

## ES Seminar

### "Social movements and resistance among indigenous nations: Bedouin society as a case study"

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MA Thesis Presentation



"Alhrak al-Shababe" in Arabic – is a new youth based social movement comprised of young leadership which has grown and strengthened in recent years in light of the weakening of other, more traditional, leadership groups (tribal/religious and political party) resisting government's policies of exclusion over the years. This young social movement, influenced by the events of the Arab Spring, was established seven years ago as a way to organize protest against the Praver plan.<sup>1</sup>

My work focuses on the factors that led to the creation of this movement of young leaders in Arab Bedouin society in the Negev. It attempts to characterize the young leaders themselves, values and strategies in terms of internal (the Bedouin society) and external (the state) challenges, while examining the timing of the work of this leadership. The thesis reviews the guiding principles of the group (Alhrak al-Shabab), while comparing their activism to the different models of activism around the world, including those of indigenous groups. This study aims to learn how this group is perceived in society, while examining the dynamics and the relationship between the mentioned leadership and other protest groups' leadership such as political parties, religious groups, and tribal groups).

This research study is based on semi-structured interviews with the founding young activists of the movement. This is the first study to examine the political protest strategies of the young leadership of the resistance movement in the Negev while placing it in a broader theoretical context of social movements, protests, and resistance around the world among indigenous peoples and in the Middle East.

This research claims that the youth movement, “Alhrak al-Shababe,” is unique and has some revolutionary elements. These elements include 1) Success in stopping a government program and freezing it. This is a precedent in the history of protest and resistance in Palestinian society in Israel; 2) Contribution of young people who took upon themselves to awaken silenced voices. 3) Mobilization of international popular support and building public momentum; 4) Creating political and social discourse as well as structure among the Bedouin and Palestinian society in Israel, and challenging the colonial strategies; 5) Building a new force: The young people coped with the pressure from the establishment that was intended to contain it, And not to be deterred from it, 6) New Leadership: The uniqueness of the movement is that the leadership was made in leadership processes and not by leaders.

These unique characteristics led to the unification of international Palestinian voices and the consolidation of the voices of popular protest against the Praver plan, which crossed the social and political structures within the Bedouin and Palestinian society, and created a feminist-oriented, egalitarian and inclusive movement.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.acri.org.il/en/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Praver-Policy-Brief-FINAL-ENG.pdf>