

## **Identity and Nation:**

### **Comparing Egyptian and Israeli Bedouin Policy**



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#### **Abstract**

In many ways, the Egyptian and Israeli states fail to ‘see’ the Bedouin and therefore situate them as a group “in but not of the global order,” an order where nations and states represent contingent identities and socio-political organizations. However, the Bedouin are not legally recognized as a distinct nation nor as indigenous peoples in neither Egypt nor Israel, and Egyptian Nationalism and Zionism reject the Bedouin as part of their nation, or ‘*imagined community*.’ This concept of *nationalism* strongly influences policy, and as a result, leads to the discrimination of the Bedouin through internal colonial policies, land seizure, suspension of human rights, and exclusionary economic policy. Despite Egypt and Israel’s different political systems, the outcome for the Bedouin in both countries is remarkably similar.

#### **Keywords**

Bedouin, Egypt, Israel, Nationalism, Zionism, Economic Exclusion, Negev Desert, Sinai Peninsula, Hapoel Hatzair, Yosef Aharonovich

## Introduction

Egyptian nationalism and Zionism portray the Bedouin as a threat or obstacle to the success of the nation, which subsequently influences civil rights and economic policy to systematically disadvantage the Bedouin. Additionally, their identities as Arab and Palestinian in the case of Israel, or ‘Pro-Israeli’ and ‘non-Pharaonic’ in the case of Egypt, further alienate the Bedouin from the state-imposed definitions of membership in the nation and situate them as a problematic faction within the larger Arab-Israeli conflict.

The word Bedouin, based off the original Arabic word ‘Badawīn’ (بدوِي), means ‘dweller in the desert.’ The Bedouin are an indigenous Arab group that historically lived a nomadic lifestyle spread across the Middle East and North Africa.<sup>110</sup> In Israel/Palestine and Egypt, the Bedouin identity is a socio-cultural kinship ascribing to traditional tribal structures, as well as a historic territory.<sup>111</sup> Their strong socio-cultural rituals and intricate political and economic institutions have continually adapted and persisted despite political threats to their relative autonomy. This article focuses on the Bedouin in both the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and the Negev Desert in Israel.

Bedouins represent roughly 4% of Israel’s population and 30% of the population of the Negev Desert. An estimated 300,000-400,000 Bedouin currently live in the Sinai Peninsula, representing 70% of the population of the Peninsula and 6% of Egypt’s population.<sup>112</sup> The Bedouin population grows at nearly 6% per year—one of the fastest rates of any group in the

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<sup>110</sup> Steven E. Sidebotham, Martin Hense, and M. Hendrikje, *The Red Land: The Illustrated Archaeology of Egypt's Eastern Desert* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008), 257. “Bedu” is also a partial transliteration meaning Bedouin.

<sup>111</sup> Deborah F. Shmueli and Rassem Khamaisi, “Bedouin: Evolving Meanings,” in *Israel's Invisible Negev Bedouin* (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2015), 3-7.

<sup>112</sup> Hillary Gilbert, “An Excluded Population: A Nuanced Approach to Sinai’s Bedouin is Necessary to Secure the Region,” *Project on Middle East Democracy* (2014): 1, <https://pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Policy-Brief-Gilbert-Oct-2014.pdf>.

world.<sup>113</sup> Historically, the Bedouin lived a mobile, pastoral lifestyle. They descended from ancestors who migrated from what is today Saudi Arabia in the 7th century. However, since the late 17th century, many Bedouins began to adopt a more sedentary lifestyle as a response to changing policies enacted by the Ottoman and British empires. They worked increasingly in the fields of agriculture, fishing, or unskilled labor. Today, in both the Sinai Peninsula and the Negev Desert, the Bedouin work as roving merchants, traders, migrant laborers, as well as in pastoralism and tourism.<sup>114</sup> The Bedouin in Israel and Egypt have high rates of unemployment as a result of lack of access to education and public services. In Israel, many Bedouins live in what the government considers illegal, unrecognized villages, which leaves them vulnerable to home demolitions by the state and exacerbates issues of equal access to services.<sup>115</sup> Even in state-sponsored Bedouin townships, resources available to residents pale in comparison to those available in Jewish localities.<sup>116</sup> In Egypt, the government does not recognize traditional Bedouin lifestyles. The bleak socio-economic future for the Bedouin today directly results from destructive public policy fueled by a concept of nationalism that excludes the Bedouin.

## **Economic Exclusion**

*"In the old days, when there were hard times like this, people would help each other," he said. "Now everyone looks after his own interests, makes his own money at the mahatta, but does not help out others as much. The relations between people have been weakened. Tourism and money are responsible for this."*

- Member of the Khushmaan tribe on the eastern coast of Sinai (2007)<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> "Bedouin in the State of Israel," The Knesset, 2010, [https://www.knesset.gov.il/lexicon/eng/bedouim\\_eng.htm](https://www.knesset.gov.il/lexicon/eng/bedouim_eng.htm) (Population count not including Bedouin in the Palestinian territories).

<sup>114</sup> Emanuel Marx, *Bedouin of Mount Sinai: An Anthropological Study of their Political Economy* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 41.

<sup>115</sup> Ben White, "Demolitions as Displacement: Israel Targets Negev's Bedouin Palestinians," *Middle East Monitor*, June 23, 2016, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20160623-demolitions-as-displacement-israel-targets-negev-bedouin-palestinians/>.

<sup>116</sup> Shlomo Swirski and Yael Hasson, *Invisible Citizens: Israeli Government Policy Toward the Negev Bedouin* (Avda Center: Information on Equality and Social Justice in Israel, 2006), 7.

<sup>117</sup> Joseph John Hobbs and Fujiyo Tsunemi, "Soft Sedentarization: Bedouin Tourist Stations as a Response to Drought in Egypt's Eastern Desert," *Human Ecology* 35, no. 2 (2007): 211, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-006-9052y>.

In the Negev today, an estimated 67% of the population live below the national poverty line.<sup>118</sup> As of 2012, the Bedouin earn \$1,144 fewer a month than Israeli Jews, and participate in the labor force at only 28% of the work-eligible population compared to 48% of Israeli Arabs and 67% of Israeli Jews.<sup>119</sup> The Bedouin face a lack of economic mobility due to discrimination and lower access to quality education. The current economic situation of the Bedouin today can be traced to earlier policies by the Israeli government and earlier Zionist movements in which Jewish settlers prioritized Jewish immigrant laborers as a form of ‘pure settlement’ which effectively cut Arabs out of the job market.

The concept of ‘pure settlement’ creates an economy based on Jewish labor in combination with the expulsion of native peoples from their land; it allows the settlers “to regain the sense of cultural or ethnic homogeneity identified with a European concept of nationality.”<sup>120</sup> While many Jews viewed this policy as progressive at the time, the Israeli concept of nationalism, or ‘imagined community,’<sup>121</sup> arose, in part, from the economic exclusion of Palestinian Arabs through land acquisition and subsequent racist hiring practices. The concept of ‘pure settlement,’ in the case of Israel can be broken down into two main concepts: ‘conquest of labor’ and ‘conquest of land.’

The concept of the ‘conquest of labor’ originated during the Second Aliyah (1904-1914) with the creation of the Hapoel Hatzair, or ‘Young Workers’ party. While the first wave of Jewish immigrants preferred to hire local Arabs because they worked for a lower wage, the

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<sup>118</sup> Farah Milhar, “Israel’s Denial of the Bedouin,” *Minority Rights Group International*, November 2011, 5, [https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/MRG\\_Brief\\_Bedouin.pdf](https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/MRG_Brief_Bedouin.pdf).

<sup>119</sup> Kathleen Abu-Saad, “Indigenous Data Matter: Spotlight on Negev Bedouin Arabs,” *The Lancet* 388, no. 10055 (2016): 22-29, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31866-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31866-9).

<sup>120</sup> George Fredrickson, *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Inequality* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Press, 1988), 218-221.

<sup>121</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (Verso, 1983), 6.

Second Aliyah proposed this idea of ‘conquest of labor,’ or ‘self-labor’ for established Jewish settlers to exclusively hire new Jewish immigrants. This would lead to a normalization of Jews in Palestine and create a more complete sense of a truly Jewish nation. However, the outcome of this policy excluded Palestinians from the labor market, created a stratified, split economy and caste system, and developed the mechanisms for a more powerful Jewish ‘imagined community,’ cast in contrast to an economically weakened Palestinian one.

In one explicit definition, the conquest of labor meant, “taking away the work in the moshavot from the Arab workers and transferring it into the hands of the Jewish workers.”<sup>122</sup> This occurred in two stages: subsidization and monopolization of skills. Jewish charity organizations subsidized Jewish workers to provide the new immigrants with a ‘European’ wage. As a result, Jewish wages doubled three years after the founding of Hapoel Hatzair in 1905.<sup>123</sup> Meanwhile, Palestinians received a lower wage for the very same work, effectively creating a stratified caste system of a wealthier, more powerful Jewish workforce and an underpaid Arab workforce. Second, Zionists, through the classification of skilled and unskilled, exclusively hired Jews for skilled, high-paying jobs which left Arabs to work as poorly paid laborers. Yosef Aharonovich, editor of *Hapoel Hatzair* noted that “gradually, certain jobs, performed earlier by the local [Palestinian] workers, began to be separated from the labor in general and turned into specialized, Jewish jobs. Earlier, for example, the local people used to deep-weed the field for the same price they performed all jobs. Now there are many farmers who will [only] give this work [...] to loyal [Jewish] hands [...] paying a decent wage for it.”<sup>124</sup> The justification for such

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<sup>122</sup> Moshavot is the plural of moshava, a form of rural Jewish settlement in Ottoman Palestine. Joseph Shapira, *Hapoel Hatzair: The Idea and the Deed* (Tel Aviv: Ayanot, 1967) 19.

<sup>123</sup> Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Arab Conflict 1882-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 61.

<sup>124</sup> Yosef Aharonovich, “Conquest of Land or Conquest of Labor: Parts 1 & II,” *Hapoel Hatzair* 3, nos. 2 & 4, (June/July and August/September, 1909), in Yosef Aharonovich, *Collected Works of Yosef Aharonovich*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1941).

stratification played into Social Darwinist elements of superior culture and even race. Ze'ev Smilansky, a Zionist writer at the time noted, "The more cultured jobs [...] require more intelligence, attention, and a distinguishing eye from the laborers."<sup>125</sup> Additionally, the term "loyal hands," mentioned by Aharonovich, points to a racial or cultural determination of economic value. This method of 'conquest of labor' required the earlier 'conquest of land,' carried out by Jewish settlers and the Jewish National Fund, which aimed to keep land purchased from Palestinians in the hands of Jews. As a result, those who owned the land employed the laborers and cultivators, which greatly affected the Bedouin in Palestine, since before 1948, an estimated 90% of Bedouin relied on agriculture for income and survival.<sup>126</sup>

This concept of Jewish economic priority re-appeared decades later through a range of Israeli policies and further undermined the Bedouin economy. During the military rule in the Siyag, from 1949-1996, the Bedouin struggled to engage in agriculture due to the low quality of the soil and limited freedom of movement. The economy stagnated without help from the Israeli government: "In 20 years [of military rule] no socioeconomic development took place for the newly transferred Bedouin communities."<sup>127</sup> In addition, "the decline of village life and the virtual stagnation of the Palestinian economy turned this minority population into a rural proletariat virtually overnight."<sup>128</sup> This forced the Bedouin into the urban labor market, a marked departure from traditional Bedouin occupations.

However, the Bedouin face economic disadvantages not only in the labor market but also in government funding. Bedouin townships receive lower funding than Jewish townships. Since

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<sup>125</sup> Shafir, *Land, Labor*, 61.

<sup>126</sup> Jillian Kestler-D'Amours, "Israel Plans to Dismantle Negev Villages, the End of the Bedouin," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, English edition, 2012.

<sup>127</sup> Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 112.

<sup>128</sup> Rena Zuabi, "Land and Labor in the Negev: Palestinian Bedouin Citizens of Israel," Stanford University, 2012, 103.

the creation of Bedouin townships until today, the Israeli state describes Bedouin townships as “urban or suburban,” yet they still lack independent economic centers and offer very few local jobs. The majority of Bedouin are without access to transportation and consequently face limited employment prospects.<sup>129</sup> For example, as of 2016, the town of Rahat has a small commercial center with only two banks and ramshackle government buildings.<sup>130</sup> The government recently subsidized the company SodaStream to build a new plant in the Negev near Rahat as part of an industrial zone. Additionally from 2013-2017 the government laid out a national Negev development plan worth \$135 million, however the “target communities” were exclusively Jewish townships.<sup>131</sup> Therefore, even when policies appear to be targeted towards the Bedouin, the ultimate outcome creates a kind of internal colonization to disadvantage the Bedouin, similar to the Egyptian government’s tourism investments to benefit mainland Egyptians facing unemployment.

Lirit Serphos, the government’s policy director for Bedouins in the Negev, stated in a 2014 interview that the Bedouin preferred to live from unemployment benefits. “They don’t want to make the effort,” she said, “[i]t takes an effort to go to work.”<sup>132</sup> This stereotypical and frankly racist claim insinuates that the Bedouin face the same environmental constraints as any Israeli and ignores their systematic exclusion from the labor force. Furthermore, unemployment benefits amount to only \$280 per month, arguably insufficient for a large Bedouin family to survive on.<sup>133</sup> Israel forces the Bedouin into a vicious cycle of unemployment. Jobs are created in the Negev, but target the Jewish workforce. Therefore, the Bedouin are pushed to the margins,

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<sup>129</sup> Zuabi, 106.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> “SodaStream to Invest in Negev,” *The Times of Israel*, April 4, 2012.

<sup>132</sup> Ben Hattem, “The Negev Desert’s Vanishing Bedouin,” *The Daily Beast*, June 16, 2014, 2-4, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-negev-deserts-vanishing-bedouin>.

<sup>133</sup> Hattem, “Negev Desert,” 6.

engaging in temporary jobs or traditional agriculture. However, Israel has maintained a policy that restricts grazing and hinders agriculture and herding, leaving the Bedouin to rely on government assistance. Additionally, due to rampant unemployment, Bedouin schools do not provide an adequate education to facilitate economic mobility.<sup>134</sup> Due to limited taxable income, Bedouin township schools receive meager funding. Additionally, Bedouin from unrecognized villages send their children to school in townships, putting a strain on already modest resources and services. The average income in Bedouin townships is half of that of Jews in Beer Sheva, the main city in the Negev.<sup>135</sup> As of the 2013-2014 school year, Bedouin had a 36.2% dropout rate, compared to 19.7% Arab and 5.6% Jewish dropout rates. Only 4.1% of Bedouin 20-29 year olds are enrolled in university.<sup>136</sup> This limits economic mobility for the rapidly growing population.

Since the Second Aliyah in 1904, Israeli Jewish economic policy has created the foundation for a stratified labor market that benefits Jews. After 1966, Israel has pursued policies of systemic economic neglect, worsening the economic divide between Jews and Bedouin. As Yosef Gorny, Professor of Zionism Studies and head of the Zionist Research Institute at Tel Aviv University, said, “the purpose of [economic] separatism was the creation of the foundation of [Jewish] economic-political strength.”<sup>137</sup> This policy succeeded, as the Bedouin largely lack the skills and access to high paying jobs. Furthermore, due to lack of school funding and available jobs, the Bedouin lack access to acquire basic skills to integrate into the larger labor market.

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<sup>134</sup> Steven C. Dinero, *Settling for Less: The Planned Resettlement of Israel's Negev Bedouin*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 104.

<sup>135</sup> Dinero, *Settling for Less*, 53.

<sup>136</sup> Abu-Saad, “Indigenous Data Matter,” 25.

<sup>137</sup> Yosef Gorny, “Pangs of Transition: Concerning the Development of the Idea of Laboring Settlement,” *BaDerech: Journal of She'erit Hapletah* no. 2 (1968): 77-78.



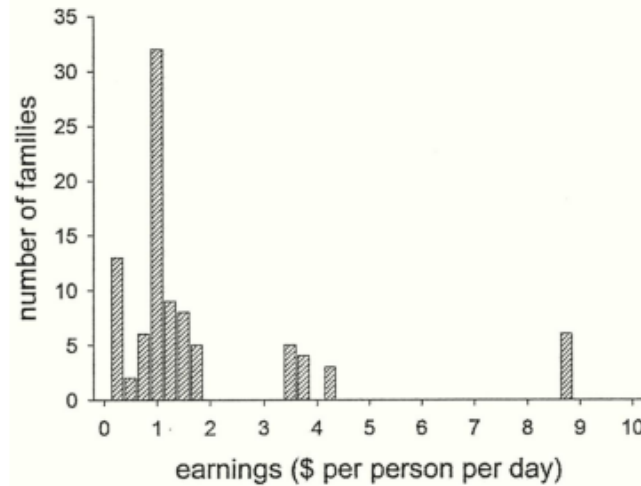


Figure 1: Distribution of earnings, Sample of South Sinai Bedouin, from: Hillary Gilbert, “This is Not Our Life, It’s Just a Copy of Other People’s: Bedu and the Price of ‘Development’ in South Sinai,” *Nomadic Peoples* 15, no. 2 (2011): 20.

According to a sample survey done in 2008, the vast majority of Sinai Bedouin families earn roughly one dollar per day, per person. This is well below the benchmark of extreme poverty outlined by the World Bank. This reality is the result of Egyptian government economic exploitation of Bedouin lands and Bedouin restriction from wage labor and other modes of economic mobility. In the late 20th century, the Bedouin economy shifted dramatically from a multi-source economy, to reliance on wage-labor jobs. During the Israeli occupation from 1967-1982, Israel hired local Bedouin for paid labor jobs in the construction and petroleum industries, to create the infrastructure necessary for Israeli settlements. This new exposure to readily available wage labor transformed the Bedouin economy, particularly in the South Sinai. After the occupation, the price of staple goods rose, and the Bedouin could no longer sell goods to traditional Egyptian markets.<sup>138</sup> Therefore, wage labor replaced traditional livelihoods as the Bedouins’ main source of income.

<sup>138</sup> Hillary Gilbert, “This is Not Our Life, It’s Just a Copy of Other People’s: Bedu and the Price of ‘Development’ in South Sinai,” *Nomadic Peoples* 15, no. 2 (2011): 12.

However, after the return of the Sinai in 1982, the wage labor market that Israel introduced left with the occupying forces. The number of jobs diminished, despite widely publicized government plans under President Hosni Mubarak in the 1980s and 1990s to move millions of Nile Egyptians into the Sinai with irrigation networks, agricultural plans, and newly proposed townships and villages, such the 1994 National Plan for the Development of Sinai (NPDS). The plan promised improvements to various industries including tourism, agriculture, and transport; the most famous being the al-Salam Canal which would transport Nile water into northern Sinai.<sup>139</sup> Plans such as the NPDS focused on a strategic, national consideration that “aimed to incorporate a peripheral desert region and integrate it into the Egyptian economy.”<sup>140</sup> An “underlying assumption” within the plan involves the settlement of the local Bedouin and the migration of 3 million Egyptians into Sinai to work in the new job market, pursuing a policy of internal colonization of Bedouin lands.<sup>141</sup> The NPDS, and other Sinai, plans were abandoned and funds were used for more politically expedient development projects along the Nile Valley.<sup>142</sup>

Egypt embarked on a widespread expansion of tourism, which produced mixed, but mostly negative results for the Bedouin. Through the Tourism Development Agency (TDA), created in 1992, the government sold coastal land in Sinai below market price to attract investors, however they placed certain restrictions on these purchases. For example, only companies could purchase land, not individuals.<sup>143</sup> To form a company, a guarantee of \$17,000

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<sup>139</sup> Heba Aziz, “Employment in a Bedouin Community: The Case of the Town of Dahab in South Sinai,” *Nomadic Peoples* 4, no. 2 (2000): 30.

<sup>140</sup> Andrea von Sarnowski, “The Role of Indigenous People in National Development Processes: Participation and Marginalisation of Indigenous Bedouin in South Sinai Tourism Development.” PhD diss., Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz. 2010.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ehud Yaari, “Sinai: A New Front,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 10, 2012, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/sinai-new-front>.

<sup>143</sup> Von Sarnowski, “Role of Indigenous People,” 122.

must be presented to the government and a minimum of 5,000 square meters must be purchased and developed.<sup>144</sup> This policy excludes the Bedouin from benefiting from the land that was seized from them. Politically, most Bedouin have limited, if nonexistent, government networks and insufficient liquidity to combat bribery, especially when competing with wealthy and powerful investors.<sup>145</sup> Additionally, even if a Bedouin succeeded in registering land before the creation of the TDA, the government only administers two types of licenses for hotels or tourist camps. In order to acquire such licenses, the owner needs to acquire a fixed amount of capital, navigate a difficult bureaucratic process involving lengthy trips to regional capitals, and possess political expedient connections with bureaucrats, almost all components inaccessible to most Bedouin.<sup>146</sup>

However, the tourism industry in the Sinai creates immense wealth for those involved. The 25-year tourism targets, set by the Egyptian Government in 1992, were surpassed in under 5 years in South Sinai. As a result, they increased the targets, and the tourism industry grew by 38.4% from 2003-2004.<sup>147</sup> In South Sinai, tourism provides the Bedouin's most important source of income with roughly 90% of the population dependent on such revenue, however the profit gained by the Bedouin is so small that the 2005 Egyptian Support for Environmental Assessment and Management Programme Report (SEAM) considered this number "inconsequential" compared to the total revenue generated by tourism.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Von Sarnowski, "Role of Indigenous People," 124.

<sup>146</sup> Von Sarnowski, "Role of Indigenous People," 132.

<sup>147</sup> Gilbert, "This is Not Our Life," 14.

<sup>148</sup> "South Sinai Environment and Development Profile," Support for Environmental Assessment and Management Programme, Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, Cairo, 2005, in Hilary Gilbert, "Nature = Life: Environmental Identity as Resistance in South Sinai," *Nomadic Peoples* 17, no. 2 (Winter 2013): 40-67.

While most Bedouin did not benefit from tourism, the few Bedouin who did formed their own, much smaller, alternative tourism economy. However, the Egyptian government placed a variety of restrictions on the Bedouin to keep them out of the tourism industry. As the government's tourism development intended, many of the large scale hotels and resorts employ mostly single, male Egyptians from the mainland, in a policy of internal colonization of the Sinai. In 2002, the 110 hotels located in Sharm el Sheikh created ten thousand jobs, yet nearly none of them were open to Bedouin applicants.<sup>149</sup> In 2008, the government banned desert trips longer than two nights based on security grounds, however this most strongly impacted small Bedouin tourist camps.<sup>150</sup> Additionally, Egypt's "attempts to police the informal transactions between tourists and the small tourist businesses favor new and larger ventures against which the smaller ones might not be able to compete."<sup>151</sup>

Since tourism mostly operates in the South Sinai, North Sinai developed other economic models after the return of the Sinai to Egypt. While most residents of North Sinai traveled into urban areas to engage in wage labor, smuggling and drug cultivation, which had been components of a complex economic system for the Bedouin before the Israeli occupation, began to expand in the 1980s. While the underground economy grew out of economic necessity, smuggling and drug trade has become synonymous with Bedouin throughout Egypt. For example, JJ Hobbs and Hillary Gilbert, sociologists who have both conducted extensive research throughout Egypt, noted the widespread association with Bedouin and drugs, with one Egyptian in Cairo stating, "How else

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<sup>149</sup> Gilbert, "This is Not Our Life," 14.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

can [Bedouin] live besides smuggling and dealing narcotics?"<sup>152</sup> This perception is reinforced by regular reports in the Egyptian media of drug raids in the Sinai, in which the official figures on crop destruction are astounding. The Egyptian government reported the destruction of 155 metric tons of opium in 1995, with one raid reportedly destroying 40 million poppy plants, a \$6 million dollar value.<sup>153</sup> The United States chief Drug Enforcement Agency officer in Egypt reported at the time to Hobbs that these numbers are a result of ANGA's faulty calculation methods, and the true amount of poppy produced in the Sinai per year is an estimated 50-60 metric tons.<sup>154</sup> With staggering numbers reported frequently by the Egyptian government, and a long-term heroin epidemic in Egypt, it is no wonder that the Egyptians associate the Bedouin with drugs, however the association only furthers the antagonism towards the Bedouin and creates a complicit Egyptian public with regards to government human rights violations in the Sinai.

Bedouin are the poorest groups in both Israel and Egypt and face considerable economic hardship. Bedouin native lands have been exploited by the Egyptian and Israeli governments to benefit target populations that fit within the concepts of Israeli and Egyptian nationalism. Jewish policy of pure settlement excluded the Bedouin from higher paying jobs on the basis of their identity. Egyptian policy imagined a booming tourism economy in the Sinai without the native Bedouin and implemented policy to further that goal. Today, the Bedouin are stereotyped in Egyptian and Israeli societies. Jews view Bedouin as lazy and entitled, while Egyptians see Bedouin as seemingly lawless drug cartels. Neither stereotype reflects the reality that the Bedouin live in poverty today largely as a result of national policy and take on non-traditional economic models out of necessity. Harmful national policy in conjunction with negative

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<sup>152</sup> Gilbert, "This is Not Our Life," 11; Joseph John Hobbs, "Troubling Fields: The Opium Poppy in Egypt," *Geographical Review* 88, no.1 (1998): 79, <https://doi.org/10.2307/215872>.

<sup>153</sup> Hobbs, "Troubling Fields," 79-80.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

stereotypes will continue to force the Bedouin to the economic margins of society until policy or national attitudes shift.

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