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The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific

INTERN POLICY REPORT

Culturalisation of Palestinian Indigeneity: A Case Study of the Naqab Bedouin

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Executive Summary

This report aims to understand how the indigeneity of the Naqab Bedouin has become culturalised and outline some of the key consequences that this new understanding is having on their community. The report is structured to firstly show the way in which indigeneity has become culturalised by the international community. The second section of this report will then show two consequences of this culturalisation, namely its impact on Bedouin land claims and their development. It will be seen in this section how Bedouin claims to their homeland is being conditioned upon a perpetual practise of their "traditional" ways of living. Furthermore, it will be shown how this new international discourse on indigeneity is allowing Israel to de-develop the Bedouin and force the blame for their condition on their "backward" culture. The report will be concluded with providing the following recommendations to organisations engaged in advocacy on behalf on the Bedouin community of Palestine:

1) Re-politicising the discourse on Bedouin indigeneity. This can be achieved by actively refusing the current culturalist discourse and viewing the Bedouin struggle for land rights as part of the wider Palestinian struggle for decolonisation.

2) Conduct further research on the theory of colonisation, indigeneity, de-development, and the way in which these concepts are interlinked. This research should also aim to explore how the wider Palestinian community is also affected by indigeneity being culturalised.

3) Drawing parallels between the experience of the Naqab Bedouin and indigenous Australians in order to promote indigenous solidarity. Such research would also be useful in understanding how indigenous culturalisation is impacting not only the Bedouin of Palestine, but also other indigenous groups worldwide.

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Introduction

The Naqab Bedouin, a previously nomadic tribal group of the Naqab desert in Southern Israel, are part of the Palestinian people. Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Bedouin have been divided from their traditional Palestinian identity and have acquired a new indigenous one by the international community. Although their indigeneity was initially considered a product of colonial realities, over time it has transformed into a culturalised identity that focuses on culture and traditional ways of living as the defining features of their indigenous status.

This report focuses on understanding how Bedouin indigeneity has become culturalised and the ensuing consequences that it is having on their community. This report will firstly introduce the Bedouin community and their identity prior 1948. It will then show how the new political circumstances, particularly the ongoing displacement of the Bedouin by the colonial state and their marginalisation in society, have resulted in academics and activists advocating a new, culturalised indigenous identity for them. This will then be followed by looking at some of the consequence of this culturalised identity, particularly its impact on Bedouin land claims and their development. Finally, this report will conclude with a number of recommendations for the General Delegation of Palestine and other organisations engaging in advocacy for the Palestinian people.

The Naqab Bedouin

Brief History of Colonialism

Prior to the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Bedouin community was a nomadic tribal group that resided in the Naqab desert, located in the south of mandatory Palestine.[1] During the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, almost ninety percent of the Bedouin were expelled from their homeland in the Naqab to surrounding areas such as Jordan, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza.[2] After the 1948 war, the new colonial government placed the Bedouin population under martial law for almost eighteen years.[3] During this time, the newly formed colonial power initiated plans that aimed to expropriate Bedouin land.[4] These nomadic communities were subsequently transferred by force into a smaller territory in the Naqab region known as the "Siyag", and their ancestral land was confiscated by the State for the purpose of creating nature reserves and military zones.[5] In the decades following the 1948 war, Israel also sought "sedentarisation"[6], forcing the Bedouin away from their previous lifestyle as farmers and herders, and transferring them into state-planned urban townships.[7] Currently, more than half the Bedouins that previously resided in the Naqab now reside in these townships where they constantly rank at the bottom of every socioeconomic index and struggle to maintain their cultural identity.[8]

Identity Formation

Before 1948, Bedouin identity was formed by one's place within one of three different allied groups.[9] These three groups were the 'Arab (tribesmen), *fellahin* (peasants), and *Abid* (Blacks/"Africans").[10] Members of the 'Arab were recognised as the "True" Bedouin of the region as they had the most noble heritage.[11] The tribesmen originated

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[1] Mihlar, F., 2011. *Israel's denial of the Bedouin,* p. 2.
[2] Elsana, M., 2019. Indigeneous Peoples' Land: The Case of Bedouin Land in Israel. *California Western International Law Journal,* 49(1), p. 64.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid, p. 64-5.
[5] Mihlar, op.cit., p. 3.
[6] *Sedentarisation* is a term defined as the settling of nomadic people (Falah, 1989).
[7] Elsana, op.cit., p. 65.
[8] Elsana, op.cit., p. 65.
[9] Dinero, S., 2004. New Identity/Identities Formulation in a Post-Nomadic Community: The Case of the Bedouin of the Negev. *National Identities,* 6(3), p. 264.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

in the Arab peninsula and arrived to the Naqab area of Palestine towards the end of the eighteenth century.[12] The arrival of the *fellahin* and the community of African people to the region in the following decades marked the beginning of *ethnicism*, or an emphasis on ethnic identity, and the beginning of a hierarchical class system in which the latter two groups were viewed as socially inferior to the "True" Bedouin.[13] Although Bedouin identity was divided as a result of ethnicism, the groups were connected through their deep attachment to their land. Indeed, land was the most important element that defined all these Bedouin groups, their values and cultural anchors.[14]

The resettlement of the Bedouin into urban townships after 1948, and away from their traditional land and way of living, greatly affected their previous identity. Not only were the Bedouin groups torn from their geographic roots, but they began to lose their cultural identity. Over time, the new political circumstances, particularly the ongoing displacement of the Bedouin by the colonial state and their marginalisation in society, have resulted in academics and activists advocating on behalf on the Bedouin for a new indigenous identity.

The development of Bedouin indigenous identity has taken place in three key phases, as discussed by a group of academics.[15] The first phase began in the 1990s when Professor Ismael Abu-Saad, a Bedouin himself, pioneered the concept of indigeneity to describe the Naqab Bedouin.[16] Abu-Saad's conception of indigeneity was deeply political as he considered it to be product of colonial realities.[17] Other notable Bedouin scholars such as Sarah Abu-Rabia-Queder and Mansour Nasasra also shared a similar understanding as Abu-Saad and considered indigeneity in historical, political, and antagonistic terms.[18]

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Dinero, op.cit., p. 264.

[14] Aburabia, S., 2014. Land, identity and history: new discourse on the Nakba of Bedouin Arabs in the Naqab. In: M. Nasasra, S. Richter-Devroe, S. Abu-Rabia-Queder & R. Ratcliffe, eds. *The Naqab Bedouin and Colonialism : New Perspectives.* Oxford: Routledge, p. 100.

[15] Frantzman, S. J. & Yahel, H., 2012. Contested Indigeneity: The Development of an Indigenous Discourse on the Bedouin of the Negev, Israel. *Israel Studies,* 17(1), p. 96.

[16] Tatour, L., 2019. The culturalisation of indigeneity: the PalestinianBedouin of the Naqab and indigenous rights. *The International Journal of Human Rights,* 23(10), p. 1575

[17] Ibid.

[18] Tatour, op.cit., 1575.

This concept of indigenous identity was then developed by Jewish academics who began situating the Bedouin struggle in a context of a wider international discussion regarding native people, land rights, and ethnocracy[19].[20] Jewish academics, such as Oren Yiftachel, used the narrative of indigeneity to connect Bedouin struggles with the struggles of other indigenous communities worldwide such as First Nations peoples and the Native American.[21] Scholars like Yiftachel criticised Israel as being a "pure settler state", like Australia and Canada, and that the occupying power must work towards mutual recognition with the indigenous population.[22] The last phase has seen the campaign by advocacy groups for international recognition of the Bedouin as indigenous people.[23]

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[19]Ethnocracy is defined as government by a particular ethnic group which works to further its interests, power, and resources (Anderson, 2016)

[20] Frantzman, S. J. & Yahel, H., 2012. Contested Indigeneity: The Development of an Indigenous Discourse on the Bedouin of the Negev, Israel. *Israel Studies,* 17(1), p. 96.

[21] Ibid, p. 88.

[22] Yiftachel, O., Roded, B. & Kedar, A., 2016. Between rights and denials: Bedouin indigeneity in the Negev/Naqab. *Environment and Planning A,* 48(11), p. 2153.

[23] Frantzman, op.cit., p. 96.

The Culturalisation of Indigeneity

Due to the efforts of civil society organisations' advocacy on behalf of the Bedouin in recent decades, this community now enjoys an internationally recognised indigenous status.[24] Organisations and government agencies such as the United Nations, the Human Rights Committee, and the European Parliament have all acknowledged the indigeneity of the Bedouin and their right to self-determination as indigenous people.[25]

However, despite this achievement by civil society organisations to help persuade reputable international organisations to recognise Bedouin indigeneity, critical scholars like Professor Lana Tatour have revisited these efforts and problematized this new discourse on Bedouin indigeneity. In what she describes as the "culturalisation of indigeneity", Tatour states that the justification for the recognition of the Bedouin as indigenous have been based on an "essentialist [model] of indigeneity" that considers culture as the defining feature of their indigenous identity.[26] In other words, Tatour argues that the international discourse on indigeneity has focused on the cultural dimension of Bedouin indigeneity as a basis for recognition, as opposed to their indigeneity being a product of colonial realities as previously assumed by scholars like Abu-Saad and Mansour Nasasra.

Tatour's culturalisation concept can be understood better by examining how indigeneity is defined internationally. In a paper written by Yiftachel in which he examines the nature of indigeneity identity among Bedouin Arabs in the Naqab, he includes a summary of the major characteristics of indigeneity that are broadly agreed upon by most international treaties.[27] These characteristics are said to include:

1) History of self-rule prior to being subjugated by the current regime.
2) Continuous self-determination as an indigenous group.
3) Desire to maintain a unique identity.
4) Continuous and consecutive relation with a given territory.
5) History of discrimination and dispossession by the modern state.

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[24] Tatour, op.cit., p. 1579.
[25] Ibid, p. 1570.
[26] Ibid, p. 1583.
[27] Yiftachel et al., op.cit., p. 2135.

6) International recognition.

Professor Tatour argues that these defining features of indigeneity identity are problematic because they fail to mention anything about colonisation.[28] Tatour argues that the Bedouin are recognised as indigenous not because they continue to face settler colonialism, but rather because they are casted as a culturally distinct group, even from the rest of the Palestinian people. By culturalising the indigeneity of the Bedouin, it risks making the advocacy of their indigenous rights "complicit in normalising the erasure of settler colonialism."[29] The next section will look closely at two consequences of this culturalisation of indigenous identity for the Naqab Bedouin.

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[28] Tatour, op.cit., 1578.
[29] Ibid, p. 1580.

Consequences of Culturalising Bedouin Indigeneity

1) Bedouin land claims based on cultural purity

Since the establishment of the Israeli state, the government has eagerly tried to expropriate as much Bedouin land as possible for the purpose of expanding its territorial control and using the area for creating nature reserves and military zones. From once occupying about 12,600,000 dunams[30] of the Naqab region during the British mandate of Palestine, the Bedouin now struggle to avoid eviction from the remaining 240,000 dunams left to them.[31] Although the Bedouin have been fighting to reclaim their land on a legal basis that stresses that their land was forcefully taken by the State, the international community has been advocating for Bedouin land rights by employing another strategy. This strategy focuses on how the Bedouin are the "traditional" residents of their previous land and therefore are entitled the right to return. Consider, for example, Article 26 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People[32]:

1) Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
2) Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
3) States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

The language used in such declarations is seen as problematic by activists like Professor Tatour. She argues that that Bedouin right to land is becoming a "traditional right" to their land and phrases like "traditional lands", "traditional homeland" and "traditional territories" are favoured over phrases such as "historical lands" and

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[30] A dunam is around 1000 square metres.
[31] Elsana, op.cit., p. 64.
[32] United Nations, 2007. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, p. 19.*

"Bedouin lands".[33] How exactly this is harming the Bedouin struggle for their land is discussed by Sam Deloria, an activist that writes in the context of Native American struggles for territorial rights. Deloria argues that a critical issue facing the indigenous peoples of America is that sympathetic scholars and advocacy groups are constantly playing the "culture card" to justify their land claims.[34] He states that by basing land claims on the principles of cultural survival, it risks Native Americans compromising their right to land by conditioning their claims to cultural purity.[35] Deloria comments:

In the law of the United States, if you read the cases, it says that we are entitled to self-government because we, as societies, preexisted this other government that came along. And that's fine. That is an abstract, theoretical basis for our tribal existence. And there are no conditions on that. If we stake out a position that says that our right to self-government is tied to our dedication, our adherence to culture, don't you see what that does to us in the legal and political arena? That is, we are saying for the first time, WE are saying, it's conditional … be damned careful that we're not saying to this society, 'in exchange for a continued political existence, we promise to maintain some kind of cultural purity'.[36]

Tatour not only agrees with Deloria's rationale, but also shows how the current discourse on Bedouin indigeneity similarly risks conditioning their land claims on cultural purity.[37] Considering that many international organisations have already adopted this new "traditionalist" understanding of Bedouin land rights and have inscribed it into official declarations, their rights have arguably *already* been conditioned on cultural purity. This is particularly problematic since the State is actively trying to assimilate the Bedouin from a pastoral community to an urban working class by expropriating their land and forcefully transferring them into urban townships.[38] By trying to transform this community into an "urban proletariat", as the former Israeli military leader Moshe Dayan stated in 1963, through various state policies, it makes

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[33] Tatour, op.cit., p. 1581.
[34] Deloria, S., 2002. Commentary on nation-building: the future of indian nations. Arizona State Law Journal. *Arizona State Law Journal,* 34(1), p. 58.
[35] Tatour, op.cit., p. 1582.
[36] Deloria, op.cit., 58.
[37] Tatour, op.cit., p. 1586.
[38] Elsana, op.cit., p. 63.

maintaining "traditional" practises almost impossible.[39] . Indeed, as Tatour states, this "de-Bedouinisation" is clearly what the State desires as it will erase Bedouin attachment and future claims to their land.[40] By focusing on the cultural dimension of Bedouin indigeneity instead of the political one, it only helps give the Israeli state more legitimacy for land acquisition and conditions the Bedouin upon "the perpetual practice of 'authentic' culture" if they want to the support of the international community for their struggles to reclaim their homeland.

2) De-Development of Bedouins

This culturalisation of Bedouin indigeneity is also resulting in the de-development of their community. By de-development, it does not just refer to "distort[ing] the development process…but undermining it completely."[41] A de-developed economy is an economy "deprived of its capacity for production, for rational structural transformation and meaningful reform, making it incapable of even distorted development."[42] The de-development of the Bedouin has been evident through policies imposed by Israel that have precluded the indigenous group from economic and institutional improvement. The following three subsections will examine de-development through the urbanisation program and through control of the education system, two areas of de-development that are affecting the Bedouin community, and show how this process is part of the wider discourse of indigenous culturalisation.

a) De-development through the urbanisation programme

In the late 1960s, the Israeli government developed plans for the resettlement of the Naqab Bedouin population into urban-style towns.[43] The government's rational for this policy has been "to 'modernise the Bedouin' and enable more efficient provision of services."[44] Although the urbanisation program, as manifested in the establishment of several permanent townships, has led to the provision of basic services, including

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[39] Elsana, op.cit, p. 63.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Roy, S., 1999. De-development Revisited: Palestinian Economy and Society Since Oslo. *Journal of Palestine Studies,* 28(3), p. 65.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Abu-Saad, I., 2011. The Indigenous Palestinian Bedouin of the Naqab: Forced Urbanization and Denied Recognition. In: N. N. Rouhana & A. Sabbagh-Khoury, eds. *The Palestinians in Israel: Readings in History, Politics and Society.* Haifa: Mada al-Carmel, p. 122.
[44] Ibid, p. 122.

roads, water systems, and schools, they have continued to lack the key components critical to the Bedouin community's development.[45] For example, while many Arab localities are connected to the national water and electricity grids, over a third of Bedouins living in new urban towns are forced to connect to private networks to get their water, and have to rely on private generators to produce electricity.[46] A comparison of the sewage infrastructure between Bedouin towns and other Arab localities also reveals a dismal picture. Whilst most Arab localities are allowed access to the national grid for their sewage wastes, only a third of the Bedouin are provided this service. For the remaining two thirds, they are forced to use open sewage gutters.[47] Bedouins living in unrecognised villages are even worse off. A report issued by the Israeli Ministry of Health in 2008 stated that:

The residents of the unrecognized villages live in prefabricated structures, shacks and/ or tents, without any regular supply of water or electricity…Sanitation is poor, with no central sewage system, no cesspools and no regular garbage collection.[48]

The first table (Table 1) below shows the water, electricity and sewage allocation for the Bedouin in both recognised and unrecognised villages. These standards of living are compared to that of Arab localities in Israeli, which in any case are inferior to the living standards in Jewish localities.[49]

Table 1: Water, Electricity and Sewage Allocation: Bedouin townships vs Arab localities in Israel[50]

Infrastructure type	All Bedouin localities (permanent townships and unrecognised villages)	Of these: Unrecognised Bedouin Villages	All Arab localities in Israel

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[45] Abu-Saad, I., 2014. State-Directed 'Development' as a Tool for Dispossessing the Indigenous Palestinian Bedouin-Arabs in the Naqab. In: M. Turner & O. Shweiki, eds. *Decolonizing Palestinian Political Economy: De-development and Beyond.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 141.

[46] Rudnitzky, A. & Abu Ras, T., 2012. *The Bedouin Population in the Negev*, p. 23.

[47] Rudnitzky & Abu Ras, op.cit., p. 23.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid, p. 24.

Water	National grid	65.4%	17.9%	95.1%
	Private grid	34%	81.2%	4.9%
	Water tanks	0.2%	0.4%	-
	Not connected	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%
Electricity	National grid	61.2%	9.2%	94.3%
	Private generator	38.5%	90.4%	5.6%
	Not connected	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%
Sewage	National grid	34%	0.4%	84.6%
	Open gutters	65.1%	97.9%	15%
	Other	0.9%	1.7%	0.4%

The second table (Table 2) illustrates the socioeconomic index of Bedouin towns compared to Israeli ones.

Table 2: Socioeconomic ranking of Bedouin and Jewish Towns in the Naqab[51]

Bedouin Town	**Rank***	**Jewish Town in Closest Proximity**	**Rank**	**Distance between Bedouin and Jewish towns (km)**
Kseifa	1	Arad	119	10
Rahat	2	Lahavim	205	4
Tel-Sheva	3	Omer	209	2
Segev Shalom	4	Beer-Sheva	115	3
Arara	5	Dimona	82	6
Hura	7	Metar	201	3
Luqiya	8			6

The ranking ranges from 1-210, with 1 denoting the lowest ranking amongst 210 state-planned towns in Israel

The above tables show that the Bedouin are denied equal access to key services necessary for their development such as water, electricity, and proper sewage systems. It also shows neighbouring Jewish towns are much better off socioeconomically compared to the Bedouin villages. Although the urbanisation plan for the Bedouin was intended to "alter and improve [their] situation", the tables above reveal that real aim of the State is in fact to expropriate the remaining Bedouin land and eradicate any unrecognised villages. [52]

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[51] Abu-Saad, I., 2005. Retelling the History: The Indigenous Palestinian Bedouin in Israel. *AlterNative,* 1(1), p. 35.
[52] Adalah, 2006. *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-186018/

b) De-development through control of education system

Though it should be acknowledged that what determines a student's educational performance and zeal to finish their schooling studies is complex, many of reasons Bedouin students drop out early is a result of discrimination of the Arab education system by the Israeli State.[53] By providing inadequate resources and limiting their awareness of their own cultural and ethnic identity, the education system effectively functions to inhibit the development of the Naqab Bedouin.[54]

The government controlled education system for the Bedouin population is another mechanism employed by the Israeli state to prevent their independent development.[55] The current education system in place for all Arab citizens in the Israeli state is one that was developed by the government and aims to emphasis Jewish values, culture, and history.[56] The 1953 Law of State Education in Israel specified the following aims for state-education:

To base education on the values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love of the homeland and loyalty to the state and the Jewish people, on practise in agricultural work and handicraft, on pioneer training and on striving for a society build on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual respect, mutual assistance, and love of mankind.[57]

Although the current curriculum does include references to Palestinian Arabs and their culture, it tends to reflect an Orientalist approach, often portraying their lifestyle, history, and culture in a negative light.[58] For example, studies of school textbooks studied at school have revealed that Palestinian Arabs are portrayed in many instances as "murderers", "rioters", "suspicious", and generally backward and unproductive.[59] By dedicating only a small portion of the curriculum to teach Arabs about their own culture, and often portraying them in a demeaning manner, it serves

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[53] Coursen-Nedd, Z., 2004. Discrimination Against Palestinian Arab Children in the Israeli Educational System. *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics,* 36(4), p. 792.
[54] Abu-Saad, 2014, op.cit., p. 149.
[55] Abu-Saad, 2014, op.cit., p. 143.
[56] Abu-Saad, I., 2008. Present Absentees: The Arab School Curriculum in Israel as a Tool for De-Educating Indigenous Palestinians. *Holy Land Studies,* 7(1), p. 2.
[57] Abu-Saad, I., 2006. State-Controlled Education and Identity Formation Among the Palestinian Arab Minority in Israel. *The American Behavioral Scientist,* 49(8), p. 1088.
[58] Abu-Saad, 2006, op.cit., p. 1089.
[59] Ibid, p. 1089-90

to both curb the development of a Palestinian national identity and instil amongst them an image that depicts their culture as inherently uncivilised and backward. Since the international discourse on indigeneity frames Bedouin culture as a type of primordial and unmodern culture, it has indirectly allowed the Israeli state to capitalise on this widely accepted depiction and embed these ideas into its education curriculum.

The Arab education system also suffers from discrimination from the State in the allocation of physical resources.[60] The lack of funding by the government and their negligence of educational needs has resulted in schools in Bedouin localities suffering from unfavourable learning conditions. In a sample study conducted of 19 out of 37 schools in Bedouin resettlement villages in 1993-94, the findings highlighted the dismal condition of schools in these towns.[61] The principals that were interviewed in the study enumerated 101 classrooms in prefabricated structures, 46 in provisional structures, 29 in metal sheds, and only 150 in standard building .[62] Lavatories was another issue, with many schools not having running water, and some not even having any such facility.[63] Furthermore, only few schools had access to air-conditioning services, libraries, or cafeterias; all of which were found in Jewish schools in neighbouring towns.[64] Although this survey was carried out during the 1990s, academics like Abu-Saad argue that physical resources and facilities in Bedouin schools continue to be either insufficient, or altogether lacking.[65]

Abu-Saad argues that by "maintaining [Bedouin] cultural, socioeconomic and political subordination to the Jewish majority through the imposition of aims, goals, staffing and curriculum to which the students cannot relate", it is having a notable impact on their development.[66] In one of his papers he demonstrates that the outdated and inconsiderate education system discourages many students from studying beyond high school.[67] In a graph constructed by Abu-Saad (see Appendix 1), it shows the

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[60] Arar, K., 2012. Israeli Education Policy since 1948 and the State of Arab Education in Israel. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education,* 4(1), pp. 113-145.
[61] Abu-Rubiyya , S., al-Athauna, F. & al-Bador, S., 1996. *Survey of Bedouin Schools in the Negev*, p. 8.
[62] Ibid, p. 11.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid, p. 12.
[65] Abu-Saad, 2014, op.cit., p. 144.
[66] Ibid, p. 149-50.
[67] Ibid.

percentage of Bedouin children who dropped out before graduating from high school between 1990 and 2012.[68] The numbers show that 71% and 68% of Bedouin children dropped out from school in 1993 and 1994 respectively. This is drastically different to Israeli schools who had a dropout rate of 21% and 17% in those same years. Although in 2012 the situation of drop-out rates shows an improvement with 32%, it nonetheless represents a third of students not studying beyond high school.

As mentioned previously, although drop-out rates may be a combination of a variety of factors, the de-development of the Bedouin through indoctrinating them about their "backward" culture and providing them with inadequate educational services, is certainly contributing to students discontinuing their studies after high-school. The indirect support of this de-development program by the international community through its culturalised understanding of indigeneity, is only encouraging the state to maintain its current policies.

c) De-development as part of the wider discourse of indigenous culturalisation

This process of Bedouin de-development, through both the urbanisation program and the education system, is argued to be "embedded in a wider colonial fantasy and discourse of culturalisation."[69] Preconceived ideas about Bedouin culture are being used by the State to de-develop them, while defending their policies by referring to the perceived primitiveness of indigenous cultures. For example, when the former director of the Bedouin Education Authority (BEA) was questioned in an interview about the lack of indoor plumbing in Bedouin schools, he responded with "in their culture they take care of their needs outdoors. They don't even know how to flush a toilet."[70] This director was eventually dismissed from his position, but not because of his racist comments. Rather, he was asked to leave due to financial irregularities in his administration.[71] This shows that the role of state-administered organisations like the BEA are not established to help grow Bedouin communities, but rather serve to control and limit their development.

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[68] Ibid, p. 150.
[69] Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N., Woodsum, A. G., Zu'bi, H. & Busbridge, R., 2014. Funding Pain: Bedouin Women and Political Economy in the Naqab/Negev. *Feminist Economics,* 20(4), p. 174.
[70] Abu-Saad, 2014, op.cit., p. 148.
[71] Ibid.

These imagined ideas of culture are also being used to "erase critical examination of socioeconomic inequalities in the settler colonial state."[72] The lack of infrastructure, poor educational facilities, and high drop-out rates amongst Bedouin children is perceived to be a result of the Bedouin being uncivil and "certainly unrelated to government policies and intentional oversights."[73] Instead of condemning these alarming socioeconomic indices and demanding that Israel provide equal services and infrastructure to both the Arab and Israeli villages, human rights groups like the United Nations Human Rights Committee have recommended that Israel should "ensure that any proposed plans for [Bedouin] relocation take due account of their traditional way of life."[74] By focusing on the "traditional" aspect of Bedouin indigeneity rather than the political part, it has indirectly encouraged the world to turn a blind eye to discriminatory and unjust practises against the Bedouin by the State. Moreover, it has redirected the focus on preserving their distinct culture and traditions regardless of the implications on land claims and development.

Conclusion & Recommendations

This report concludes that the Naqab Bedouin's indigenous identity is being culturalised by the international community which in turn is having negative impacts on their land claims and development. The first consequence of indigenous culturalisation discussed in this report was that Bedouin land claims are being conditioned on cultural purity. For the Bedouin to credibly fight for their land rights,

[72] Shalhoub-Kevorkian et al., op.cit., p. 174.
[73] Ibid.
[74] United Nations, 2014. *Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Israel.* [Online] Available at:
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FISR%2FCO%2F4&Lang=en

they must maintain their "traditional" practises and ways of livings. It was shown how this is problematic, and even dangerous for the Bedouin community, since the Israel state is actively trying to assimilate them into an urban culture by expelling them from their ancestral lands and transferring them into modern towns.

The second consequence of culturalisation mentioned was the de-development of their community. This de-development was discussed through two angles; the first was de-development through the State's urbanisation program, and their second was through the control of the Bedouin education system. Not only does the Bedouin community lack services and infrastructure critical to their communal growth, but they are deprived from learning about their own Palestinian identity. This section demonstrated how the de-development process through these two mechanisms is part of the wider discourse of indigenous culturalisation. Imagined ideas of Bedouin culture and lifestyle are being used by the State to inhibit their independent development and cast a shadow over their socioeconomic inequalities that are deliberately maintained by Israel.

In light of these consequences of indigenous culturalisation for the Naqab Bedouin, this report presents three recommendations to organisations engaged with advocacy on behalf of this community:

1) Re-politicising the discourse on Bedouin indigeneity. This can be achieved by actively refusing the current culturalist discourse and viewing the Bedouin struggle for land rights as part of the wider Palestinian struggle for decolonisation.

2) Conduct further research on the theory of colonisation, indigeneity, de-development, and the way in which these concepts are interlinked. This research should also aim to explore how the wider Palestinian community is also affected by indigeneity being culturalised.

3) Drawing parallels between the experience of the Naqab Bedouin and indigenous Australians in order to promote indigenous solidarity. Such research would also be useful in understanding how indigenous culturalisation is

impacting not only the Bedouin of Palestine, but also other indigenous groups worldwide.

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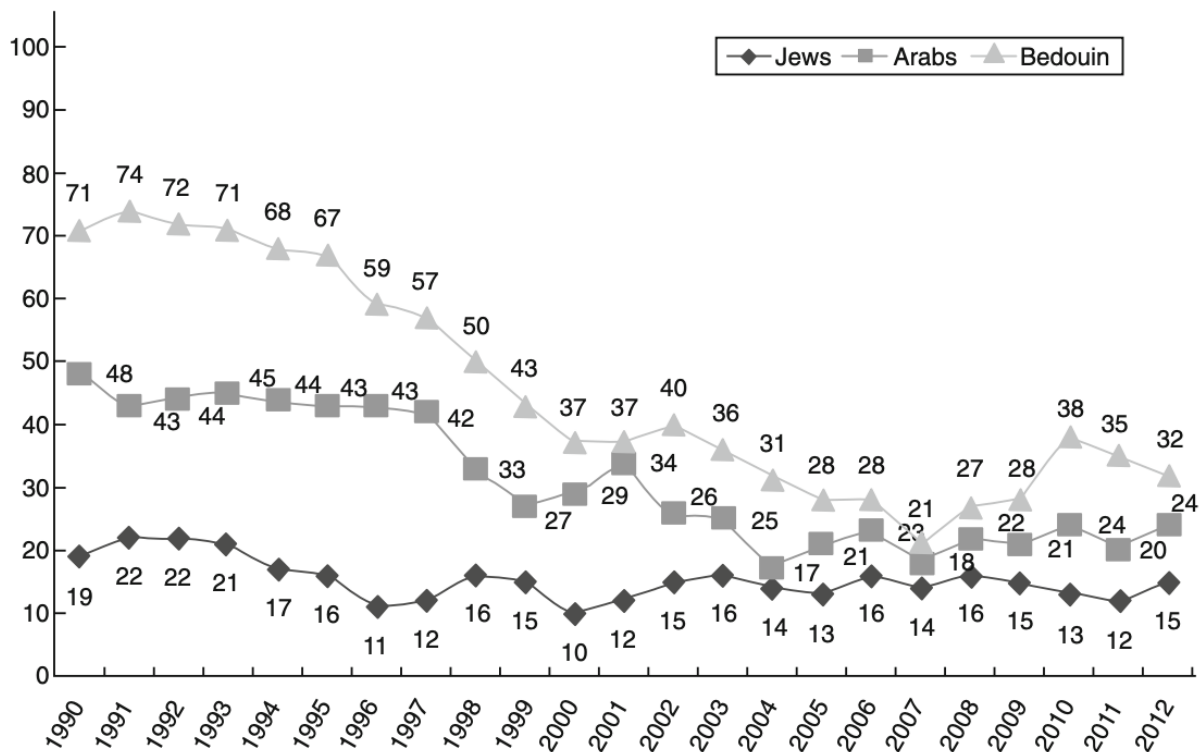
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Appendix

Appendix 1: Rates of drop-out among the Naqab Bedouin, Jews, and Arabs between 1990-2012[75]

[75] Abu-Saad, op.cit., p. 150.