Symbolic Meanings and the Feasibility of Policy Images: Relocating Military Bases to the Periphery in Israel

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This article is aimed at crafting an interpretive policy analysis as a predictive tool by using the proposal to relocate Israeli military bases. Since the mid-2000s, the Israeli government has promoted a new plan to transfer military bases from urban areas and central regions to the southern metropolitan area in the Negev desert. The economic and operational logic behind the program is unclear and prompts serious debate about nationality, ethnicity, economic gaps, and the environment in the Negev. This area epitomizes marginality in Israel, both socially and geographically, and is characterized by conflicts between Jews and Bedouins. Thus, the program can be regarded as one involving policy images, where potential participants lack the information necessary for understanding the goals of the policy. This paper proposes a new methodology based on interpretive policy analysis for conducting a pilot study to evaluate the feasibility and practicality of the proposed program. We use this methodology to analyze the symbolic meanings that local organizations attribute to the program with the goal of predicting their response to this program. Thus, the relocation plan serves as a template on which to develop and test the IPA-informed evaluative methodology, which is applicable to other cases.

KEY WORDS: policy images, interpretive policy analysis, militarism, distributional conflicts

Introduction

In 1993, the Israeli government and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched a new plan to transfer military bases from urban areas and the central regions, with the goal of developing the land that had been vacated for civilian purposes (State Comptroller, 1996). Though the IDF wanted to relocate its bases to the outer ring of the central region of the country, in the early 2000s Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered the army to relocate the bases to the southern metropolitan area in the Negev desert close to the city of Beer Sheva. In 2005, the IDF program to relocate its bases in the Negev was integrated into the government's development program for the Negev. This program saw the relocation of the army bases as one of the main avenues for the economic development of the region (Oren & Regev, 2008, p. 187).

In an attempt to reduce military expenses in terms of logistics and human resources, the IDF identified four locations around Beer Sheva, the Negev's largest city, where the military bases would be built (Government of Israel, 2005): (a) a cluster of IDF training bases 20 km south of Beer Sheva that would host 11,000

soldiers and 500 officers and administrators, currently located in the central region; (b) a military air-cargo unit at Nevatim military airport, 25 km east of Beer Sheva, currently located at Ben Gurion airport, Israel's major civilian airport; (c) IDF's high technology units at Beer Sheva's high technology industrial park, currently located near Tel Aviv; and (d) IDF's intelligence units in Likit-Omer, 5 km north of Beer Sheva, currently located in Tel Aviv and its affluent Ramat Hasharon suburb. As part of the relocation program, a transportation project has been launched to build high-ways and railroads for the planned areas (Oren & Regev, 2008, pp. 188–89).

However, despite the approval of the development program by the government, no budget was ever allocated for it. All that remained of the program was the relocation of the military bases (Swirski, 2007). In April 2007, after years of debate and protests, the government of Israel instructed its ministries to implement at least a portion of the plan by relocating one of the bases (Prime Minister's Office Spokes-man, 2007).

The logic behind the program to relocate military bases to the Negev is not clear: Economists emphasize the potential for new civilian construction on the land vacated by the military. IDF officers underscore the army's need for new infrastruc-ture. Politicians highlight the prospective development of a peripheral metropolitan area that is currently lacking employment resources and infrastructure. It seems that there is disagreement on the logic behind the program.

This lack of clarity about the factual content of the program, its goals, and the values it seeks to advance is exacerbated by other problems such as the source of the funding for the project, the location of the new bases, and housing opportu-nities for the officers. Furthermore, this program is a stark example of a symboli-cally loaded policy. It is imbued with symbolic meanings such as militarization and even the "Judaization" of the Negev as a means of thwarting attempts by the Arab-Bedouin population to take control of public lands. Here, actors may have to deal with conflicting goals when they shape their attitudes toward the plan. For example, while the plan may Judaize the area, a goal favored by certain Jewish nationalists, it may also bring economic growth that will benefit the area's resi-dents, including the Bedouins. Similarly, those who oppose the plan because of this potential Judaization run the risk of increasing the marginality of the region. Small wonder, then, that statements about the intention to implement the program, coupled with media reports about the lack of information about the project, trig-gered disagreement between the communities living in the Negev over the proper way to understand the policy, its values, and the potential effects of the program on the Negev. Each community may interpret a different set of images about the goals and results of the program. The confusion over the goals of the program led to massive protests, organized mainly by environmental NGOs, as well as counter protests, spearheaded by organizations that support the construction of new bases in the area.

In short, we are not dealing with a clear program but with *policy images* about which potential participants lack the information necessary to understand its goals and values and debate about the images the policy creates. As True, Jones, and Baumgartner explained (1999, pp. 161–62),

> Policy images are a mixture of empirical information and emotive appeals. Such images are, in effect, information-grist for the policy making process. The factual content of any policy or program can have many different aspects, and can affect different people in different ways . . . When there is disagreement over the proper way to describe or understand a policy, proponents may focus on one set of images while their opponents refer to a different set of images.

Rational policy analysis may fall short in attempting to analyze policy images. Rational policy analysis is premised on the logic that actors are performing an action for reasons that can be regarded or justified as good reasons (Anderson, 1979). Therefore, in this case rational policy analysis is not the preferred tool for several reasons. First, this method works better with the study of decision making rather than the attitudes of social agents who are reacting to the leadership's decisions. Second, as Anderson noted, rational policy analysis can begin only once the relevant values have been determined, either by an authoritative decision maker or through the statement of citizens' preferences in a democratic political process. However, in cases of policy images the relevant values are blurred, and emotions play a significant role in the way actors understand and evaluate a vague policy. Third, rational analysis assumes that actors are knowledgeable about their situation. However, when the policy is unclear, state agencies communicate more meanings than information, thereby opening the door for multiple interpretations by different actors. "Emotive appeals" overshadow the little empirical information to which social actors have access and encourage actors to symbolize the information they collect on policy intentions. Symbolization bridges the gap between hard facts, and images and senses. Fourth, following Thacher and Rein (2004), when policy actors have many goals that conflict with each other, instrumental rationality cannot provide a firm guide for action. While they treat values as commensurable, the case under study suggests that the dilemma involves incommensurable values, and the actors possess no means to rationally justify the trade-offs between them.

Discrepancies of this sort invite interpretive policy analysis (IPA), as Yanow (1996) recommended. IPA is an established analytical approach that considers not only the instrumental aspects of policies, but their expressive side as well by focusing on meaning as constructed by the participants in policy processes and the various and sometimes unintended meanings policies communicate to targeted populations (Barrett & Tsui, 1999). Policymaking is a competitive process over power and meanings, and these meanings define the approaches and actions that different actors employ in relation to a proposed policy (Yanow, 1996). The emergence of the interpretive approach in public policy relates to social and political changes that have taken place over the past three decades (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). Among them is globalization, which strengthens local and global identities and the growth of a multicultural environment, which highlights the elusive affiliation of members of peripheral communities with the nation-state and its institutions (Castells, 1997) and growing demand for recognition (Fraser & Honnet, 2003). As Deleon (1994, pp. 84–85) noted, a scholar's choice of theory and method must be "dictated by the

requirements of the issues at hand rather than the researcher's tool kit—while still retaining the necessary rigor regardless of the methodology."

Here, however, we depart from the traditional IPA. While traditional works narrated policy disputes or explained policies outcomes by drawing on IPA (as Barrett and Tsui did), we will use IPA to assess what the actors and potential participants may think about the policy images of the military deployment. Prediction rather than explanation is our goal. This path is relevant when the communities reacting to the government's action have limited knowledge, the policy is subject to competing interpretations, rather than a detailed and explicit policy (such as the nuclear policy studied by Baumgartner and Jones [2009]), and communities' opinion leaders play a greater role than organized groups so the agenda-setting is complex and dynamic (unlike, e.g., Kingdon's [2002] work). Furthermore, policy research is not divorced from practical matters and can serve policymaking if it appears in the right phase. Using IPA as a predictive tool may be our contribution to the craft of IPA. The relocation program is thus used in this study as a template on which to develop and test the evaluative methodology, which is applicable to other cases.

In the following section we will present the phases of the new methodology for conducting a pilot study to evaluate the feasibility and practicality of the proposed program. Following a description of each phase, we will use this methodology to analyze the symbolic meanings that local organizations attribute to the program with the goal of predicting their response to this program of relocating military bases to the Negev.

The Evaluative Methodology

Our methodology evaluates the symbolic meanings that the local civil society attaches to the proposed program. It examines an epistemological orientation to policy, which is based on three major sources: (1) the limited information about the program that is available to the local organizations; (2) the imagination of the activists in local organizations in relation to the program and its goals; and (3) the interpretive repertoire, which is based on past experiences.

The methodology contains seven major phases, which move from an evaluation of the symbolic meanings that organizations attribute to a policy to a classification of these meanings into meaning clusters. While the methodology's theory is rooted in the ideas presented in Yanow's (2000) monograph, *Conducting IPA*, we try to make it more practical as a predictive tool. Figure 1 presents the seven phases, which are described in greater detail below.

1. Identifying and listing all local organizations that the communities they claim to represent might be affected by the program

We focus on local authorities, local NGOs, nonlocal NGOs working in the area of the program, and local economic organizations. As our focus is on civil society, the methodology disregards governmental branches or national authorities. The focus on organizations reveals the problem that Hillery (1955) challenged almost sixty
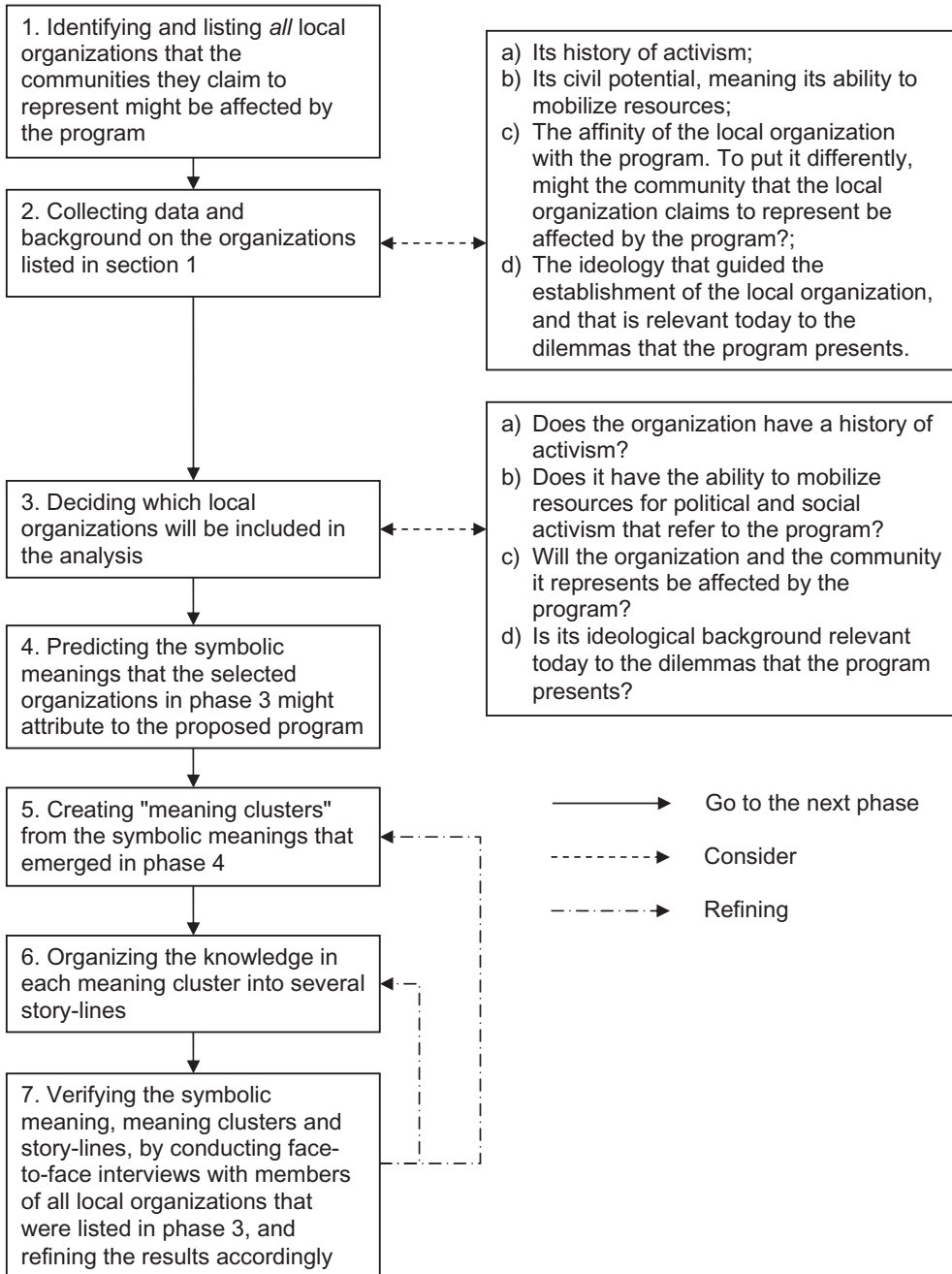
1. Identifying and listing *all* local organizations that the communities they claim to represent might be affected by the program	a) Its history of activism; b) Its civil potential, meaning its ability to mobilize resources; c) The affinity of the local organization with the program. To put it differently, might the community that the local organization claims to represent be affected by the program?; d) The ideology that guided the establishment of the local organization, and that is relevant today to the dilemmas that the program presents.
2. Collecting data and background on the organizations listed in section 1	
3. Deciding which local organizations will be included in the analysis	a) Does the organization have a history of activism? b) Does it have the ability to mobilize resources for political and social activism that refer to the program? c) Will the organization and the community it represents be affected by the program? d) Is its ideological background relevant today to the dilemmas that the program presents?
4. Predicting the symbolic meanings that the selected organizations in phase 3 might attribute to the proposed program	
5. Creating "meaning clusters" from the symbolic meanings that emerged in phase 4	⟶ Go to the next phase ⇢ Consider ⟶ Refining
6. Organizing the knowledge in each meaning cluster into several story-lines	
7. Verifying the symbolic meaning, meaning clusters and story-lines, by conducting face-to-face interviews with members of all local organizations that were listed in phase 3, and refining the results accordingly	

Figure 1. The Evaluative Methodology and Its Phases.

years ago regarding representation of communities. Too often, the notion of "community" relies on the notion of a relatively homogenous, geographically bounded community that can be pinpointed, and thus can easily be represented. However, this notion of "community" is far from accurate. Therefore, it is uncertain whether

NGOs, economic organizations, and local authorities do represent local communities. In a recent study on "Who Participates?" Houtzager, Lavalle, and Acharya (2003) argue that understanding representation involves an examination of the dense networks of associations, and how they interrelate to represent different identities and constellations of actors. Indeed, communities may be represented through various policy councils, NGOs, social movements, or interest groups. These actors may help to amalgamate community interests and priorities. However, there are diverse interpretations of the interests of their beneficiaries. Despite these limitations, as a result of methodological concerns and the awareness of the political power that NGOs, local authorities, and economic organizations have in policy making, our evaluative methodology suggests analyzing these actors as representatives of local communities and interests. We will employ the term "local organizations" to describe them.

In our case study we listed all of the local organizations in the Beer Sheva metropolitan area, using lists from the Israeli Center for Third Sector Research and data from the Ministry of the Interior. In total, we identified more than 100 organizations.

2. Collecting data and background on the NGOs and organizations listed in section 1

This data includes four areas of information about each organization: (a) its history of activism; (b) its civil potential, meaning its ability to mobilize resources; (c) the affinity of the local organization with the program. (To put it differently, might the community that the local organization claims to represent be affected by the program?); (d) the ideology that guided the establishment of the local organization, and that is relevant today to the dilemmas that the program presents.

3. Deciding which local organizations will be included in the analysis

To this end, we suggest turning each criterion of the four listed in phase 2 into a yes/no question: (a) Does the organization have a history of activism? (b) Does it have the ability to mobilize resources for political and social activism that refer to the program? (c) Will the organization and the community it represents be affected by the program? (d) Is its ideological background relevant today to the dilemmas that the program presents? The answers to all four questions *must* be "yes" for the organization to be included in the analysis.

The data collection in our case study is based on the organizations' official publications, websites, petitions to the courts, and all newspaper articles (in the leading national newspaper, *Ha'aretz*) since 1995 that referred to one of these local organizations. The first and second columns of Table 1 detail the 27 selected local organizations.

We have categorized the selected local organizations by the functions they serve: local authorities, NGOs, and economic organizations. The local authorities in the Negev are not homogeneous. These organizations reflect the Negev's social structure, which is characterized by ethno-class diversity and segregation that are evident in separate areas of residence. The Jewish authorities are internally divided into four

Table 1. Selected Organizations and Local Authorities and the Predicted Symbolic Meaning They Attribute to the Relocation Program

	Category of Organizations	Organization	Meaning Clusters	Story-Lines
1	Jewish urban municipalities	Beer Sheva	Jewish-Arab Distributional Justice and Injustice	The Agent of the Zionist Project
2		Dimona Yeruham		Distributional Justice and Distributional Injustice
3	Affluent suburban municipalities	Lehavim Meitar Omer	Jewish-Arab Distributional Justice and Injustice	The Agent of the Zionist Project Distributional Justice
4	Regional council (Jewish villages)	Ramat Negev	Jewish-Arab Distributional Justice and Injustice	The Agent of the Zionist Project Distributional Justice
5	Palestinian-Bedouin townships (local authorities)	Hura Kseifa Lagia Arara Shkeib Tel Sheva Rahat	Distributional Justice and Injustice	Distributional Justice and Distributional Injustice
6	Regional council of recently recognized Bedouin villages	Abu Basma	Distributional Justice and Injustice	Distributional Justice and Distributional Injustice
7	Human rights NGOs	Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages (RCUV)	Jewish-Arab	The IDF as the Oppressor of the Bedouin Minority
8		Bimkom—Planners for Planning Rights		
9		Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)		
10		Negev Coexistence Forum	Distributional Justice and Injustice	Distributional Injustice
11		The Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow (MDR)		
12		Adalah Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel		
13	Environmental NGOs	Sustainable Development for the Negev	Environmental	Impetus for Reducing Pollution
14		Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI)		
15		Israel Union for Environmental Defense		Environmental Hazard
16	Other NGOs	Yadid—Association for Community Empowerment	Distributional Justice and Injustice	Distributional Justice
17	Economic organizations	Ramat Hovav Industrial Park	Distributional Justice and Injustice	Distributional Justice
18		Manufacturers Association of Israel		

major types: (a) the local authority of Beer Sheva, the central and largest city in the Negev; (b) the development towns of Yeruham and Dimona, whose residents are relatively poor Jewish immigrants from North Africa and the former Soviet Union; (c) Beer Sheva's affluent suburbs: Meitar, Omer, and Lehavim; (d) regional councils that serve tiny rural villages and kibbutzim. The Ramat Negev regional council is the largest in Israel, but represents only 5,000 Jewish residents in a dozen villages.

The division of Jewish local authorities represents an ethno-class division. The Jews, who account for 70 percent of the 550,000 residents of the Negev, are roughly divided into three ethno-classes: (1) Ashkenazi Jews (those of European descent) who enjoy a relatively high economic status and live in three suburbs near Beer Sheva and several communal and rural villages; (2) Mizrahi Jews (those who emigrated from Muslim countries) who generally belong to the middle and lower classes, but many of whom are upwardly mobile economically. They live in Beer Sheva and in nearby development towns; (3) Russian Jews who emigrated from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s to Israel. They share the same middle to lower economic status of the Mizrahim and live in similar localities, but in their own neighborhoods. The Mizrahim and the Russians suffer from the stigma associated with the periphery, but are still part of the dominant Jewish majority.

Bedouins, on the other hand, are considered a peripheral ethno-class outside the dominant Jewish nation. They are usually known as the indigenous community or as Arab nomads (Meir, 1997) and are located at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. They had to deal with the Naqba (Palestinian catastrophe) in 1948, when less than 20 percent of the Bedouin population remained in Israel. In 2008, this community, considered to be the most oppressed and poorest minority in Israel, had 160,000 residents (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Half of them live in townships that were planned and built by the State of Israel in the 1970s and 1980s. They are represented by their own local authorities (see Table 1). The other half live in 46 villages, which have not been recognized by the State of Israel as formal localities. Without such formal recognition, the villages lack basic infrastructures such as water and electricity. They face the possibility of having their homes demolished and their land expropriated. These villages are represented by an NGO called the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages, intended to function as a local authority and to protest against Israeli policy toward the informal villages (see Meir, 2005; Yiftachel, 2003). However, in recent years the government has recognized 11 villages, which are governed municipally by Abu Basma—The Regional Council of Recently Recognized Bedouin Villages.

A second category is the NGOs. Many Israeli human rights and environmental NGOs have made the Negev a major arena of activism, due to its ethno-class structure and its "backyard" image. There is also growing activism by local NGOs (see: Ben-Eliezer, 2003; Gidron, Bar, & Kats, 2004; Yacobi, 2007). Indeed, these NGOs are not integrated, and many of them claim to advance the interests of a particular community. However, they voice the needs of the communities of the Negev, because, usually, they are deeply involved in the communities, aware of their needs, and ideologically do not want to act as patrons of the communities. These human rights and environmental NGOs are at the forefront of the protest against the army.

The third category is the economic organizations, including the Ramat Hovav National Site for the Treatment of Hazardous Waste, the development authorities, and the manufacturers' guilds. These organizations are deeply involved in the program and seek to leverage the project for their own interests.

These three sectors represent the map of the Negev's civilian society. This map does not portray a homogeneous society, nor a multicultural society characterized by tolerance and recognition. This map is full of hierarchies and competition, and therefore produces complex clusters of symbolic meanings in relation to the relocation plan.

4. Predicting the symbolic meanings that the selected organizations in phase 3 might attribute to the proposed program, based on interpretively analyzing the data that was collected in phase 2

Given that a policy image presents a mixture of (incomplete) empirical information and emotive appeals, it may be understood differently by each local organization. How do local organizations construct the images of the program, its aims, and effects? Here symbolic meanings are important, because they bridge the gap between facts and images. Thus, the symbolic meaning that each local organization attributes to the program is a reflection of its cultural background (i.e., of the community it claims to represent), its position in the social structure, its ideology, and its interests (as the local organization interprets them). By interpretively analyzing the history, ideological background and interests of each organization separately in light of its relationships with previous programs, this phase tries to predict the symbolic meanings that each one of the selected organizations might attribute to the proposed program.

Three types of information are collected about each organization: (a) background on its establishment, aims, and ideology—as stated in the formation documents; (b) its past activities—in particular the interests and the aims that the organization wanted to achieve; (c) all statements made by members of the organization on issues which are relevant to the program. By "relevant" we mean sharing similar symbols and signs. The analysis of this information is based on sign analysis, developed by Adams and Padamsee (2001). This method analyzes the meaning of signs and symbols, based on the assumption that signs and symbols are emotionally and culturally charged judgments about the program. In this interpretive process the researcher has to ask what are the signs and symbols that the organization values, what are the signs and symbols that are relevant to the program, and how does and did the organization understand these signs and symbols. In other words, what meanings does the organization ascribe to these symbols?

These understandings are then interpretively put in context with the program. For each symbol that is encapsulated in the program and in the past activism or statements of the organization, the researchers should ask: what is the meaning that might be attributed to the program by the organization?

In our case study we based this phase on an in-depth analysis of the 27 organizations and the communities they claim to represent, their activism, positions and

ideologies, and interpretive deductions made from our insights for our case study. These meanings were verified by interviews with officials in the organizations, which forms the seventh phase in our methodology. However, to avoid repetition, we are not detailing the predicted symbolic meanings that each selected organizations attributes to the relocation plan here. We will do so as part of the meaning cluster and their story-lines, to be presented in phases 5 and 6.

5. Creating "meaning clusters" from of all of the symbolic meanings that emerged in phase 4

In this phase, the researcher should organize and classify all of the symbolic meanings that have been identified in the previous phase and are encapsulated in the program into a few meaning clusters. Practically, the data should be divided into segments, with each segment focusing on a particular theme. Once that step is accomplished, all of the segments that contain the same theme can be classified together into one meaning cluster (see: Strauss & Corbin, 1990). We define "meaning cluster" as a group of meanings that share a similar theme. For example, symbolic meanings that are linked to economic issues would be classified into a meaning cluster called "an economic cluster." One of the major difficulties in this phase is to create a title for each meaning cluster. We recommend that titles be general enough to include different symbolic meanings.

In the classification we did in relation to the relocation program we identified three meaning clusters. The Arab-Jewish cluster refers to the symbolic meanings of the relocation plan in relation to the complicated and sensitive Jewish-Arab relations in the Negev. This cluster places nationalism at the hub of the discussion. The distributional justice and injustice cluster refers to resource allocation and economic gaps between mainstream Israeli society and the society in the Negev as well as internal inequality among communities in the Negev. The environmental cluster refers to the symbolic meanings of the relocation plan in relation to its environmental impact. This cluster focuses on the tension between sustainability and development of the Negev.

6. Organizing the knowledge in each meaning cluster into several story-lines

However, the story-line cannot rely only on the symbolic meanings: it should synthesize the symbolic meanings, and the knowledge about the communities and the local organizations that claim to represent them with the program. The result is several clusters of symbolic meanings, each made up of several story-lines. The story-lines in each cluster differ from each other. Each story-line presents an attitude to the program that is built from the histories, cultural backgrounds, past experiences, and interests of organizations that share similar values. All this knowledge is presented in relation to the program. Table 1 details the meaning cluster(s) that every organization attributes to the program and the story-lines constructed by those organizations about these clusters.

The presentation of the meaning clusters is the outcome of the evaluative methodology, i.e., the prediction of the meanings that local organizations attribute to the program. This outcome should help policymakers reconsider the program before the deliberative process begins and—as much as possible—to mold the program with respect to the needs and positive expectations of the organizations.

7. Verifying the symbolic meaning, meaning clusters and story-lines generated by our interpretive analysis by conducting face-to-face interviews with members of all local organizations that were listed in phase 3, and refining the results accordingly

In these interviews a single question should be asked: "What is the meaning that you or your organization attributes to the program?" Yanow (2000, p. 16) argues that "our understanding of the meanings may be wrong—we have made an interpretation that is not in keeping with the actor's intent." To avoid incorrect perceptions, verification is necessary. We conducted the interviews in summer 2007 and the interviews validated our interpretative analysis.

We will now apply the sixth and seventh phases to our case study—the program to relocate the IDF bases to the Negev. The results were already refined after the interviews.

The Meaning Clusters

The Arab-Jewish Cluster

The Arab-Jewish conflict is the major factor that explains the state of militarism in Israel (Kimmerling, 2001). The very existence of the Arab national minority in Israel is associated with security risks. However, at the heart of the Jewish-Arab conflict in Israel is the land issue: the question of which group possesses the land. In the Negev this conflict is quite evident. While the Bedouins claim rights to the land they are living on, arguing that it is their historic native land, the official state policy, which is supported by Jewish local authorities in the Negev, sees them as "invaders."

The conflict may generate symbolic meanings when local organizations learn of the plan to relocate the military bases. Our research identifies two main symbolic meanings that are embedded in this meaning cluster, suggesting diverse ways of reading the nature of the Arab-Jewish conflict, and the role of the IDF and the relocation plan within the conflict. The first regards the IDF as the long arm of Zionism, aimed at oppressing the Bedouins, particularly their claims for recognition of their land rights. The second also regards the IDF as the long arm of Zionism, but whose aim is maintaining Jewish territorial control in order to achieve the main goal of Jewish independence in Israel. Each one of these symbolic meanings is represented by a story-line.

1. The IDF as the oppressor of the Bedouin minority. This story-line is articulated by human rights NGOs active on behalf of Bedouin communal interests. These NGOs analyze the status of the 160,000 Bedouins by employing approaches that focus on

indigenous peoples and their territorial rights. These approaches see the state and the army in particular as a biased power that advances and normalizes the demand of the majority group to enjoy exclusive rights over the land (Tzfadia, 2010). All of these approaches make the relocation plan appear as yet another means of invalidating the land claims of the Bedouins.

The background behind these voices is the structural transformations in Israeli society (Ben-Portat et al., 2008), which have influenced the IDF's spatial activities. In particular, the emergence of human rights NGOs, part of the new multiculturalism in Israeli society, which challenges the Jewish, secular, and Western hegemony, seeks to augment the representation and recognition of communities in Israel and advocates for their civil rights (Yonah & Shenhav, 2005). The relocation plan may underscore the tension between the role of the IDF as the long arm of the Jewish state and the claims for recognition made by communities in the Negev, mainly by the Bedouin community.

Human rights NGOs have a long history of activism in the Negev. In particular, they support the Bedouins' demand to be recognized as an indigenous people who have rights over their land, and the right to develop their cultural identity. In the past years (2006–10), for example, all the listed NGOs (Table 1) petitioned the Israeli High Court against settlement projects for Jews, arguing that they aim to prevent access of the Bedouins to their land, and represent an unjust land allocation policy. On the same grounds, the NGOs also petitioned against the new regional master plan, which ignores the unauthorized Bedouin villages.

The history of relations between the IDF and the Bedouins offers many reasons to suspect the IDF's intentions with respect to the relocation plan. After the war in 1948 through which the State of Israel was established, the IDF removed the Bedouins from their land in the western part of the Negev and concentrated them in the eastern, less fertile, part of the Negev. In 1980 the IDF decided to relocate the Nevatim military airport to the Negev, evicting thousands of Bedouins from their land for this purpose. According to the Negev Coexistence Forum (2006), the IDF holds 24 percent of the total of Bedouin land. In October 2006, the Israel Land Authority demolished the informal village of a-Sira, adjacent to the Nevatim military airport. Adalla and the RCUV argue that the reason behind the demolition was the plan to expand Nevatim, as part of the relocation program.

Furthermore, NGOs may question the relocation plan's decision-making process: no participatory or deliberative process took place, and the attitudes of the Bedouins have never been taken into consideration. The RCUV claimed in this context that Israel regards the development of the Negev as a matter for Jews only. In this vein, planning in Israel in general, and the relocation plan in particular, contains symbols of dominion over the Bedouin land, as part of the general policies of Judaizing the Negev, reducing the amount of Bedouin land, and planning and constructing new Jewish settlements. A concrete example is the fact that Omer, an affluent suburb, has managed to expel a Bedouin village within its jurisdiction (Tzfadia, 2006), and now a new neighborhood for military officials and their families is being built in the Bedouin village's stead. Thus, there is no reason for these

organizations to view the relocation plan as a program that aims to develop the Negev for the good of its Bedouin residents.

The other story-line in this meaning cluster regards the relocation plan as a pioneering Zionist vision. The IDF symbolizes the "agent" of the Zionist project.

2. The Agent of the Zionist Project. Several organizations and Jewish local authorities attach positive meanings to the relocation plan in the context of the Arab-Jewish cluster. The positive image is linked to a broader process in the relations between society and the IDF in Israel, namely, the militarization of Israel's periphery. Global economic changes have reduced the profits from war while opening up new opportunities for the middle and upper classes, most of whom live in the central region of the country (Ram, 2008). In this sense, the relocation plan symbolizes the demilitarization of the center of the country, in both a physical and symbolic sense. The IDF is now relying increasingly on Jewish soldiers from the marginal groups in society, particularly in combat units. In this sense Jewish peripheral communities consider service in the army, but more importantly, identification with the IDF's values and needs, as an avenue for social mobility (Levy, 2007).

The relocation plan involves the mythical values of pioneering and defense, which have been linked to each other from the early days of Zionism (Zerubavel, 2000). The IDF has played a central role in the project of controlling "national land" against the territorial "aggression" of the Arabs. Its soldiers were settled near the borders after 1948. The IDF expropriated Palestinian land in the West Bank and allocated it for settlements, claiming that the settlements serve security needs. Recently, the Ministry of Defense has financed the construction of fences around new Jewish settlements in the Negev in the name of safeguarding "national land." According to these views, the Bedouins are illegally settled on public land, and continue to "steal" the Negev's land. Thus, the army's arrival in the Negev is a safeguard against the "theft" of national land.

Such a symbolic meaning might be attributed by local and regional Jewish authorities to the proposed relocation. These groups can utilize the Zionist ethos of Judaizing the Negev to increase their population with the army officials and their families who would come to settle in the area. For example, the Ramat Negev mayor argued that "Ben Gurion [Israel's first Prime Minister] had no intentions to build a Bedouin state in the Negev . . . The key project of Ramat Negev is to increase its population. We need to settle hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Negev" (Chromachenko, 2003).

The arrival of military bases with thousands of new residents will reduce the sense of the Jews being a "minority" in relation to the Bedouins. This is particularly true for the Jewish suburbs near Beer Sheva, which are surrounded by unauthorized villages, and for the regional councils of Ramat Negev, which contain several unauthorized villages. "The relocation project of the military bases is seen by the residents of Ramat Negev as the ultimate demographic opportunity," says Morgenstern (2006), an environmental consultant in the Negev. The case of Omer, which is planning and marketing a new neighborhood for military officials and their families to be built over Amra, an unauthorized Bedouin village whose population has been evicted,

best symbolizes the relationship among demography, the relocation plan, and the territorial conflict between Jews and Bedouins.

Thus, questions of identity, recognition, and lack of recognition, all of which are reflected in this meaning cluster, play a central role in the plan to relocate the military bases. Though these questions are integrated into those about the redistribution of wealth and power (Fraser & Honnet, 2003), it is the following meaning cluster that is specifically devoted to resource allocation.

The Distributional Justice and Injustice Cluster

The plan to relocate the military bases has the potential to transform the contemporary "scheme" of resource distribution between the Negev as a peripheral region and other regions in Israel, as well as between established and marginalized ethno-classes in the Negev. In this sense, the relocation plan can be understood as a project that advances or impedes distributional justice. In other words, this cluster distinguishes between symbolic meanings of distributional justice and symbolic meanings that suggest increasing injustice.

Why do we associate the IDF's spatial reorganization program with socio-economic questions? Since the Yom Kippur (October) war in 1973, the Lebanon wars (1982–85, 2006) and the Palestinian Intifadas (1987–93, 2001–06), the autonomy of the IDF and the government to implement security policies has been eroded, mainly because of the rise of a market-oriented society. Values of liberalism and individualism have replaced the republican values of collectivism and nationalism, mainly among upper-class secular Jews (Levy, 2007; Shafir & Peled, 2002). The market economy ethos nourishes public criticism of the IDF as an organization that wastes public resources at the expense of economic growth. Thus, since the mid-1990s there has been a growing awareness that it is a key priority of economic policy to significantly reduce the military budget.

The IDF seeks the legitimacy of the upper class and business community by adjusting its activities accordingly: it adopts codes of TQM and utilizes new public management instruments and language of management; outsources logistics; reduces the duration of reserve duty; and markets army products (Levy, 2010).

The strategic plan to relocate military bases to the Negev is presented as one that offers efficient land use by exchanging expensive land in the central region for inexpensive land in the periphery, and demonstrates efficient infrastructure management by managing clusters of bases instead of individual bases spread out over a wide area. Thus, the program should be seen as a symbolic statement about the role of the army in the new "real estate discourse," which is enjoying growing popularity in Israel (Shenhav, 2000). At the same time, the army emphasizes its commitment to provide economic development to the Negev. This promise is embedded in a national narrative, enabling the army to play both in the national and economic arenas.

1. The Relocation Program and Distributional Justice. There is a growing awareness in Israeli society, mainly among peripheral Jewish groups, that the IDF can serve as an avenue for improving the economic status of individuals and communities (Levy,

2007). Many Jewish communities in the Negev might regard the relocation program as an opportunity for public and private investment in the Negev, encouraging employment resources, improving the Negev's infrastructure and, generally, bringing prosperity to the region.

The Jewish local authorities see the program as an opportunity to attract new, affluent residents. The suburbs near Beer Sheva will expand, with a population of similarly high economic status as their residents. Omer's spokesman said that high-ranking officers and pilots were to live in the suburbs; mid-rank officials would live in Beer Sheva; and those of lower rank would reside in Dimona and Yeruham. Furthermore, the suburbs are preparing land for constructing new houses, hoping that the relocation program will bring more people to the Negev. The villages of Ramat Negev are crying out for new residents, and are pinning their hopes on the plan. In recent years, these villages have marketed themselves as communities that offer a high quality of life, which may help in the marketing process to army officials.

It should be mentioned that the IDF's high-tech units are planned to be relocated to Beer Sheva's industrial park near Ben Gurion University. The plan is that civilian industries will be developed around these units that will support the military. The two Jewish towns of Dimona and Yeruham, which have faced problems of limited sources of employment and relatively low income levels, share similar hopes. In 2002, the average monthly income in Israel was 6199 NIS, but in Yeruham it was 4739 NIS and in Dimona 5129 NIS. Thus, the arrival of the military bases potentially promises to increase job opportunities and salaries.

Beyond the issues of employment and population, the relocation program also promises increased revenue for the local authorities. Some of the new bases are planned within the jurisdictions of the local authorities, and the army will pay them municipal taxes. This is particularly true for Beer Sheva and Ramat Negev, where large-scale construction of military bases is to take place.

The Bedouin local authorities as well might attribute a positive symbolic meaning to the relocation program in the context of the distributional justice meaning cluster. In a process that took place in Israel's northern periphery, the Galilee, the Judaization program and the arrival of Jews exposed unjust policies in dealing with the Palestinian citizens of the area. A similar process may happen in the Negev: the relocation plan may have to move hand-in-hand with improving the Bedouin community's standards of living.

NGOs like Yadid, which promote the empowerment of communities, are the most obvious component to be analyzed in this story-line. Yadid emphasizes the economic gaps between ethnic groups in Israel, and believes that by making investments in education and infrastructure these gaps can be minimized. An influx of population might contribute to improved educational facilities, and there is a chance that the IDF will make efforts to improve civilian facilities in order to entice its officials and their families to live near the new bases.

This story-line indicates that the general assumption is that the relocation plan will not transform the social order, but may reduce the gaps between groups. The flip side of this cluster, to be presented below, suggests that the relocation plan symbolizes the increasing of those gaps.

2. The Relocation Program and Distributional Injustice. Many organizations working in the Negev attribute a negative symbolic meaning to the relocation program. It is their view that the program will increase the economic gaps between the Negev and the rest of Israel and between the communities in the Negev. In 1994, an inter-ministerial committee ("Marketing the Military Bases Project") discussed the dis-mantling of 120 military bases in and near cities in the central regions of the country and the marketing of the land. The committee estimated that 80,000 housing units could be built on the land vacated by the army and that the total income for the State of Israel from the marketing process would be US $6.5 billion (as of 2006; see: Bareli, 2006). A leading real estate appraiser in Israel, Gilad HaMeiri, argued that "the wish to develop the Negev does not determine the economic reality that transforms the evacuated land into a built-up urban environment, apparently to finance the reloca-tion [of the bases] to the Negev" (quoted in Rosenberg, 2007). Economically speak-ing, the relocation plan will benefit the IDF by improving its infrastructure; the Government of Israel by increasing its revenues; central local authorities by increas-ing taxes; and residents of the central regions by reducing housing costs, increasing the diversity of housing opportunities, and ridding cities of a military presence. Yet, there are no guarantees that army officials and their families will move to the Negev, that new infrastructure (roads and railways) will serve the Negev's urban centers, or that the new bases will purchase services from companies in the Negev or that these impacts will affect all communities in an equal manner.

Our interviews confirm that these details are well-known in the Negev, invoking the Mitzpeh Ramon experience. In the early 1980s, the tiny Jewish town of Mitzpeh Ramon in the southern part of the Negev was part of a military relocation project that followed Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula as part of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty of 1978. In its efforts to persuade officials and their families to live in Mitzpeh Ramon, the town's local authority planned and built a new neighborhood for the officers and their families. However, the officers did not purchase houses there, so the neighborhood remained empty for many years (Oren & Regev, 2008). Today, Dimona and Yeruham, two small, Jewish, and relatively poor towns (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009), which are located near the planned bases, are aware that they are not attractive enough. However, the towns are adopting an optimistic approach: their mayors are saying that development may bring prosperity, and town residents may find economic mobility through employment in the new bases.

For the Bedouin community in both the townships and the unauthorized vil-lages, the relocation program will not bring immediate prosperity. The terminology of "development" in the Negev is considered a code for Judaizing the Negev. Even at the level of discourse, the program does not consider the Bedouin community.

The awareness that the relocation program may adversely affect economic gaps might actually encourage economic organizations to support the program. It is reasonable to assume that the relocation of the military bases to the Negev will attract manufacturers and businesses that support the army logistically, as they will enjoy a reduction in their land and labor expenses. This was the case when the IDF built bases in Sinai after the war in 1967, when the IDF relocated bases to the Negev after the peace agreement with Egypt, and during the construction of the Separation Wall

between Israel and the West Bank (since 2002). In all of these cases, construction companies and entrepreneurs were the beneficiaries, but local small business had limited opportunities to enjoy these benefits.

The Environmental Meaning Cluster

There is a disparity between the image of the Negev as the Israeli wilderness and the fact that it has become Israel's backyard in environmental terms. The Negev is home to the nuclear facilities near Dimona, the National Site for the Treatment of Waste at Dudaim, the National Site for the Treatment of Hazardous Waste at Ramat Hovav, quarries and mines, etc. In the context of this meaning cluster we can identify two story-lines: NGOs that claim that the relocation of the military bases is an impetus to reduce pollution in the Negev, and NGOs that regard the building of new bases as an environmental hazard. The two story-lines are encapsulated in a growing concern in Israel about the environment and the army's use of natural resources (Ram, 2008).

1. An Impetus for Reducing Pollution. Environmentalists in Israel view the Ramat Hovav National Site for the Treatment of Hazardous Waste as the embodiment of evil. The area around this site suffers from toxic chemical emissions, air and ground pollution. Environmentalists have argued that the plan to construct a cluster of bases at the Negev Junction 7 km south of Ramat Hovav should be canceled, as long as the pollution level is high. They demand that Ramat Hovav industries adopt the EU's standards of pollution. Concern for the health of soldiers who will serve at the future bases was the catalyst for revealing Ramat Hovav's industrial hazards. In contrast to environmentalists worldwide, who protest against military bases because of environmental damage (see: Doxford & Hill, 1998; Hooks & Smith, 2005), in this case the Israeli environmentalists decided to "accept" the damage of the military bases, and to take advantage of the relocation plan in order to oppose Ramat Hovav. Some of them, like Sustainable Development for the Negev, argue that as long as the bases are planned to be located near existing infrastructures (such as roads, as in the case of the Negev Junction, the Nevatim airport or the Beer Sheva industrial zone), environmental damage will be negligible.

In April 2004, Deputy Chief of the General Staff Gabi Ashkenazi stated with regard to the Negev Junction plan that "the army is considering an alternative location" (Abrahamson, 2004). A month later, the Ministry of Health published the epidemiological report on the Bedouin residents near Ramat Hovav, which explored the correlation between mortality rates and proximity to Ramat Hovav. In November 2004, the government decided to adopt the Ministry of the Environment's plan to reduce air and water pollution caused by the Ramat Hovav industrial zone. The Prime Minister's Office was authorized to follow the implementation of the relocation plan, as well as the plan to reduce the pollution (Government of Israel, 2004). Indeed, the government linked the relocation program to the reduction of pollution. In December 2006, the Ministry of Environment and the industrial council signed an accord by which Ramat Hovav was forced to implement a plan to reduce pollution. Subsequently, The Israel Union for Environmental Defense claimed that the plan did

not respond to the major pollution problems. In April 2007, after two years of close surveillance and long legal proceedings, the government approved the establishment of a major cluster of IDF bases at the Negev Junction (Prime Minister's Office Spokesman, April 1, 2007).

Local organizations in the Negev supported the governmental decision. Local politicians asked: if Ramat Hovav posed a risk to soldiers, then what about the residents of the Ramat Hovav area? A coalition of regional councils, local councils and Bedouin councils, both formal and informal, joined in the environmental protest, arguing that the relocation program should be an impetus for reducing pollution from Ramat Hovav.

2. Symbol of Environmental Hazard. The discourse about the ecological cost of security is considered here in a broader context, as another method of monitoring the army. In other words, environmental protection can be used as part of the politics aimed at challenging militarism (Wilcox, 2004). Since the end of the Cold War, environmentalists have demanded that the impact of armies on the environment be minimized. This call goes beyond questions of environmental protections and encompasses the demand for a change in the status of militarism in daily civilian life. The most prominent example is the protest of environmental NGOs in Japan against American military bases: while the protest is seemingly focused on environmental issues, it is, in fact, a protest against the presence of the U.S. army in Japan (Wilcox, 2004).

Similarly, some environmental NGOs in Israel have adopted a motto that goes beyond environmental concerns. Many of them are identified as social NGOs (DeShalit, 2005), such as the Israeli Union for Environmental Defense, which has a history of criticizing the IDF for causing environmental hazards, mainly in the Negev. This NGO criticized the army for polluting underground water near its airports, and warned of the potential dangers of the nuclear reactor near Dimona, of Ramat Hovav, and of the relocation program. In December 2006, it protested against illegal digging near the Nevatim military airport, which was done as part of the relocation plan. The Israeli Union for Environmental Defense is also concerned about damage caused to natural sites. It has a history of protest against new roads, new settlements, new neighborhoods, and construction near the shoreline. Thus, the relocation program of the bases in the Negev symbolizes an environmental risk that should be avoided.

Summary and Policy Implications

Our research aims to craft an interpretive policy analysis as a predictive tool by using the case of the program of relocating Israeli military bases. For this purpose we suggest an evaluative tool that is inspired by IPA, which focuses on the symbolic meanings that organizations and communities attribute to what can be termed (following True et al., 1999) a policy image. Unlike traditional IPA, however, which narrates policy disputes or explains policy outcomes, we have created a tool that we believe can be used to predict how various communities will respond to a proposed idea. We developed a unique evaluative methodology that first predicts the symbolic

meanings that local organizations may attribute to the policy image, and then verifies this prediction by interviewing major players. In our sample case, we highlighted the competing images of the program and the resulting competing attitudes.

Let us summarize the advantages of this methodology. First, scholars are provided with tools to track changes in agents' opinions about a concrete policy, from the moment the policy is no more than an "image" through the stage where it is fleshed out and finally to the stage where it is actually implemented. The intent is not only to track the changes but also to understand their origins, including the impact of coalition building, the deliberative processes of decision making, the manipulation by state agencies, the impact of transparency, and more. To recall, IPA-informed methods are the suitable tool for analyzing agents' reactions to policy images.

Second, the proposed predictive tool may assist policymakers by mapping the cultural and political values of the communities that might be affected by the program, and their possible standpoints on the program. Understanding these symbolic meanings is valuable information in molding programs and minimizing objections to them. The objective analysis usually used by decision makers in insufficient when the policy is imbued with contradictory, culturally loaded meanings. Policy analysis that considers quantitative data seeking "to design economically efficient and technologically efficacious solutions" (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. xiii) is not appropriate here. The attitudes toward the relocation program, like any other program, cannot be predicted and analyzed without considering values, as well as social, political, and cultural factors. In our case study, such factors include the relations between the army and the civil society, the image of the Negev, and the way in which the Negev's residents view this image, and disputes in Israeli society about the distribution of wealth, status, and a variety of political and cultural assets. These factors are rooted in historical processes, and without them it is impossible to analyze any program.

In addition, our methodology has the potential to launch a collaborative process, one that regards the implementation of the evaluative methodology as the groundwork for public participation and decision making.

The relocation plan was used in this study as a template on which to develop and test the evaluative methodology. The significance of this methodology thus goes far beyond the specific empirical issue under study and can be applicable to a variety of policy issues, or to policy processes in other countries.

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