, only if the highest Bedouin population potential is developed,
- education effort should be focalized mainly on languages mastering and computer knowledge acquisition,
- Desert Stars is a program to nurture a new leadership within the Bedouin society. Its goal is to identify and promote young Bedouins with potential leadership qualities and an interest In social engagement,

Relations

- in the popular representations, Bedouins symbolize either a set of values, or on the contrary, religious neglect, sedition, negation of civilization,
- Bedouin is "the Other", both backward and unduly benefiting from the largess of the State,
- average is : 1 – Arab / Muslim, 2 – Bedouin, 3 – Palestinian, 4 – Israeli
- Bedouins from South place their attachment to descent tribes at first, Bedouins second, Palestinian third, as Bedouins from North place Palestinian first,
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Israel

- peripheral at the periphery of Israeli society,
- friendly relations at personal level, conflict relations at political level,
- young Bedouins going to the army are generally disliked by the rest of the population,
- Bedouins see Israeli in a more friendly way than the Arabs do,
- Israelis do not know Arabic language, which makes them more culturally cut from the Arab minorities, Bedouins included,
- there is a collision between two civilizations, most striking example is the violent way in which men are still treating the women,
- Bedouins are stealing Israel in the economic side, as the authorities are very naïve towards them,
- the contradiction between both legal systems creates a distance between the two societies,
- the Israeli political and administrative actions against the Bedouins , regarding, land, housing, villages, identity registration....generate at least frustration and suspicion, going to more or less violent opposition,
- Bedouins can bring to Israeli society, improve feeling for neighborhood, solidarity, respect,, agriculture knowledge, ecology value,
- It is a chance in fact, for Bedouins women to be born in Israel, because it is known that in countries around, Arab women have very few opportunities to evolve as in this country,
- Israel's attitude toward the Negev Bedouins is clearly the product of a mentality that see human and civil rights beyond the single prism of Jewish settlement. It is rooted in a territorialist outlook that views mobility and tribal formation as the antithesis of stability, belonging and most importantly, state formation,

in disregarding the historical right of the Palestinian Bedouin to their land, Israeli Jews are forgetting an integral part of their own history. The native Arab Bedouins served as model for those European Jewish newcomers seeking to free themselves from the yoke of Diaspora. It is well documented that pre-state movements had an unmistakably Bedouin character,

- Bedouins are at the crossing between Israeli and Palestinians. The Israeli authorities are making big effort to make the Bedouins feel real partners, but in fact membership to Palestinian population is more natural and easier.
- the Israeli membership is possible only if it is disconnected of Jewishness,
- Bedouins are not big Zionists, but they are proud Israelis,
- the Bedouins are more tribal than nationalistic. It is that deeply ingrained tribal culture that has allowed them to survive centuries of nomadic existence, but it is also the trait that presents barriers to their continued wellbeing in modern Israel,
- Israel was, historically, the first body to take any interest at all in the Bedouin people, granting them citizenship, providing education, medical care, access to the social benefits enjoyed by every Israeli citizen.
Nevertheless, Israel's government policy has never been geared to Bedouin specific needs and desires,
- one of the most sensitive issues for the Bedouin minority is army service. A significant number of Bedouin have traditionally volunteered to serve in Israel's defense forces. Islamic movement operatives have been recently, actively discouraging Bedouin men from volunteering for the army, reducing it to a very low percentage,
- the Bedouin community of Rahat and B'nei Shimon Regional Council collaborate within the framework of transforming the Negev into a few industrial area,, one of the ways of fulfilling Ben Gurion's dream of "making the desert bloom",
- a widespread phenomenon among the Negev's Bedouin residents makes that hundreds if not thousands of them are losing their citizenship due to "erroneous registration", something unacceptable to people who have been living in this area for dozens of years, after their parents who was there before,
- individuals who have been citizen for 20, 30 or even 40 years, some of whom served in the army, who voted, paid their taxes, had clerks cancel their status with a keystroke. They can vote in local elections but not in national ones, they cannot receive Israeli passport,

Israeli Arabs (Muslims, Christians)

- minority of the minorities,
- Bedouins considered as kind of traitors because a lot of them are going to the army,
- they see Bedouins as a primitive Arabic population,
- Bedouins are Sunnites Muslims,
- Bedouins have no land, as opposite to Arabs who have it,
- still existing Bedouin polygamy makes a strong difference with Arabs,
- Bedouins used to live in their own world, without communication with the others populations,
- Arabs express towards Bedouins a feeling of superiority and behave in an arrogant way,
- It is quite a complicated relationship, due to differences of cultures, histories,, although there are marriages between Arabs women with Bedouins men,
- Arabs political leaders try to attract Bedouins to their side, without much success, their economic interest being quite different,
- kind of segregation from Arabs to Bedouins, attitude of superiority,

Palestinians

- Bedouins are Arabs, so there is a natural solidarity with them,
- Bedouin ties with their brethren in Jordan, Syria and Egypt raise security concerns for Israel, as Bedouin identity takes on a new and more radical twist. "There is no difference between the Bedouin and the Palestinians" is a sentiment spreading in the southern Bedouin community, not necessarily shared by Bedouin from the Galilee,

Bedouins (North/South)

- South tribes are more conventional, mostly with men domination, less motivation for education, strongest religion influence, economically less developed,
- North Bedouin population is less religious oriented, is in a relatively good social and economic situation, women are more educated,
- they have in common, a past of nomadic style of life, a social structure around tribes,
- in the North, living besides other minorities creates a more open minded, liberal spirit, influenced by Arabs and Israelis proximity,
- villages in the North, exists since 50 years, when they are quite recent in the South. This historical difference creates a difference of mentality and of lifestyle. In the North, there are not real tribes but families, when in the South, there are tribes.
- villages in the North are quite close from cities, often beside Arab villages, In the North, there are marriages between Bedouins and Arabs, when in the South, it is exclusively between Bedouins,
- North Bedouins coming from Syria, more integrated to Israeli life, with a mentality that has evaluated from the original desert life's ones, with no bigamy, different from South Bedouins, from Saudi origin, still more tribal, with still 20 to 20% of polygamy,
- North and South Bedouins are few things in common. They are not of same origin, North from Syria, South from Saudi and Egypt, dialects have differences, lifestyle is different,
- North and South have no common organization, apart from inter marriages, they don't really like each other,

2 -Interpretation

The role of the Observation phase is to enlarge as possible the knowledge of the Bedouin situation within the Israeli society, with the most objectivity as possible.

The goal of the Interpretation phase is firstly to make a full analysis of all the observed elements, in order to detect and extract the most determining factors of the Bedouin identity situation.

It is secondly, to make a concrete and precise diagnostic from those factors

Determining factors

1 – Cultural specificities

Amongst Israel minorities, Bedouin community is mainly characterized by an **historical way of life**. It is, first of all, linked to geographical conditions. Bedouins are the people of the desert. It conducts to nomadism. With its immediate consequences, organizational, structural, economic, social. It relates to roughness, purity, liberty. To knowledge and love of nature. To proximity with animals.

Bedouin society is structurally patriarchal, as is usually Muslim society. But historical heritage and roughness of conditions reinforced it particularly. Man authority is still strongly predominant. Which has its prolongations in specific rules and codes, such as the blood law, polygamy, women subordination to fathers, husbands wills.

Comparatively to others Israeli Arabs minorities, Bedouin culture, specifically linked to nomadism in desert life, has no specific religious roots and, by definition, no precise and fixed geographic attachment.

Bedouin population is globally more determined by a tribal structuration than by a nationalist approach of common life. Its traditional solidarity is principally linked to its structuration in clans and families. It results in preservation in Israel of a specific juridical and administrative system.

The definition of those characteristics reveals the fragility in themselves of Bedouin cultural specificities. Modifications of the main diverse factors of the Bedouin way of life, endanger all those specificities.

2 – Conflictual situation

Differences between global Israeli society and Bedouin community, is much wider for Bedouins from the South than for Bedouins from the North of Israel. Historical and geographical reasons cause the northern Bedouins more settled and integrated in their regional environment than their Southern brethren. That creates two different levels of assimilation, with a situation of confrontation between Bedouin community and Israel Authorities much tougher in the South.

The politics of normalization the Bedouin situation within Israeli society produces many level of confrontation. Major subject is the land confiscation, linked with an enforced settlement in new cities for 70% of the Southern community and the existence of still around 60 “unrecognized villages. Urbanization, plus substitution of Israeli rules and way in matter such as education, administration, polygamy interdiction, police place and action, are part of the present confrontation.

Low level of employment, very bad economic situation, create a big gap between the ordinary Israeli society and the Bedouin population. Although new forces are acting in the Bedouin community. A new generation of educated Bedouin entrepreneurs, emancipation of women through a strong education tendency, open a dynamic way to modernization and improving situation.

Between Israeli modernized society and Bedouin traditional community, mainly in its Southern representation, two worlds are facing each other. It could be in some places assimilated to a civilization conflict. Combination of new wills from both the Israel Government and a Bedouin generational and gender upsurge could inverse the tendency.

3 – Evolutions

Two strong subjects participate to the existence and maintaining of a very sensible frustration feeling within the Bedouin population. Overall is what the Bedouin think is their land confiscation. Frustration fully understandable as it represents the erasure of the source of their identity. The other subject is a consequence of privation of land as it generated much of Bedouin traditions. Clan structure has to be subordinated to administrative and social Israeli laws and rules. Enhancement of women's rights, national administrative obligations, fight against violence and bigamy, fed the feeling of mandatory changes.

Young Bedouins face strong unemployment, lack of means to benefit from what modernity exposes to them, obscure future. In an unbalanced situation, questioning the acceptance from oldest generations, they take refuge in a more extremist, oppositional posture, and into the radicalism that Islamic religion proposes to them.

Trend toward more entrepreneurship, engagement of a new generation of leaders to sustain social and economic transformations, very striking efforts from Bedouin women to enter into emancipation process and modernization via Education, secondary as university, are one positive side of evolution. The engagement of the Israeli state in developing significantly the community is the other way for hope.

As aspiration to modernization confronts with living frustration feeling, opposite forces of evolution are presently in a full fight that maintains uncertainty to future status of the Bedouin society.

4 – Environment

Bedouin image is together quite an emblematic and controversial one.

Emblematic because attached to the classic representation of desert life : purity, roughness, nature, liberty, proudness. Controversial because in the Israeli context, beside those very positive qualifications, Bedouin life style is also linked to its black sides : violence, crime and traffic, man absolute dominance, sedition, backward behavior.

In Israel, Bedouin appear as peripheral to the country periphery. Mobility, patriarchal and tribal structure enter in direct opposition to belonging stability, to state laws and structuration. Way of life are by nature contradictory one another. De facto, Israel government and authorities are the first to take interest and invest in Bedouin people, but evacuated their specific needs and desire, far behind its will to keep full liberty for the development of the Negev Area.

Within the Israeli Arab population, Bedouin appear as the minority of minorities. Muslims, Christians, Druze, show kind of arrogance toward Bedouins, together with a segregation attitude. If there is in fact a deep proximity between them in term of language, food, dressing, culture, history, way of life, religious practice make them quite different.

There is a natural linkage between Arab populations that generates solidarity of Bedouin community to Palestinians. This attachment is getting stronger for the Southern part of the community when it keeps on at same level for the Northern part.

Bedouin is joining the others Israeli minorities in the overall and permanent struggles they conduct to find their right place and role in the Israeli society. But the set of values that create its identity, separates Bedouin from others minorities, as it amplifies the gap with the Israeli society.

5 – Assimilation process

Two main reasons make inevitable the transformation of Bedouin people in Israel. The first one is indeed the creation of the state of Israel. One of its consequences is the introduction in Middle East region of a democratic regime. Even if Israel democracy can be easily criticized, it unifies Jewish, Arabs, Christian population under same laws and rules. Democracy means for Bedouins to come under Israel laws and rules.

The second reason is modernization. Modernization compels Bedouin centuries old traditions to adapt to various faces of modernity : urbanization process, digitalization, globalization, national regulation. The Northern Bedouin community is more advanced than the Southern one, regarding assimilation, but the necessity of change is the same for both of them.

The depth of its cultural roots, the width of the economic and social gap between Bedouin community and average Israeli society make the assimilation process all the more necessary and difficult.

Diagnosis

The characteristic of the Bedouin identity in the Israeli society is the radicality of its confrontation. Cultural fundamental attachment to nomadism lifestyle opposes sedentarization and rurality. Historical tribal traditions oppose open modernity.

The intangible strategy of the Israeli government to fully and freely use the Neguev as the new platform for the country development, accentuates the radicality of confrontation.

The choice for Bedouin future in Israel is either the death of its identity, or its total renewal.

3 – Creation

From the diagnosis, the creation phase has for objective to conceive the definition of the future identity for the Israeli Bedouin community.

This identity should be articulated around a principal force, the “identity concept”.

An “identity system” will develop enrich the identity concept.

Identity concept and system should help the Bedouin community to stimulate internally all its strengths to ensure its future and to win a valuable place into the Israeli society.

Identity concept

Total renewal

-emphasizes the absolute necessity for Bedouin to choose between death or life of their identity within the Israeli society,

-it applies to both Northern and Southern Bedouin entities,

-it puts the charge on the present generation and its capacity to mobilization of its will and strengths,

-it implies a full and sincere support on behalf of the Israel Authorities and the active collaboration of the Israeli economic, education, social actors.

Identity system

“Total renewal” is the central idea that applies to the present and future situation of Bedouin identity.

It implies that a set of complementary concepts will be defined to put the identity renewal in action.

To choose the renewal of Bedouin identity will express a high level of ambition, aiming at getting a valuable place for the community into the Israeli society.

It should be based upon the best levels of success in a modern society. In the first place, on education as the central piece. Together with items as high technology mastering, linguistic abilities, openness to external world, Israeli laws and rules integration.

Renewal can firstly come from the Bedouin community itself.

The following system is only described as a theoretical model, opening the way to internal thinking and imagination.

Total renewal

Ambition : creativity – excellence – audacity – engagement

Education : general – specializations – openness -

Civic Sens : solidarity – respect – law – ecology

4 – Application

It exists now, in the Bedouin community, a new generation of leaders, which started already the development of well advanced and noticeable initiatives and programs for its development present and future into the Israeli society.

Taking into account the modest size of that community, a common platform for the Bedouin renewal identity could federate and optimize rapidly all efforts and projects.

Fundamental options

Future for the integration of the Bedouin community in the Israeli society has to choose between two ways.

1 - Total assimilation.

The initiatives and programs conducted by the new Bedouin generation of leaders will allow the young generations to merge in the Israeli community in a satisfactory manner, and not in a secondary position.

“Bedouin” will stay as an historical, folkloric, touristic, somehow legendary, concept.

2 – Total integration.

“Integration” means that Bedouin will keep alive in the future their identity, their specific and unique personality, while getting fully integrated in the Israeli society.

But the success of the integration of the Bedouin community in the Israeli society can only be obtained if the identity renewal is itself a success.

If not, the integration will end in a total assimilation.

Programming

1 - Un-conditional program.

Whatever the option chosen, assimilation or integration, Bedouin have to get rid of the elements, parts of their traditions and lifestyle, which are directly opposing the Israeli standards:

Polygamy, violence, blood rule, man predominance.....

The abandonment of those elements are un-conditional because Israel will definitely not accept them in the middle term.

It will be very much more efficient and very much less conflicting if the decision is taken by the Bedouin community itself, than if it is imposed by the State authorities.

Other elements conflicting with Israeli strategy should be transformed by the way of open, concrete and loyal negotiations: land ownership, village's definitions, coordination between the national and the Bedouin laws systems.....

2 – Operational program

As the success of future of Bedouin in Israel depends before all of the will and the strength of engagement of the community and of its leaders, it will be purely theoretical and not useful to imagine a program of actions in line with "Total renewal".

But some axes for actions can be traced.

. Education firstly, linguistic, high tech, ecology, should be the key items where the Israeli involvement will be at its maximum to support the development of the Bedouin community.

. In addition to urbanization process, a special educational program for Bedouin population and administration should be enforced to facilitate the transformation of rural lifestyle into urban lifestyle.

3 – Bedouin identity program

If the option of “integration” is chosen, a debate and thinking should be conducted about a new identity concept and a new identity system.

As an example, this identity concept could be: **EXTREME**

Bedouin, the people from the extreme

-it established a link with the Bedouin conventional way of life, desert life.

-it is in line with the ambition of the new generation of Bedouin leaders, to settle the community at the top of the Israeli society

-it gives the identity concept the dimension of common goal and gives to it an active role.