

## The Role of the Home Environment in Cultural Transmission

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### Summary

This paper is based on an examination of the relationship existing between the values of the Bedouin society and the physical properties of the environment in which the children are raised. It shows the relationship between the Bedouin's conditions of life and their prevailing values and describes how Bedouin society has traditionally used the organization of the children's environment as a means for their socialization. This section of the paper is based on literature on the subject, observations and interviews conducted at Bedouin encampments located in Israeli deserts. In the second part, the paper presents the findings of an empirical research. It shows the implications of the change in the Bedouin way of life, in their technology and in cultural values, as well as on the design of the home and on the organization of the children's environment once these are located in permanent houses made of concrete. This part is based upon observations and detailed home interviews with all members of the family in 31 dwellings and on the analysis of children's questionnaires (aged from 11 to 13) answered at school (N=74).

The findings of the research show that:

- Despite the fact that 70 years have passed since the Bedouins have settled down on their own land and despite changes in building technology -the principles of planning and organizing the home have been preserved and even strengthened.
- The manner in which the Bedouins' home is organized testifies that it serves to support their cultural values and assists in implanting them in the children.
- Significant changes in the organization of the home do not occur as a direct result of technological changes, but rather as a result of changes in the concept of the major cultural components: the personal status, the meaning of deeds and the perception of time.

### Résumé

Cet article examine les relations entre valeurs de la société bédouine et propriétés physiques de l'environnement où les enfants sont élevés. Les relations entre conditions de vie des Bédouins et leurs valeurs dominantes y sont décrites. L'article montre comment la société bédouine a traditionnellement utilisé l'organisation de l'environnement des enfants comme moyen de leur socialisation. Cette partie de l'article est basé sur la

littérature existante sur ce thème, ainsi que sur des observations et entretiens menés dans des camps bédouins situés dans les déserts israéliens. Une deuxième partie présente les résultats d'une recherche empirique. On y montre quelles sont les implications du changement dans le mode de vie bédouin, dans la technologie et les valeurs culturelles, ainsi qu'au niveau du plan de la maison et de l'organisation de l'environnement des enfants une fois qu'ils habitent de manière sédentaire dans des maisons en dur. Cette partie est basée sur des observations et entretiens détaillés avec tous les membres de 31 familles et sur l'analyse des données de questionnaires (N=74) auxquels les enfants ont répondu à l'école.

Les résultats indiquent que:

- bien que 70 ans se soient écoulés depuis la sédentarisation des Bédouins et malgré les changements subis par la technique de construction, les principes de planification et d'organisation des maisons ont été préservés et même renforcés;
- la manière dont la maison des Bédouins est organisée démontre qu'elle sert de support à des valeurs culturelles et de soutien dans leur transmission aux enfants;
- les changements importants dans l'organisation de la maison ne sont par conséquent pas des changements technologiques mais plutôt le résultat d'une évolution de composantes "culturelles majeures": le statut personnel, la signification des actions et la perception du temps.

## 1. Introduction

This article deals with the connection between the design and organization of the home and the social values of the culture, of which the home is meant to be part. While for many years it was common practice to examine how culture is reflected in public buildings and in technology, the tendency to examine its role in the dwelling (which were traditionally considered as representing the basic human needs ) is on the rise.

In this context Gauvain, Altman and Fahim (1983, 180) state:

"The home is a window to a culture in that it displays religion and cosmology, sex roles, family organization, and a variety of aspects of culture."

In referring to the home, Duncan (1985) writes that the built environment is not only a window to a culture but also a medium through which culture is expressed:

"The built environment, in addition to providing shelter, serves as a medium of communication because encoded within it are elements of social structure. It speaks in the language of objects about the moral order of the culture. It serves as the stage set for the morality play, the backdrop for that collection of stories that a people tell themselves about themselves, in order that they may better know who they are, how to behave, and what to cherish" (Duncan, 1985, 148).

Rapoport (1990, 14) states that not only does the home reflect society's values but it is also supporting them:

"A dwelling is not just a structure; it is an institution, a social and cultural unit of space created to support the way of life of people".

The home, according to Rapoport (1987, 13), can be considered

"as an active component of culture, used as an element of that culture rather than as a passive container of culture..".

The concept of home being not only the mirror reflecting the cultural values of its builders (Altman and Gauvain, 1981; Rapoport, 1969, 1980; Lawrence, 1987; Duncan, 1981, 1985), but also an active means of shaping this culture (Rapoport, 1987, 1990; Geertz, 1973; Duncan, 1985), moves the discussion about the connection between the home and culture towards its practical applications in design. This concept requires, according to Rapoport (1987), that architecture should be "more culturally responsive". To facilitate this, "it is crucial" according to Lawrence (1987, 157)

"to comprehend which cultural variables have an impact on the design and use of houses and how these variables function in the domestic realm during the course of a life cycle".

This article shows the results of a research performed with the aim of promoting knowledge in the direction indicated by Lawrence; the research dealt with the role played by social values in shaping the environment and with the role played by the environment in inculcating these values in children. The research refers to children not as representing a single stratum (with comparatively little power and little responsibility), in a complex age stratification system (see Boocock 1976, 248), but rather as the social component which guarantees the continuity of society and of its values. According to Geertz (1973), the child is born with the mental potential suitable for many different modes of life. He dies (as an old person) after living only one of them. Culture is the factor which routes the vast potential of the child into a specific groove through the mechanisms it utilizes to control his/her experiences and to direct his/her behaviour.

In this respect, the child must not be seen as one of the weak links in society but rather as a challenge - as raw material to be shaped and worked on in order to reach a stage where succession can be guaranteed. The research, of which certain findings are shown in this article, examined the way in which three societies, all having different social values, organize the physical environment of their children. These three societies have lived side by side, in Israel, for nearly 80 years. Each represents a different social orientation and lives in a different type of settlement: The *individual-oriented* society in the urban neighbourhood; the *family-oriented* society in the Bedouin village; and the *community-oriented* society in the kibbutz. These three societies, all on similar economic levels, living in the same climate and under the same rule, organize their children's physical space in totally different ways, in a manner which is intended to link the children to the preferred social organization: to the same organization which is perceived (or was perceived) as having an advantage, in terms of survival, over a long term.

The article deals with only one of these societies: the Bedouin society which is represented in this study as a *family-oriented society* and whose characteristics suit those of the collectivist society according to Duncan's (1981, 1985) model and also according to Triandis *et al.* (1988).

## 2. Research Hypotheses

The main hypotheses for our purpose were:

- The child's physical environment is part of the cultural mechanism, intended to control behaviour and experience, in a manner which will make the child prefer the social organization which the society identifies with. (In our context: the Bedouin child's physical environment is intended to support his / her attachment to the family).
- The values which society wishes to implant in the children are values imbued with its identity. These values have a tendency to persist, even if the circumstances which created them no longer exist. Therefore, a society wishing to protect its essence will not rush to change its values or its control mechanisms even when its mode of living and the available technology changes. (In our context: the Bedouin society's values adapted to the nomadic life in the desert are likely to persist even under other conditions. The Bedouin child's environment will continue to be shaped by those principles which led to their shaping in the desert.)
- The conclusion that values from the past do not conform with the needs of the future could cause a breakdown in a society interested in maintaining its identity and wishing to ensure progress. Such a breakdown could be expressed clearly in the organization of the child's environment - as the child is the one who is supposed to be the bridge between the society's past and its future. (In our context: the contrast between the Bedouin society's wish to maintain its identity on the one hand, and the recognition that it must train its children for a future unlike the past, on the other hand, could be expressed through lack of continuity, contradictions and confusion in the organization of the children's environment).

## 3. The Bedouin Family - The Preferred Social Organization under Desert Conditions

Most of the Arab world claims Bedouin origins, looks up to Bedouins as the "ideal" Arabs and to their values and mores as the basis of Arab ethics and social tenets (Patai, 1973; Weekes, 1978).

The Bedouin's values are derived from their way of life in the desert, demonstrating human territoriality in conditions characteristic of pre-agricultural societies. Under these conditions, the size of the group living on the territory, as well as the length of its sojourn, is limited by the capacity of the ground to maintain them. This group must have internal cooperation and at the same time continuously look for new areas to settle as well as protect territory with undefined and indefensible borders (Weekes, 1978; Dickson, 1951; Mauger, 1987; Epstein, 1933; Ashkenazi, 1974; and others).

The family represents the social organization which has the necessary internal cohesion, enabling it to prevent decay and to ensure cooperation, as well as the potential of continuity. Its stability, in the nomadic desert conditions, can compensate its members for a lack of permanence.

The Bedouins' values, being the only guarantee for continuity of society and the sole answer to the needs of the individual living in the desert, are directed at strengthening internal family forces, to create mutual dependence between the members

and rewarding behaviour which satisfies the family's interest. In reviewing the literature of the Muslim Arabs, Weekes (1978, 33) concludes:

"The Bedouin life-style has become symbolic of basic Arab values. These serve to ensure harmony in human relationships, solidarity of the family in the face of adversity and a continuation of the system".

#### 4. Organization of the Bedouin Child's Physical Environment

##### 4.1. *Strengthening the child's attachment to the family and preventing conditions for individuation*

(This section is based on observations and interviews in the Judean desert and the Negev and upon the following sources: Epstein, 1933; Ashkenazi, 1974; Dickson, 1951; Patai, 1973; Ginat, 1982; Granquist, 1947; Havakook, 1986; Levi, 1987; Lewando-Hundt, 1984; Marx, 1984; and Weekes, 1978).

The organization of the physical environment in which the children are raised is aimed at accustoming them to living with others and developing their sense of belonging and commitment to the family.

From the moment of birth, until maturity, the children stay with their people both awake and asleep: until they are weaned they are attached to their mother's body and she feeds them whenever desired. In the evening, the children sit near their parents at the fireside, listening to the talk and fall asleep there without being aware of the passage into sleep and without parting from the family. The mother (or grandmother) carries the sleeping toddlers and puts them to bed near her, where they share bedding and pillow. Waking up, the children find themselves amongst their siblings, hearing their breathing, smelling their odour and sensing the warmth of their bodies.

When they grow up, boys and girls are separated and sleep in different corners of the tent. The bedding is spread out every night. The children do not have a fixed place to sleep - they may sleep elsewhere every night and in the company of a different sibling.

Bedouin children do not take regular meals. From infancy they are used to asking for food whenever they are hungry and identify the person supplying food as the one satisfying their needs. At family meals (mostly in the evening) or when there are guests, everyone eats with their hands, sharing the same plate. The Bedouin do not use individual dishes. There is no external indication of the number of participants at a meal. Division of portions does not exist. People simply share the food, respecting the needs of others. When there are guests, the same plate will be used several times and the children will be the last to get their food. The children may even wait on the visitors, but will never eat in their presence. This custom is intended not only to show their status but also to teach them to postpone satisfaction and to prepare to be hosts in the future (a major role in Bedouin society).

Until they are 7 years old, the children stroll around the women within the encampment, playing with their siblings and cousins. They take part in all family activities and help in the housework, participate in meetings of the entire family (serving, pouring away remains of coffee, removing ash from the fire and listening to

the conversation and to the stories). In this way they learn the customs and manners of their society.

In the entire encampment, there is no object or place identified as belonging to a certain child. Whatever they do, the children find themselves in the company of the family. There is minimal information or experience which belongs to them only. All their personal activities (eating, sleeping, playing and relieving themselves) are done spontaneously, according to their needs and in their own time- without any interference and without any special ceremony.

From the age of 7 to 12, boys and girls paths begin to diverge. They begin to spend more time with relatives of the same sex, learning to give and to get, to help and be helped. When they reach sexual maturity, they are considered partners of their parents and share the responsibility for the family and everything it owns.

#### *4.2. The son's or daughter's status and preparation for their family roles*

The Bedouin children's future role in the family determines their status, the attitude towards them and the method of their education- from the very day of their birth. Bedouin society, being patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal, sees the son as the perpetuator of the family, a strengthening power for the protection of the territory and its enlargement, and a supporter of his parents in their old age. The daughter is seen as being the one who will leave home in time, marry and bring children to another tribe. In Bedouin society there is a sharp distinction as to the newborn's gender. The term child does not exist as a shared name for boys and girls, and they are not brought up in the same way. Since there are no "children" in the Arabic language but only "sons" and "daughters", as claimed by Patai (1973, 28),

"there are no 'children' in the Arab consciousness either... And, accordingly there are no "child"-rearing practices in the Arab world, but only 'boy'-rearing and 'girl'-rearing practices."

The father sees himself blessed by his son and names himself after his eldest son. The mother, only after having given birth to boys, will achieve status and affection in her husband's family. The dependence of the mother on her son makes her anxious to fulfil all his needs, to devote herself to him and make much more effort for him than for his sisters. She breastfeeds him until his fourth year, whenever he wants. During this period the boy stays near her all day long: he is nourished from her body, he falls asleep in her lap and he plays nearby.

The birth of a daughter means failure for both parents. After the birth of a girl the mother is in a hurry to get pregnant again. She stops feeding her and hands her over to her elder sister or to one of her relatives. Already at the age of one year, the daughter experiences physical separation from her mother and develops dependence on additional relatives. The girl discovers the encampment surroundings at an early age. At the age of 7 or 8, she begins to join the other girls who put sheep out to pasture, thus extending her range. From the age of 12, a girl is not allowed to enter the men's area of the tent while strangers are present. She serves the guests through the curtain which separates this area from the women's section. The girl stays within the boundaries of the home and the family until she reaches maturity. She gets no privacy and does not experience social contacts with strangers. If she marries a cousin, she spends her entire lifetime within this very circle. In case she marries a stranger, she will have to move

to another encampment and join a new tribe. She lacks certainty regarding her place in the future and has never experienced a different way of life. The total dependence of the women on her physical and social environment not only ensures patriarchal rule and family monolithism but also, and this is possibly the essential point - its continuity in desert conditions (conditions where it is impossible to imagine the survival of the family without the woman's total devotion to birth, nursing and bringing up the children).

The boy stays within the encampment until the age of 7 or 8. He then begins to stay away from the tent with his friends, and to become acquainted with his environment while chasing birds. When he reaches the age of 8, his father starts taking him on his travels. In this way he meets and learns the society outside the family and the tribe. The scope of his home and social world is growing and changing. He enjoys the adventure of his excursions with his father, as well as the security within the encampment and the family, and the certainty that the encampment will be his home forever.

## **5. Changes in the Physical Environment of the Bedouin Child**

### *5.1. The Bedouin village 1920-1989*

The Bedouin village which was the object of this research is located in the northern part of Israel and is inhabited by more than 2000 people, the descendants of two households, who live on different hills separated by agricultural land. In principle the village is similar in nature, and in the manner of development, to the other Bedouin villages in the Galilee. The inhabitants, as most other Galilee Bedouins, came from the Golan Heights, making their living, until 1920, from robbery and from the sheep they pastured. Under the British Mandate, they were no longer able to carry weapons and to continue to steal, pillage or smuggle. They were given social and political autonomy, families were given legal authorization to hold the land where they lived and were given financial assistance and helped to build schools for the children. In the 20's, alongside the development of the Jewish settlement of the country, the Bedouins began to settle in permanent residences and to engage in agriculture and work as hired labourers. Permanent dwellings were gradually erected, using building materials available to the Bedouin, particularly stone and tin.

Those houses built before the 60's were single storeys. The internal divisions were replicas of those in the tent. Eventually an additional wing containing a kitchen and shower (see Figure 1) was added to the stone houses. Tin houses mostly become storehouses or animal quarters. In very few cases these sheds serve as homes for people who have no family.

Over the years, the building developed. From the 60's onwards two storey houses were built of reinforced concrete, where the lower level was intended for animals and storage and the upper level for living quarters.

The process of building changed substantially with the building of solid houses. The setting up of the tent was a process often repeated, taking several hours and mostly done by the women. Building a Bedouin village style concrete house is a slow process requiring several years and done by the men.

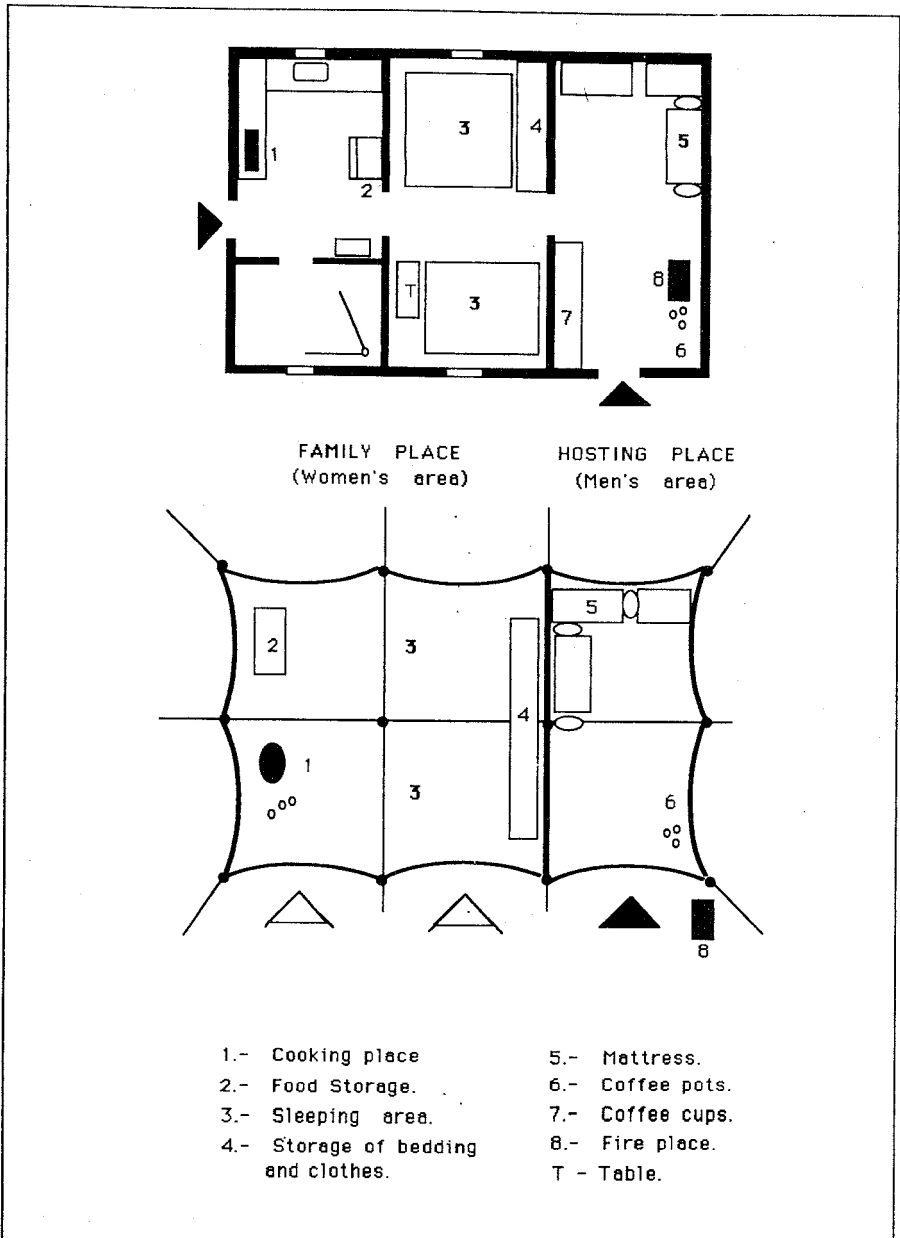


Fig. 1 The tent in the desert and the home in the village.  
 La tente dans le désert et la maison au village.



In their concrete houses the Bedouins use the television and telephone, eat food cooked on an electric stove and kept in the refrigerator. Hygienic habits have changed, due to the availability of running water and of a clothes washer in every home. Modern tiling enables daily baths and there is a total separation between the living areas and the livestock. The Bedouin's car and his agricultural machinery can be found parked next to his home.

About 75% of the heads of households in the village work as hired hands; the majority in agriculture. Some serve in the army or work as clerks and teachers. These are daily exposed to Israeli culture. The children of the village learn in state schools where they are exposed to the demands of the same culture. This exposure has resulted in a confrontation between the values of the Bedouin culture, which can be considered (according to Triandis *et al.*, 1988) as a collectivist culture, and the culture of the Western world which, as represented by the educational system, is individualistic.

### 5.2. *The home in the village - new structure built according to old values*

The findings of this research show, that in spite of the changes which have occurred in the Bedouins' life style and in the way in which they earn their living, the Bedouins were not eager to abandon the habits and values that have upheld tribal unity and family cohesion. The Bedouin attitude to their home is a direct offshoot of their image of the tent. The Bedouin custom of enlarging the tent as necessary was extended to buildings of stone and blocks - most of the family homes have been enlarged over the years according to the requirements of the nuclear family. The Bedouin habit of setting up the son's tent near the father's became even more important with the transition to houses made of blocks or concrete. The Bedouin today builds his son a modern house near his own.



Fig. 2 Bedouin household in the Galilée in Israel: the tent in which the old men still meet to drink their coffee, the house in which the family lives and the new structure designed for the elder son with the pile of blocks to complete its building.

Logement d'une famille bédouine en Galilée (Israël): les hommes âgés se rencontrent sous la tente pour boire le café, la famille vit dans la maison et un bâtiment encore en construction est destiné au fils aîné.

The effort involved in building the house means that the Bedouin invests most of his savings in building materials for his son's house and begins building while the son is still a boy. The house is built over a period of years through combined family effort, not as a functional solution to immediate needs but as a foundation for the continuation of a patrilineal tradition. The extended physical presence, over the years, of the house being built in the yard in front of the children eventually going to live there, makes this a kind of symbol for them. This concrete symbol, which did not exist in the desert, simultaneously tells them their rights within the family and the obligation involved in these rights.

The link between the head of the household and the son's homes (expressed in the relative proximity between the extended family's homes and the way the doorways face the common area) results in a situation where children meet daily their grandmothers, grandfathers and uncles (who are also permanent visitors in their home), play on a regular basis with their cousins, eat sleep and enjoy themselves, at their own choice in their cousin's homes. The social environment in which they grow up is the family, and the social climate that accompanies them is one of open affection, proximity and cooperation.

The families' houses are larger than the average tent and have at least three rooms, kitchen and a shower. New technologies (such as running water, refrigerators, TV and telephone) have entered the Bedouin household, but have not resulted in the removal of a single social function found in the tent (see figure 1).

The visitors' area (men's area), situated in the forecourt of the tent became the visitor's room near the front door. The front door leading to the guest area was always open during daytime hours, in those homes observed in this research, and anyone entering, even if not previously expected is welcomed as a desired guest. In many homes, two rooms were set aside for this purpose: one for "Western" guests and the other for Bedouin visitors. The guest room is decorated with pictures of the Kaaba in Mecca, photographs of men, members of the family who do not live in the village and embroideries of flowers and/or birds worked by the women of the household. The pictures found in the guest room in various homes were almost identical (see Duncan 1981, 43; Duncan 1985, 135).

The guest room, is considered today, as in the past, men's territory. This room comprises the men's arena of social life in the absence of social structures of a communal nature in the village.

Observations made in about 30 residences show that in families having more than two children (the average number is 7.1), sleeping arrangements were similar to those of the Bedouin tent. Young children sleep near their mother, the older ones with their siblings of the same sex. The father may be found sleeping near his wife or near his sons, in the guestroom. In all the houses, the girls' bedroom is situated (as with the women's area in the tent) in the inner part of the house; and in their room all the mattresses and blankets are stored, as in the women's section of the tent.

Sleeping arrangements in the house remained as they were in the tent- on mattresses, one next to the other, in flexible positions. The blankets and mattresses are shared. The Bedouin child can indicate the structure in the yard as his intended home but in his parents' home no area can be identified as belonging to him, not even a fixed sleeping place or even an individual mattress. This has no connection with the size of the house or the economic status of the family.

As in the tent, young children fall asleep beside their parents and are taken to bed whilst still asleep. The older children lie down on a mattress and go to bed whenever they like.

In 1989, the Bedouin family continues to take its meals according to circumstance and not time. The common meal is served on the floor and the whole family eats from one plate. Except for dinner, the children eat whenever they want. As in the tent, there are always people around, and the children never find themselves alone. Their participation in various chores is influenced by the traditional attitude towards work rather than by the actual need to perform the task.

The total control of the family, in Bedouin society, is expressed by the structural fabric of the village and the internal fabric of the household. In the same manner as in the house, *it is impossible to find expressions of individual organization, it is impossible to find expressions of public organization on a communal basis in the village.*

The village houses, which seem to be a random cluster of houses in various stages of building, testify to the lack of common planning in the entire village. The lack of overall planning in the village is accompanied by the lack of infrastructure, roads and lighting and the absence of public buildings. (Apart from the school and a mother and child care station which was set up at government initiative on agricultural areas of the village- at some distance from the living areas.)

All of this testifies to the absence of a social entity (with real power or symbolic representation) that represents the link between all of the inhabitants. Such a social entity (which is meant to develop on the basis of communal living over time) could not have developed with the Bedouin's nomadic lifestyle, and it seems that the total control of the family over Bedouin social life did not allow its development until the 80's.

The only social organization which can actually be identified in the area is that of the extended family, which comprises three generations living in a number of dwellings (3-6) near one another, and characterized by cooperation, mutual assistance and shared entertainment. The family is the unit which decides on erecting a house, on its position and design, whose decision directly influences the internal structure of the house and indirectly the fabric of the entire village which is comprised of a quantitative amalgam of family buildings. The environmental design of the home blocks any tendency to independent development on the part of individual household members. The general pattern of the village neutralizes any organized force which might harm the family's freedom of action.

Seventy years of fixed settlement have not weakened the physical patterns intended to support the familial cohesive forces. The social structure of the Bedouin village, the layout of the house and its socio-spatial division, the pattern of sitting, eating and sleeping has not changed, despite the fact that the Bedouin no longer roams, in spite of the changes in the economic base and despite the fact that the capacity of the land enables an increase both in the population and in its density. The inertia of these patterns does not stem from the physical characteristics of the environment (in this context, the Bedouin has remarkable flexibility, building, enlarging and altering his house continuously), but rather from the persistence of the social values which have become an integral part of the Bedouin identity.

### 5.3. *The School and the Home - Different settings representing different cultures*

Despite the above descriptions, it seems that the child's physical environment has been fundamentally modified. This modification does not result from a change within the home, but rather from the fact that the dwelling has lost its uniqueness in the life of a child.

Since the children's future can no longer be considered as a repetition of the past, it is not possible to educate them according to a pattern of imitation (Lamm, 1976). Nowadays, the rural Bedouin send their children to public schools, which are similar to schools in Western society. Whilst the village is constructed with a very careful adaptation of Western technology to the Bedouin way of life - the school stands in the centre of the village as a bastion (or as a Trojan horse) of another culture - including its values, and the techniques of implanting them. Introduction of school into the life of Bedouin children has caused a significant change in their physical and social environment and in their approach to time. Going to school physically detaches the children from their families. Their exposure to outside experiences, to information and to values which are not shared by the family, provide a mental backing to this break.

The school considers the children to be individuals, allocates them fixed places and personal furniture. During school hours, children have no vertical relationship with their family, but rather a horizontal relationship with their peers. At school, unlike at home, the physical conditions of boys are similar to those of the girls; both have to meet the same demands. Time at school has a different meaning than at home. The child's seating at school is not similar to that at home, both from the socio-spatial aspect and from the point of usage of furniture. Furthermore, the school cannot achieve its goals unless its influence penetrates into the home. The school compels the parents not only to see the children as individuals, but also to create conditions meeting their specific needs: to wake them up at a fixed time, to supply them with the necessary personal equipment and to allocate them space and time for doing homework.

Due to school, the children have to adjust themselves to the two different cultures they have to live with. School is an external factor competing with the family for influence over the child, as well as being a factor fostering the individual, thus detaching him from the family. This situation, as reflected in the physical layout of the house and the school, testifies to the existence of two different value systems. The position of pupils, parents and teachers, as reflected in interviews, presents serious problems resulting from the impossibility of bridging the demands of school and those of the home. Some of these problems can be seen in figure 3 and 4.

Figure 3 illustrates the desired schedules of boys and girls, aged 8 to 13, as perceived by their parents (N=35) and teachers (N=6). A comparison of these schedules indicates differences in the perception of children's rights and duties, as well as in attitudes towards the child's gender and towards the meaning of time. The parents do not yet acknowledge the children's rights to free time on their own, nor do they recognize playing as legitimate activity. They allocate time for homework during the evening hours (even though not all dwellings have light convenient for reading and writing). The time allocated by them for watching TV is generally when the family is watching TV. The girls' duties, according to the parents, are different from those of boys.

The teachers "free" the children from domestic obligations, they allow them more time for sleep and expect them to play, read and do their homework during the day, and to watch TV only when children's programs are on the screen. The teachers do not differentiate between schedules for boys and girls. (Figure 3 shows that the division by

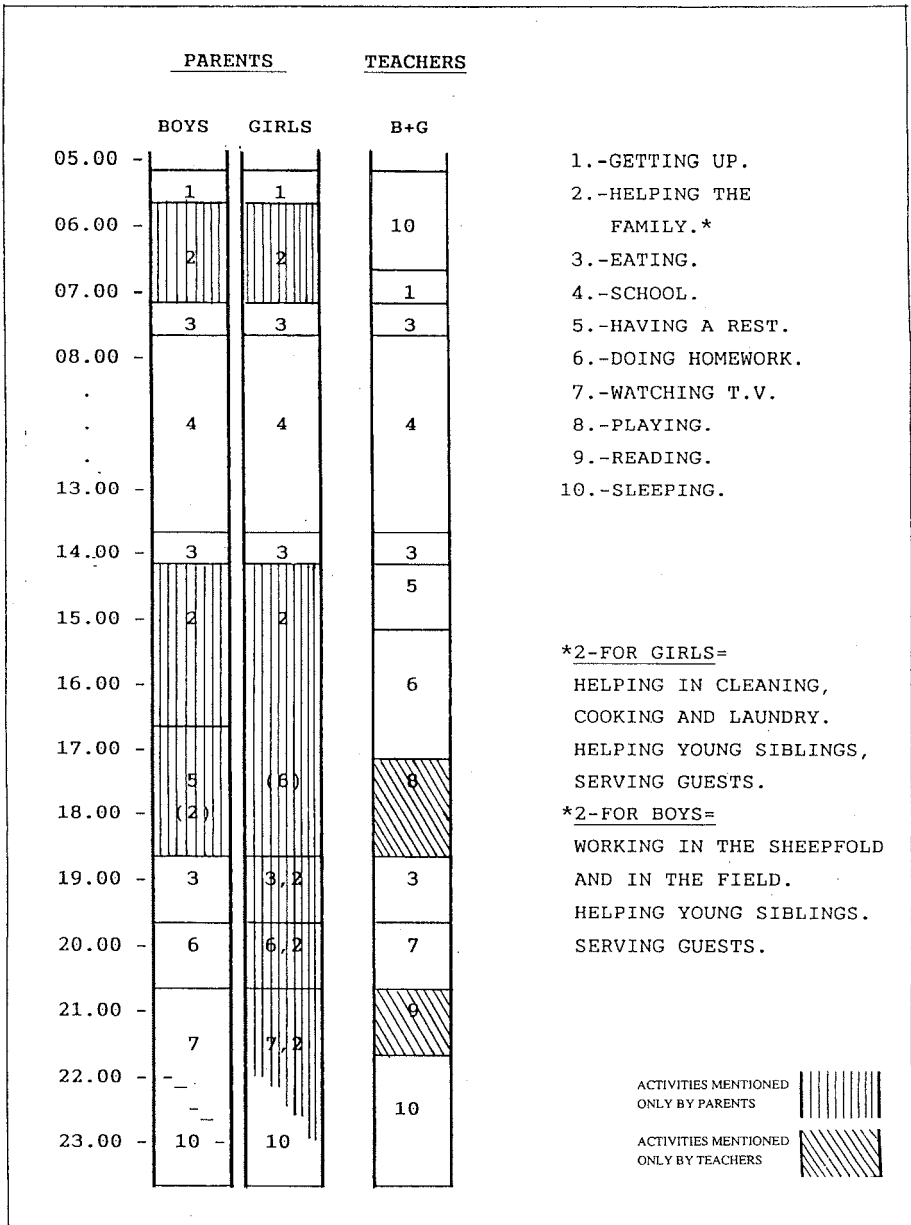


Fig. 3 Typical schedules of girls and boys - according to their parents and teachers.  
Horaires typiques pour les filles et les garçons, selon leurs parents et instituteurs.

the teachers is clearer and more decisive than that of the parents. The only time specifically delineated by the parents in the schedule was that set by the school.

The conflict between parents and teachers, as viewed from the children's schedules, shows a different approach to all the basic components of culture, according to Geertz (1973), namely: towards the status of the person in the society, towards the meaning of his/her deeds and towards time.

In this context Rapoport (1982, 180) states:

"Cultural conflicts and problems may often be more severe at the temporal level than at the spatial"...Groups with different rhythms occupying the same space may never meet. Groups with different tempos may never communicate. Groups with different rhythms may also be in conflict".

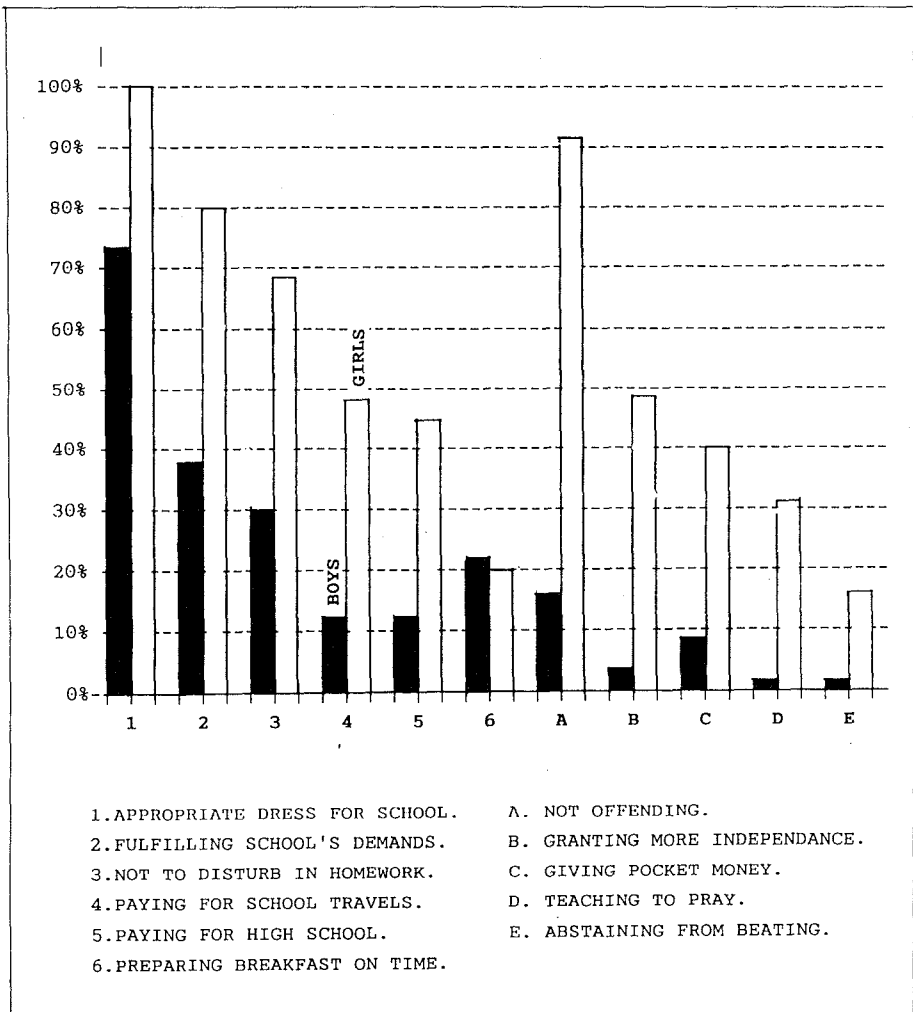


Fig. 4 Children's expectations from their parents.  
 Les attentes des enfants envers leurs parents.

Figure 4 illustrates the expectations children (aged from 11 to 13) have from their parents. This figure shows that the conflict between the school's demands and the conditions at home concern most of the children, especially the girls. The difference between boys and girls is also connected to their lowly status at home (a relationship that was made clear through interviews with them) and also in the difficulty the families have in giving up on the girl's help at home (as can be seen from Figure 3). In this conflict between school and home the children see the school as representing their personal interest, while the parents represent the family's interest. Many of them believe that the solution to the conflict is through concessions on the family's part. The concept of the school as a totally different place from the home is expressed by the general wish to appear in special clothes- individual clothes suited to the body's proportions. Bedouin children who do not even have a corner to themselves or a personal article at home ask for their own clothes, not as property but as a token, enabling them to construct a personal individual appearance in a framework which requires individual character and talents never nurtured at home.

The existing gap between the values at school and at home, require the children's energy and time (according to Laosa, 1983). Their efforts to coordinate this gap lessens their achievements at school and their functioning at home. Confusion and instability in the organization of the children's environment might indicate the difficulties of society to bridge values of the past (which shape its identity), and values which might ensure its development in the future.

#### *5.4. New Value = New function, new place, new furniture and new picture on the wall*

According to Buber (1965), culture exists as a result of the merging of its contrasts: neither by virtue of tradition itself, nor by virtue of the novelty - only by virtue of their fusion. Thus, the ability to weave the school's aims into the fabric of values of the Bedouin society, and the ability of this society to give up some of its habits without endangering its essence is conditional for its continuity as a culture. This process of absorption and renouncement demands a distinction between the core of culture and its mechanisms (see Rapoport, 1987).

The research data shows that the population tries to meet present demands, while keeping its essential principles and abandoning norms which have been instrumental in the past. There are signs that Bedouin society is trying to internalize knowledge acquired at school while rejecting individuation in teaching methods. Observations made in the homes showed that parents allocated a table for doing homework and a shelf for books. However, they are shared by all the children, which imposes cooperation and mutual consideration. The children themselves have made the study area a site of common activities and mutual assistance.

Another indication of the adoption of new attitudes towards education can be seen in the practice of exhibiting the son's matriculation certificate in the guest room. This practice expresses both the positive attitude of the family toward the acquisition of knowledge and its traditional approach of praising the son's achievements.

The reflection of this attitude in the children's viewpoint was expressed by the answers they gave about their future wishes: about 45% of the children want to practice independent professions. About 35% want to be teachers. None of them are motivated by a wish to be famous, rather by the hope of bringing honour on their family.

With regard to the renouncement of norms, the research data showed that the change in the approach to the children's future led to the reduction of practical differentiation in the education of boys and girls. School not only equated the requirements from both sexes but also their living space and social opportunities. Due to the changes in the conditions of life and in child rearing practices the Bedouin society, which has not changed its basic concept of the child's gender (as expressed in the allocation of rights and duties at home and in behavioral and verbal expressions), accepts the fact that the complete dependence of the girl upon the home environment is no longer instrumental.

## 6. Conclusions

The results of this research bear out Rapoport's (1969, 60) statement that:

"Man may build to control his environment, but it is as much the inner, social, and religious environment as the physical one that he is controlling".

This statement implies that the physical environment is shaped by the cultural values of its builders but it also includes the idea that it actually transmits them and influences through them, as claimed by Duncan (1985, 135, 136):

"The house mirrors the social structure"... "The built environment has a powerful role to play in the social process".

Focusing the research on children enabled the demonstration of another role for the physical environment in relation to culture. A society, aware of its values, utilizes the cultural potential of the physical environment and shapes the child's environment as a comfortable ecological basis for the development of social and behavioral patterns which are suited to the central concepts of the culture.

In this manner, the built environment becomes not only a mechanism serving to express values and mold behaviour but also an instrument for inculcating culture and passing it on to the future.

The use of the physical environment as a tool for imparting culture testifies to society's recognition of its cultural potential.

Based on the findings of this research one can conclude that society will not easily relinquish values which are an integral part of its identity; and that environmental mechanisms based on values which society is interested in preserving will maintain their existence regardless of environmental and technological changes. Changes in such a mechanism can come about as a result of internalizing new values. This means that we can conjecture that culture's environmental mechanism is dependent on values far more than on technology.

The environmental mechanism dependent on and reflecting culture becomes a mirror not only of states of equilibrium (which are comparatively rare), but also of circumstances of change in values and of conflicts as is stated by Gauvain, Altman and Fahim (1983, 211):



"The design, use and modification of dwellings serve as a sensitive barometer of the state of a culture, not only in time of stability, but also during periods of social change".

An appropriate analysis of the built environment might, therefore, contribute to the examination of actual values no less than a sociological analysis.

The confrontation with new values poses a real challenge to any society wishing to preserve its identity and also to face the demands of time. This confrontation requires society to differentiate between values and the mechanism to implant them and to develop its appropriate mechanisms. According to Rapoport (1987), one can conclude that the solution to a conflict between two cultures depends on separating the core from the periphery in both of them, and by integrating them, while at the same time protecting the core of the absorbing culture.

## 7. Implications for Architecture

The diversity of cultures that characterizes many towns in the world today, has caused a change in the attitude towards culture but it has also modified the attitude towards home. Sebba and Churchman (1990, 22) claim that:

"Whereas the home was once primarily a shelter from the physical climate and from wild animals, it has become a shelter from the excesses of the social and cultural climate and from other people. Its purpose is not only to keep us warm and safe, but also to protect our personalities and beliefs".

Against the background of the inter-cultural interaction in public institutions, in shopping areas, places of entertainment and means of transportation, and against the backdrop of the strengthening of the meaning of the home as a social refuge - it is no longer possible to dislodge the socio-cultural issue from the other issues with which an architect must contend.

Therefore, the status of the home in today's culture must be recognized, as well as the status of culture in all the functions of the home. Research must progress in a manner which will lead to operational conclusions in environmental design. Such research must aid the architects (especially when designing for a culture of which they are not an integral part) to be aware of the meaning of decisions and to their potential consequences.

One must, in the cultural context at every point in time, ask the following questions: How does society regulate the interpersonal relationships of its members and their behaviour in space and time? How do people and behaviours become a complete system in a certain space and at a certain time?

In this context it is important to stress not the investigation of one component of the system (which is legitimate from a pure scientific viewpoint), but the investigation of the relationship between all the components. Only this kind of investigation can allow the architect to understand the consequences of altering one factor in the system on the actions of the whole.

What meaning does society associate with its different activities, what functions do they fulfil, what are their social function and meaning, who carries them out, how much is intended as symbolic, what is the suitable manner and place of carrying them out? (Is learning considered a value, a means of personal advancement or of gaining honour? Can girls also acquire knowledge? Is knowledge acquired in private or in a

group, at home or outside of it, through explanation or through experience? Can hosting be considered a value or a means of demonstrating social control? Who hosts where and how? )

What is the person's status in relation to the space? What is the social cell to whose needs the space is planned? What is the status of the child at home, in the guest room, at school? To what extent are child's needs taken into consideration in these places? Whose needs determine the design of the place?

What is the meaning of the place (the geographical location, the functional area and the personal place), does it symbolize function or value? (What is the meaning of an eastern wall, of the sleeping place, of the women's wing?)

What is the meaning of design detail? (What is the meaning of the entrance, the window, the wall in every place in which these are found?) What values are linked to them, what functions do they fulfil?

What is the meaning of the design act? Is the orientation of the house meant to suit climatic, strategic, aesthetic or symbolic needs? Is the location of the rooms meant to suit functional, social or psychological needs?

It seems that systematic research might clarify at least a portion of these questions and contribute to what Rapoport (1987) terms: "more *responsive architecture*".\*

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