THE ARAB LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL: ASCENDANCE AND FRAGMENTATION

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This article describes the rise of a second generation of Arab political leaders in Israel as seen in the proliferation of explicitly Arab political parties (nationalist and Islamist) and Arab NGOs (secular and religious). While more representative of Israel's Arab community than the its predecessors, reflecting the community's growing national consciousness, the new leadership is also more fragmented. The author acknowledges Israel's active efforts to weaken the new leaders, but asserts that fragmentation has also resulted from continuing traditional structures, including extended family, a culture of notables manifested in the personalization of institutions, and patriarchy, particularly the political exclusion of women.

ARAB LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL has undergone major changes over the last several decades. Under the impact of sociological and political change, a new generation of leaders has emerged that is transformational, more self-aware, and far more capable than the leadership that predominated in the early decades of the state.[1] This new generation is also more representative of the socioeconomic and sociopolitical composition of Arab society and reflects the community's growing national consciousness. As a result, it is viewed as the community's legitimate representative, especially with regard to matters of collective identity.

The new leadership, however, has not been successful in achieving common Arab goals. An intense competition in its ranks has resulted in disunity and fragmentation, seriously undermining its effectiveness; this fragmentation is especially apparent during elections, when the failure of Arab leaders to establish common lists has resulted in the waste of thousands of Arab votes. The purpose of this article is to trace the rise of the new leadership against the background of sociopolitical change and to explore the factors responsible for the divisiveness that weakens it. These factors have much to do with the policies of the Israeli state and with the almost total lack of Arab access to the Israeli public and private sector, greatly intensifying competition and

rivalries. But they also derive from sources located within the Arab community itself, most notably the persistence of traditional patterns of social behavior that foster competition for power positions. This discussion focuses on the endogenous Arab factors, looking not just at the "governing minority" but at the broader elite in Arab society, including national leaders (members of Knesset, heads of political parties), local leaders (mayors and heads of local councils), and leaders of civil society institutions.

Studies of leadership styles and elite structure have shown the importance of unity and socioeconomic differentiation (reflecting representativity) as factors determining the leadership's ability to achieve common goals.[2] Drawing on unity and differentiation continuums, Higley and Lengyel delineate four main combinations of elite structure and their implications for effective governance.[3] For example, a united and highly differentiated elite, being both representative and consensual, would be more likely to be effective in promoting common interests, whereas an elite that is disunited and narrowly differentiated (i.e., not representative) would tend to be disconnected from its constituency and preoccupied with internal rivalries. A united and narrowly differentiated elite is prone to authoritarian, nonrepresentative rule; a disunited but widely differentiated elite is representative but cannot work together. Under this last model, elite factions engage in ceaseless competition to maintain influence and power. Because the control of the various elite factions over their constituencies remains loose, the fear of losing support encourages informal institutionalism in which clientalism becomes a norm. As will become clear in this paper, the fourth model is the one that best describes the Arab leadership in Israel.

THE ISRAELI CONTEXT

It is important to say at the outset that Israel sets limits to Arab leadership's maneuvering space.[4] Arab leadership in Israel is not a part of a governing elite; it is the leadership of a dominated minority that seeks to overcome the structural barriers set by the hegemonic Jewish majority, and its shortcomings cannot be disconnected from the Israeli system of control.[5] This is not the place to discuss the specific Israeli policies that block economic development in the Arab sector or the policies of exclusion and discriminatory land and zoning restrictions that cut off the Arab society from the Israeli mainstream and keep it in a state of enclavization, marginalization, and dependency. Among the inevitable results of such policies are social stagnation and obstruction of social transformation. This is the context that determines the political and civil framework in which the Arab leadership operates and which defines and limits the Arab practice of democracy in accordance with the exclusive national interests of the Jewish state and majority.[6] The imposed limits are justified by the concept of "defensive democracy," whereby the majority has the right to use whatever means are necessary to protect its prerogatives.

Israel has deployed a range of tactics to weaken and undermine an Arab leadership that has become increasingly concerned with national issues and

collective rights and increasingly willing to challenge the state's Jewish identity and the exclusive hegemony of the Jewish majority over state institutions. Besides cooptation and the nurturing of subservient Arab leaders content to limit their activities to demands for services and resources, the state's tactics include intimidation, arrest, and detention of individual leaders, as well as legal measures such as banning or attempting to ban political parties or prevent them from running in elections.[7] The legal efforts have been less successful in recent years,[8] but an atmosphere of threat and intimidation continues, as can be seen from the detentions in 2003 of several leaders of the Islamic movement and the trial of MK Azmi Bishara for declarations supporting the Palestinian right to resist Israeli occupation. Even when the state acknowledges that discriminatory and aggressive policies have been used against the Arab population—as was the case in the official Or Commission's report on state responsibility in the October 2000 police killings of thirteen unarmed Arab citizens during demonstrations—it accuses the Arab leaders of incendiary actions that make such policies necessary.

More common today than legal means are the constant accusations and criticisms by Israeli official and nonofficial sources—including many academics—aimed at delegitimizing the Arab leadership not only internationally and among the Jewish majority, but within Arab society itself. Arab leaders are accused of abusing "Israeli democracy" and Israeli "tolerance" to promote goals that, if not illegal, go beyond their mandate. A rather typical article is one by Dan Shiftan of Haifa University, which asserts that the "challenge that the Arab members of Knesset pose to the basic assumptions of a Jewish majority goes beyond the realm of a civic society discussion, which relies on common understandings as part of the democratic process."[9] Another common charge is that the Arab leaders devote their energies to the broader Palestinian problem at the expense of their "authentic duties" of serving the needs of their constituency. Needless to say, the weaknesses of the leadership are encouraged and exploited to facilitate state penetration of Arab society. In short, the Arab leadership in Israel is caught between the procedural democratic patterns of political behavior in the Israeli political system on the one hand and total institutional, discursive, and rhetorical hegemony of the Jewish majority on the other.

Israel's role in undermining the Arab leadership in Israel, however, in no way lessens the need for a thorough analysis of the patterns of behavior of the Arab leadership in Israel. Quite the contrary: Given this leadership's growing prominence on the Israeli and Palestinian political scene in recent years, an examination of how it emerged, its salient characteristics, and the reasons behind its failures becomes all the more necessary.

THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL RISE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL ARAB LEADERSHIP

The Arab leadership in Israel during the first decades of the new state's existence was a product of the 1948 *nakba*, which wiped almost the entire

political, economic, and cultural elite from the political space that became Israel.[10] Moreover, the imposition of military rule on Arab society at the war's end severely limited the community's freedom of expression, movement, and organization and therefore curtailed possibilities for real political mobilization. Meanwhile, in their quest to control Arab society, the authorities made a practice of cultivating ambitious young members of the large clans remaining in Israel (often from what had been the periphery of Palestinian society) who were willing to cooperate with the state in exchange for seats in the Knesset or other positions of power.[11] Such individuals dominated the "Arab lists" affiliated with the dominant Mapai (later Labor) in Knesset elections up to the 1970s.[12] Thus, most of the post-1948 leadership was pragmatic, traditional, based on family and religious affiliation, instrumental in its outlook, and subservient to the dictates of the state.

The exceptions to the rule of Israeli-sponsored Arab leaders in the early years came from the al-Ard movement (which espoused a nationalist platform and called for a Palestinian state on the basis of the 1947 UN partition plan) and the binational Arab-Jewish communist party.[13] Leaders in these two frameworks were, like their counterparts on Mapai's lists, relatively young when they rose to prominence but better educated and "self-made." The al-Ard leaders were detained, placed under house arrest, or encouraged to leave the country, and the movement itself was banned in 1965.[14] The Arab leaders of the Israeli Communist Party (ICP) were also persecuted, even though they were relatively powerless within a party heavily dominated by strong Jewish leaders with good relations with the Israeli establishment.[15] (This latter situation changed in 1965, when an Arab-dominated faction more sympathetic to Arab nationalist demands split from the ICP to form Rakah, which won three seats—two Arab—in the Knesset elections that year.)

The lifting of Israeli military rule over Israel's Arab citizens in 1966 and the June 1967 war had profound (though not immediate) repercussions on Arab politics in Israel. The end of martial law translated into more freedom of expression, movement, and political organization, while the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip exposed the Arab minority to a wider Palestinian society after nineteen years of total isolation. This development translated into a growing local influence of Palestinian nationalism and indirectly contributed to the rise of the Islamic movement a decade later, as religious youth began studying in Islamic colleges in the newly occupied territories.

At the same time, sociological changes were taking place. A middle class had begun to emerge as a result of economic expansion after the 1967 war.[16] The second generation of Arabs in Israel grew up in better economic and social conditions than their parents. Fluent in Hebrew, many attended universities in Israel and abroad; the number of Arab university students in Israel increased significantly in the 1970s and 1980s.[17] They were also more familiar with the Israeli system, more self-confident, and thus less easily manipulated by the Israeli political elite. All these changes were soon reflected in the Arab Knesset members.

One concrete indicator of change can be seen in the educational level of Knesset members. Up until 1981, most Arab MKs, especially those associated with the Labor party, were not educated. Only 7 out of the 70 MKs between 1949 and 1984 had a B.A. degree; 19 had not even attended school regularly. In comparison, from 1984 to 2003, 53 of the 62 Arab MKs have had at least a B.A. degree; in the last few years a growing number have had masters or doctoral degrees.

The real turning point for the rise of a more representative Arab leadership was the formation in 1977—just prior to the Knesset elections—of Hadash (the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality), a wide coalition comprising the Rakah communists and several Arab nationalist organizations established in the early 1970s.[18] Rakah was the dominant party in Hadash, which won more than 50 percent of the Arab vote and five seats (three Arab) in the 9th Knesset elections of 1977. Hadash's growing influence in Arab society put the Labor party, which lost the 1977 elections for the first time since 1948, on the defensive, leading it to drop its long-established practice of sponsoring separate Arab lists in favor of including Arab candidates on its own lists. But the Hadash victory signaled a broader change in Arab society, marking the decline of accommodative patterns according to which Arabs identified with Zionist parties or sought to satisfy the expectations of Israeli leadership.

Hadash was the sole representative of authentic Arab interests in the Israeli Knesset until 1984, when a new party, the Progressive List for Peace (PLP), won two seats in the elections for the 11th Knesset. Though dominated by Arabs and headed by Muhammad Mi'ari, an internal refugee who had established the Committee for Defense of Arab Land in the early 1970s, the PLP, like Hadash, was a mixed Arab-Jewish party. But unlike Hadash, which focused mainly on criticizing the distributive injustices of the Israeli system, the PLP adopted a clear Palestinian nationalist platform, demanding a change in Israel's identity and collective rights for the Arab community. Such positions reflected the growing national awareness among Israel's Arab population, allowing the PLP successfully to compete with Hadash for the Arab vote.

Although the PLP did not turn out to be an enduring presence, passing from the scene following the 1992 Knesset elections, it had an important impact on Arab politics in Israel. The clear popularity of its nationalist discourse forced other political formations, including Hadash, to adopt a more nationalist rhetoric. Even the Democratic Arab Party (DAP), which was established in late 1987 by 'Abd al-Wahab Darawsha when he left the Labor party, which pursued more integrative and accommodative policies than the other Arab formations, adopted a moderate nationalist discourse.

On the other hand, the rise of the PLP also marked the beginning of a proliferation of Arab parties that mirrored a growing fragmentation. Prior to the 1996 elections, two new parties entered the fray. The National Democratic Assembly (NDA, or Balad), led by Azmi Bishara, was seen as heir to the PLP legacy and began to challenge Hadash for the secular Arab vote. And for the first time, an Islamic party ran for the Knesset. (To do so, it had to break away from the main movement, established in the late 1970s, which opposed

participation in national elections on ideological grounds). Overall, then, the new Arab leadership elite falls into the three diverse ideological streams: communist, nationalist, and Islamist.[19] It should be noted that alongside these three streams, the Zionist parties continued to win around 20 percent of Arab votes, distributed among Labor, Likud, and the leftist Meretz.

ARAB KNESSET MEMBERS BY LIST SINCE 1948[1]

Knesset	Mapai[2]	Labor[3]	Mapam, Shinui, Meretz[4]	Likud	ICP, Rakah, Hadash[5]	PLP[6]	DAP,[7] UAL[8]	Balad
1 (1949)	2 DLN				1 ICP			
2 (1951)	1 PL; 3 DLIA; 1 AD		1 Ma		2 ICP			
3 (1955)	2 PL; 3 DLIA; 1 AD		1 Ma		2 ICP			
4 (1959)	2 PD; 2 CB; 1 AD		1 Ma		1 ICP			
5 (1961)	2 PD; 2 CB	1	1 Ma		2 ICP			
6 (1965)	2 PD; 2 CB		1 Ma		2 R			
7 (1969)	2 PD; 2 CB	1			2 R			
8 (1973)	2 PD; 1 ALBV		1 Ma	1	2 R			
9 (1977)	3 UAL		2 D-Sh[9]	1	3 H			
10 (1981)		2		1	2 H			
11 (1984)		1	2 1 Ma; 1 Sh	1	2 H	1		
12 (1988)		2	1 Ma-Me		4 H	1	1 DAP	
13 (1992)		3	1 Me	1	3 H		2 DAP	
14 (1996)		3	1 Me		3 H-B[10]		4 UAL	
15 (1999)		2	1 Me	1	2 H		5 UAL	2 B-T[11]
16 (2003)		1		2	3 H-T[12]		2 UAL	3 B

[1]Does not include Jewish MKs in the Jewish-Arab parties. Party affiliation is noted when different from the list on which the MK was elected.

[2]Arab MKs from the following parties won seats on the Mapai list: Agriculture and Development (AD); Arab List for Bedouins and Villagers (ALBV); Cooperation and Brotherhood (CB); Democratic List for Israeli Arabs (DLIA); Democratic List for Nazareth (DLN); Progress and Development (PD); Progress and Labor (PL); and the United Arab List (UAL).

[3]In the 5th Knesset, the 1 Arab MK was from the Ahdut Ha-Avoda list. In 1968 Ahdut Ha-Avoda merged with the Labor party.

[4]Ma = Mapam; Me = Meretz; Sh = Shinui.

[5]H = Hadash; ICP = Israeli Communist Party; R = Rakah.

[6]PLP = Progressive List for Peace.

[7]DAP = Democratic Arab Party. In 1996, DAP united with the UAL, and thus from 14th–16th Knesset, figures represent the number of UAL-DAP MKs.

[8]This United Arab List is not identical with the United Arab List that entered the Knesset in the 1977 elections as an Arab party identified with the Labor party.

[9]Dash (Democratic Movement for Change)–Shinui.

[10]Hadash-Balad (National Democratic Assembly).

[11]Balad-Ta'al (Arab Movement for Change).

[12]Hadash-Ta'al.

At the level of local politics, a new kind of municipal leader emerged and began to introduce new patterns of political conduct. Many challenged the preponderant influence of the large families in local politics and sought to form local coalitions based on ideological currents (mainly nationalist and communist). As officials employed by the state, however, they did not dare challenge

the Israeli control systems on nationalist grounds (which could explain why the Committee of Heads of Arab Mayors did not support the strike on the first Land Day in 1976) and instead justified their protest on the grounds of civic equality.

The pluralization of the Arab leadership structure and the competition among the various parties for Arab votes made unity around a common political platform difficult to achieve. The lack of unity and the growing fragmentation is most obvious within the framework of the Follow-up Committee, established in 1982 by the Committee of Arab Mayors and Arab Knesset Members (mainly from Hadash).[20] The committee gradually crystallized into a collective leadership forum when its membership was expanded to include the Arab members of the Histadrut central committee and representatives of the Committee for Defense of Arab Land, the Arab Students Union, the Union of Arab High Schools Students, and the Follow-up Committee on Arab Education. The importance of the Follow-up Committee was that it brought together local and national leaders into one framework aimed at defending Arab interests in the face of the discriminatory and marginalizing Israeli practices. It also began organizing strikes and demonstrations against fundamental Israeli policies toward its Arab citizens and in the occupied territories. This national political focus, which intensified when the PLP and later the Democratic Arab Party joined the committee, was not welcomed by the Israeli government, which never granted it official status or recognized it as representative of Arab society despite its wide support among the Arab population. Israel's policy of undermining the committee's representative character has contributed to its ineffectiveness, but a second major reason is the paralyzing internal competition among its members. The result is a flawed forum seemingly incapable of launching positive practical initiatives, one whose main area of agreement has been on organizing protests.

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Outside the realm of politics, young Arabs with leadership abilities seeking avenues of mobilization autonomous from state control gravitated toward Arab NGOs, which began to be established in the mid-1970s to advocate community interests and provide services to the Arab community. Their influence began to be felt in the mid to late 1980s, and a new wave of Arab NGOs was established in the 1990s, partly under the impact of the growing power of the Israeli NGO sector. The wide network of Arab NGOs forms a counterpublic where the interests of the Arab community are represented in such areas as urban planning, health services, educational infrastructure, legal rights and services, and human rights monitoring.[21] The NGOs serve an important function, providing goods and services much needed in the neglected Arab community. Among the examples of successful NGOs formed in the late 1990s are Arab Human Rights Association, Association of the Forty, Adalah, Mosawa, Mada, I'lam, and al-Aqsa.[22]

But the civil sector, too, is beset by fragmentation. Two main streams—secular and religious (mostly Islamic)—hardly cooperate and if they do, it is usually for specific and limited goals (e.g., protests against house demolitions, political detentions, or violations of holy places). These two streams constitute almost completely separate, parallel civil societies. One is secular and liberal, mainly engaged in advocacy, lobbying, and planning; the other is religious and traditional, mainly engaged in restoring traditional Islamic and Arab sites and in providing welfare, education, and health services. Whereas the first is civic oriented and seeks incorporation in Israeli society on the basis of equality, the second, predominantly Islamic oriented, seeks to establish autonomous cultural enclaves far from state institutions. In terms of funding, the secular NGOs are totally dependent on foreign donors, who influence their agendas but give them some protection from state intervention. The Islamic NGOs, on the other hand, are funded almost exclusively by the local Muslim community, which makes them less vulnerable to outside influence but also more vulnerable to state pressures (as evidenced in the arrest of some of their leaders). Beyond this basic division, sometimes fierce competition exists within each stream. The secular NGOs, for example, are mostly affiliated either with Hadash or Balad. Competition for the same (limited) resources is fierce, and overlapping functions or similar mandates result in duplication of effort. Lack of cooperation is also commonplace, even though the secular NGO leaders are usually young and educated, come from similar middle class backgrounds, and fight for the same or similar goals. The same picture repeats itself in the Islamic NGOs, where there is a clear division between the supporters of the northern wing of the Islamic movement led by Shaykh Ra'id Salah and the southern wing led by Shaykh Abdallah Nimr Darwish. However, because most Islamic NGOs are self-funded, the competition between them is not as apparent as that between the secular NGOs.

LEADERSHIP IMAGES AND REALITY

The transformation of the Arab leadership over the last decades, from one wholly constrained by the political and social circumstances (both at the local and Israeli levels) to one conscious of its constraints and seeking to overcome them, is not merely sociological but involves a change in political culture. It is a shift from accommodative leadership to constitutive or transformational leadership,[23] and in this sense it has the potential to have a formative influence on Arab society.

Unlike the older leadership, which was nurtured and in some cases "created" by the Israeli establishment, the new generation had to struggle to obtain positions within formal democratic frameworks. Traditional political mobility, based mainly on familial or clan ties, began to give way to new patterns of mobility shaped by democratic procedures and competition. One result was that individuals from smaller families or lower socioeconomic backgrounds could reach positions of power, whether as MKs, party leaders, or heads of municipalities, thanks to their education or professional skills, their ability to

operate within the democratic process, and their familiarity with Israeli political culture. Many of the main leaders who emerged in the 1990s, such as Muhammad Baraka, Salah Salim, Issam Makhul, 'Abd al-Wahab Darawsha, Azmi Bishara, Ahmad Tibi, and 'Abd al-Malik Dahamsha, exemplify this change as do many leaders at the local level such as the former and current heads of Follow-up Committee, Muhammad Zaydan and Shawki Khatib, and Nazareth mayor Ramez Jaraysi. At the same time, the mechanical and somewhat artificial attention to religious affiliation that went into the composition of the Mapai lists gave way, especially with the rise of Rakah-Hadash, to a more representative religious diversity. A similar pattern exists in the other Arab parties, where religious affiliation is either unimportant or relatively representative. Meanwhile, as we have seen, the content of Arab politics in Israel moved from exclusive concentration on issues of discrimination and inequality in the division of public resources to demands that the state recognize the Arab community as an indigenous national minority with historical rights.[24]

Despite these positive developments and the clearly more representative nature of the Arab political leadership in Israel, a deeper look at its characteristics shows that outward manifestations of change do not necessarily mean changes in the underlying sources of political power. The Machiavellian precept of the utility of adapting old structures to new rules while masking them with slogans has lost none of its relevance. Thus, although political slogans borrowed from the Enlightenment and democratic tradition may obscure the social structure undergirding the power base of the new Arab leaders, in fact the new leaders have remained at least partially faithful to traditional political values (albeit adapted to their purposes). Traditional political mobilization, grafted onto democratic structures, remains very much part of the political *habitus* of the Arab leadership.[25]

The continuing role of traditional social structures in Arab politics is at least partly related to the fact that the democratic process did not grow out of local historical experience but was imported, leading to important contradictions. The traditional models of organization combine (or clash) with social mobility and imported democratic models to create hybrid patterns or even schizophrenic syntheses. The dynamic of such hybrids becomes clear by uncovering the roots and organizational culture of the traditional structures. I will focus on three traditional social constructions that have persisted and are reproduced and incorporated into democratic institutions: the extended family (what I will henceforth call "familiacracy") and clientism;[26] the personification of political institutions through the internalization of the culture of notables (*wajaha*);[27] and chauvinist leadership practices, particularly those leading to the exclusion of women from leadership roles.[28] These three phenomena—the subject of much scholarly research that roots political power in the infrastructure of sociological reality[29]—are characteristic of many if not most traditional societies but have greater staying power and resonance in the Arab community of Israel. Given Israel's colonization policies toward the Arab sector and the community's peculiar situation as an enclaved and marginalized minority, the pressures on traditional social and cultural values and structures that are

normally facilitated by the capitalist economy and processes of globalization are stifled, and changes within the social structure are inevitably slow and superficial. Although the three phenomena are deeply interrelated, here I separate them for analytical purposes only.[30]

Familiacracy and Democratic Competition over Leadership Roles

One of the most important traditional social structures in Arab society (as indeed in most traditional societies) is the extended family, which continues to have a powerful influence on leadership patterns of mobilization. Although the extended family in Arab society in Israel is no longer the basic economic unit, as a result of the community's proletarization that accompanied the shift from the agricultural economy when Israel confiscated most Arab lands, the family has remained powerful as a social and cultural force. In the face of internal displacement, land confiscation, house demolitions, strict limitations on housing, and other hardships resulting from state policies, it was the extended family that provided the welfare and support to its members especially before the emergence of the Arab NGOs in the 1980s. This role as social shelter assured the family a continuing power, enabling it to become a mobilizing force subject to politicization and manipulation.

The enduring grip of "familiacracy"—and the way in which the traditional cultural structures interact with modern political procedures—is especially visible at the level of local politics, where elections are generally organized around family affiliation. Because the state bureaucracy and public institutions are virtually closed to Arabs, representation on the local council is crucial as a source of economic, political, and social power as well as access to the central authorities. The big families or clans therefore make every effort to increase their chances of controlling the local council through tight family unity and the formation of coalitions with other big families. In such cases, "family primaries" are often held to choose the family's candidate; given that ties of obligation and commitment often take precedence over qualifications, it is not uncommon for a highly educated candidate to be beaten by his uneducated relative. These family primaries are a good example of how the traditional social structure has adapted a modern democratic procedure into a tool that assures the family's continuing centrality in politics. Even when political leaders oppose such procedures on principle, they are obliged to use them to achieve their goals.

"Family primaries" are a good example of how a traditional social structure (the extended family) has transformed a modern democratic procedure into a tool assuring the family's continuing centrality in politics.

Familiacracy is therefore a useful tool for obtaining control over local councils, or at least membership on the council. It mandates that departments and appointments are doled out on the basis of family affiliation and not personal qualifications. Family coalitions also become the main determinant in municipal development plans, leading to investment in neighborhoods that vote for

the winning coalition and the neglect of others. And even where familiacracy helps qualified young individuals reach leadership roles, at the same time it obstructs their ability to lead.

Familiacracy also has ramifications at the national level. National politicians seeking to broaden their constituency tour villages and towns during local election campaigns to back influential local leaders (often clan leaders) to gain reciprocal support for their own campaigns. Inevitably, this form of electioneering entangles national parties in local politics, with parties becoming connected to this or that clan, which then represents the party power base. As a result, familial loyalties become a central tool in promoting party interests and need to be taken into account in the distribution of posts within the municipalities after the elections. The result can be forms of neoclientism.

Familiacracy thus becomes a factor in modern democratic political institutions—the party, the local authority, and civil sector organizations. Not only do these institutions (and their leaders) use familiacracy as an important tool in political mobilization, but the institutions themselves become a sophisticated facsimile of the familiacratic mentality, with all its implications on the behavior patterns of organizations and leaders.

All Arab parties across the political spectrum—nationalist, communist, and Islamist—as well as the municipalities and to an extent some NGOs, have thereby been transformed (to varying degrees) from formal democratic institutions into hybrid syntheses fusing tendencies from disparate political cultures. This process is bolstered by the dialectical relationship between an individual's aspirations to obtain power positions based on personal ability on the one hand, and the family's drive to preserve its power in the modernizing world on the other.[31] Add to these pressures on Arab political players the pressures from state agencies and Zionist parties, and the aggressiveness and even brutality characterizing most local political campaigns become understandable.

The Personification of Leadership Roles

The personification of institutions and leadership roles is by no means unique to Arab society. It has been a familiar feature of the political landscape throughout history, and it continues to exist in varying degrees in many parts of the world, including Israel. Overall, however, its significance as a shaper of politics began to decline with the spread of democratic forms of government; gradually, the replacement of person-to-person modes of persuasion by impersonal influence, expressed in indirect and remote forms of communication and the mass media,[32] came to be seen as a marker of modern politics. With the rise of this impersonal type of influence, the meaning of politics has been transformed from one based on direct personal connections to one based on ideology, common interests, images, codes, and symbolic power. The expected result is that the influence of personalization on the organization of public life would decline and be replaced by an alternative set of values based more on the free choice and the autonomy of active citizens and their right to

choose their representatives. In the case of the Arab community of Israel, the personification of leadership roles and institutions[33] continues thanks to the persistence of the traditional cultural and social norm of *wajaha*.

In attempting to explain the term *wajaha*, it might be helpful to distinguish between representation as *wajaha* on the one hand and the more modern form of representation as trust and as delegation of authority on the other. The first is more about putting oneself forward personally, as a "notable," than about representing the interests of others, while the second is more about respecting the opinions of the democratic constituency. Its eminent expression, as it has survived in Arab public institutions in Israel, is personification, where the identity of the institution (which can be a political party, social movement, local council, or NGO) becomes confused with that of the individual who leads it. It is not uncommon to hear people speaking of "the party or movement of this or that person"—the DAP of Darawsha, the Arab List for Change of Tibi, Balad of Bishara, the Islamic movement of Shaykh Nimr Darwish or that of Shaykh Ra'id Salah. These movements are very deeply connected with their leaders, to a point that the personality can overshadow the party.

A similar phenomenon has surfaced in the civil sector, where the proliferation of NGOs in recent years is organically linked to personification and *wajaha*. The importance of the NGO sector's contribution to the well-being of the community is beyond dispute, but there is also little doubt that a number of NGOs were established and operate at least partly as organizational tools and social spaces to showcase the personal attributes of their founders or leaders. In many cases the competition between NGOs is highly personalized, with individual rivalries between NGO leaders being transformed into organizational rivalries. For the secular NGOs, the competition is fueled by the fact that most are supported by foreign donors who are either unaware of, or indifferent to, the personal dimensions.

The *wajaha* phenomenon is very much in evidence in Arab Knesset politics, where MKs have been known to switch parties, even to parties with different ideologies, to secure a Knesset seat. The *wajaha* phenomenon also explains why Arab MKs, despite similar goals, seem unable to put together an effective Knesset coalition. Personification can even apply to ideologies in cases where political leaders are seen to embody them. In such cases, criticism of the ideology becomes criticism of the leader, and vice versa, and embracing a given ideology means following the political figure who personifies it. Every argument, no matter how focused on principle, becomes personal. As a result, disputes between leaders end in reciprocal boycotts, refusals to appear in common public forums, and so on, blocking communication between parties, organizations, and movements. Indeed, the strategy of boycott is used by many leaders to silence critics, marginalize opponents, and block rivals within their own parties. In general, personification is most obvious when party leaders compete for the same constituency, as was the case with PLP and DAP leaders in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and with Hadash and Balad from the late 1990s to the present.

Finally, it must be said that the personification of politics is not necessarily incompatible with political mobilization and the emergence of a critical public consciousness. This became clear in the last decade with the rise of the Islamic movement and of Balad, both of which succeeded in constructing a new collective consciousness in Arab society and in mobilizing large populations for common goals. Such examples demonstrate that political personification can also have positive aspects, especially in suppressed societies in need of charismatic leadership—the positive impact of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s personification of the U.S. civil rights movement is a case in point. Overall, however, when all dimensions of politics are personified, real debate and constructive communication become almost impossible.

Male Chauvinism and the Exclusion of Women

The persistence of patriarchal cultural values in modern Arab society has several aspects,[34] but here I will focus on the exclusion of women from important political roles. At a time when the educational level of Arab women in Israel is constantly rising[35] and where women academics are not rare, their almost total absence in the Arab political leadership is striking—and this despite the major sociological developments over the last decade that have changed the face of the leadership overall.

Since 1948 only one Arab woman, Husniya Jabara, managed to enter the Knesset. But this was in a Zionist party and with a majority of Jewish votes. At the municipal level, only a few women have won seats on town councils, and only once did a woman manage to become mayor: In the 1970s Violet Khoury was elected mayor of Kefar Yassif on a communist list. Even when women are given a place in the electoral slots of Arab political parties, their names are too far down in the lists for them to have any chance of winning a Knesset seat. And although women ornament many political and civil institutions, it is never as partners except in purely feminist NGOs. Their presence is to add a feminist touch and to indicate modernism. And when women do attain leadership roles in Arab society, it is usually in social fields lacking real political power, such as in education, welfare, and health service. Despite growing lip service by male leaders to the importance of women representation in the Arab parties, this situation is unlikely to change in the near future.

Women's absence from politics is fed by patriarchal Arab culture and the highly restricted Arab political field. Since they are still seen as the embodiment of family honor in the public sphere, their families would almost certainly prevent their being on the frontlines of electoral politics. Even at the level of political participation, most women remain dependent on their spouses, though recent studies have shown that some women manage to bypass their families to develop their own political preferences. This behavior, however, is still not widespread and usually not public.

The Arab patriarchal structures that stifle women's political participation are encouraged by Israeli social, legal, economic, and cultural policies toward Arab society that promote the freezing of the status quo and block mobilization;[36]

they also encourage Arab patriarchal values and structures in education and family planning.[37] In the political domain, Israeli policies limit Arab social, economic, and political mobilization, rendering Arab society and economy closed, limited, and under control.[38] The fierce competition for public resources and positions fueled by Israeli policies assure the continuing marginalization of women.[39] It should be noted that the Israeli state itself is very patriarchal,[40] dominated by men, particularly military men.[41] The state's patriarchal nature is reflected in all political domains, especially in political representation and in the division of resources, where it is Israel that decides what to "give" and to whom.

The question could be raised as to how women's exclusion from politics relates to the divisiveness and fragmentation of the Arab leadership. One possible answer is that their absence leads to the continuing production of patriarchal cultural rules in politics and political institutions. In other words, the integration of women in leadership roles could soften the influence of patriarchal behavior patterns and therefore ease the fierce competition for public posts. Operating under patriarchal conditions, Arab leaders replicate traditional social structures in order to preserve their status and promote their positions. This leads to strengthening those structures and incorporating them into modern political ones.

TOWARD A CONCLUSION

In analyzing Israel's Arab leadership, recourse to concepts such as "traditional" versus "modern" and alluding to modernization theory may sound too reductionist and dichotomous. Nonetheless, shifts in Arab political culture are best examined as a unity of opposites reflecting the dialectical tension between competing values, which are never manifested in their pure social form. Instead of a facile understanding of modernization as the replacement of traditional patterns of behavior by modern ones, the evolution of Arab politics demonstrates a dialectical interplay in which they feed into each other, leading to multifaceted syntheses. This treatment of Arab political culture does not ignore the importance of the context in which such changes take place. Modern political processes put pressure on traditional structures and values, especially when these processes are imposed by a hegemonic majority that habitually plays on the minority's traditional social structures and exploits the divisions within the minority to serve its own interests.

There is no doubt that Arab society in Israel in general and its leadership in particular have undergone far-reaching sociological change. At the same time, the persistence, even in attenuated form, of the traditional cultural constructs elaborated above adversely affects the leadership's effectiveness and ability to work together. The durability of these traditional phenomena has important implications. With regard to *wajaha*, for example, we find that an institution's domination by one leader causes, often inadvertently, the weakening of the institution's decision-making and communication mechanisms. More generally, the low rates of tax collection in Arab local authorities, the diminishing size of demonstrations and rallies (with parties often organizing

competing demonstrations and overideologizing them on party lines), and the
overall low turnout in activities sponsored by the civil sector organizations are
all symptoms of leadership problems.

The persistence of the three phenomena also has political and programmatic
implications. Any study of the Arab rights struggle in Israel shows that most
sectors of Arab society want the same things, including substantial equality and
effective participation in determining policy and decision-making in the Israeli
system. Yet neither the Arab political parties nor the Follow-up Committee,
the premier organization of the Arab population, have been able to overcome
personal and ideological differences sufficiently to maintain a serious dialog
on central issues such as education, planning, development, and housing or to
form a common front that alone could challenge Israeli discriminatory policies
in those areas. The nexus of personal ambitions, mutual suspicions, and ex-
treme ideologization prevents Arab leaders from transforming themselves into
a united national minority leadership, bearing out the suggestion that Arab
leadership falls under the "disunited but widely differentiated" model of elite
leadership set forth by Hingley and Lengyl, mentioned at the beginning of this
paper. The divisiveness within the leadership plays into the hands of Israel,
whose policies are a major factor contributing to the failures of the Arab lead-
ership, and allows it to claim that the Arabs themselves are wholly to blame. The
fragmentation and disunity also lead to frustration, alienation, and disappoint-
ment among the Arab public, nourishing mistrust and disengagement from the
parliamentary political game.

It should be emphasized that the Arab public's dissatisfaction with its lead-
ership is very different from the criticism leveled by the Jewish public and
the Israeli leadership against Arab leaders. The latter is based on political and
cultural expectations that would be impossible for any Arab leadership to meet
and that go against the grain of the Arab community. The Israeli political elite
strives to force on the Arab leadership unconditional acceptance of the Jew-
ish defined political boundaries. The fact that this proviso is rejected by the
Arab leadership leads to its political, and even legal, delegitimization, as has
happened in the past two years. On the other hand, the disappointment of
a part of the Arab population in its leadership is based on the gap between
expectations and accomplishments. The Arab public finds itself captive be-
tween the desire to protect its leadership from the Israeli political and security
establishment and its need to criticize it for its lack of responsiveness.

NOTES

1. In contrast to some treatments of
the "second generation" of Arab leaders
(e.g., that of Danny Rabinowitz and Khawla
Abu-Baker, who present them as being part
of a "shahok" generation that has lost its
ability to lead as a result of their struggle
with Israeli authorities; see their book *The*

Stand Tall Generation [Jerusalem: Keter,
2002]), I contend that the dominant Arab
leadership today belongs to the second
generation of active and vibrant leaders.
2. See for example, Mattei Dogan and
John Higley, eds., *Elites, Crises, and the
Origins of Regimes* (Lanham, MD:

Rowman and Littlefield, 1998); John Higley and Richard Gunther, eds., *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and John Higley, John Pakulski, and W. Wesolowski, eds., *Postcommunist Elites and Democracy in Eastern Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1998).

3. John Higley and Gyoergy Lengyel, eds., *Elites after State Socialism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), p. 2.

4. David Kretzmer, *The Legal Status of the Arabs in Israel* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990).

5. Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980).

6. For changes in the electoral laws introduced in May 2002 and in the citizenship law introduced in 2003, see Amal Jamal, "Citizenship as Resistance: Arab Politics in Israel Revisited" in Nimer Sultani, ed., *Israel and the Palestinian Minority 2004: Mada's Third Annual Political Monitoring Report* (Haifa: Mada al-Carmel, 2005).

7. One example was the persecution of the leaders of the nationalist al-Ard movement in the 1950s and 1960s and the banning of the movement in 1965.

8. The 1984 attempt to prevent the Progressive List for Peace (PLP), seen as the continuation of al-Ard, from running failed and even led to the amendment of Article 7 in the Basic Law of the Knesset, which had made illegal any attempt to challenge the assertion that Israel is the state of the Jewish people. See Yoav Peled, "Ethnic Democracy and the Legal Construction of Citizenship: Arab Citizen of the Jewish State," *American Political Science Review* 86, no. 2 (1992), pp. 432–43. A 2003 attempt by several Zionist parties supported by the state attorney general to prevent certain Arab leaders and parties from running for the Knesset was blocked by the Israeli High Court; see High Court Verdict, Central Elections Committee v. MK Ahmad Tibi and MK Azmi Bshara, 11280/02 47(4), 1 P. 22.

9. Dan Shiftan, "Zihotam Ha-Hadasha Shil Havri Ha-Knesset Ha-A'ravim" [The New Identity of the Arab Knesset Members], *Tkhelet* 13 (2002), pp. 23–49.

10. Bayan Nuwayhid al-Hout, *Al-qiyadat wa al-mu'assasat al-siyasiyya fi Filastin, 1917–1948* [The Political Leadership and Institutions in Palestine, 1917–1948], 3rd ed. (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1986); Issa Khalaf, *Politics in Palestine: Arab Factionalism and Social Disintegration, 1939–1948* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

11. Ian Lustick has amply demonstrated that coopting leaders was one of the main pillars of the Israeli control system. See Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State*.

12. Elia Zureik, *The Palestinians in Israel: A Study in Internal Colonialism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979); As'ad Ghanem, *The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel, 1948–2000* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

13. The party, originally an Arab-Jewish party since its inception in the 1920s, split into two in 1943 as the Zionist-Palestinian conflict intensified, but merged after the 1948 war.

14. Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), pp. 185–96; Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State*, pp. 125–29.

15. Ilana Kaufman, *Arab National Communism in the Jewish State* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997).

16. Aziz Haider, *On the Margins: The Arab Population in the Israeli Economy* (London: Hurst and Co., 1995).

17. Majid al-Haj, *Education, Empowerment, and Control: The Case of Arabs in Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

18. Kaufman, *Arab National Communism*.

19. Among the very active national and Islamist forces that do not enter the Knesset are the Sons of the Village movement and the Shaykh Ra'id Salah faction of the Islamic movement.

20. On the initial years of the Follow-up Committee, see Ghanem, *The Palestinian-Arab Minority*. See also Majid al-Haj and Henry Rosenfeld, *Arab Local Government in Israel* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990).

21. Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the Postsocialist*

Condition (New York: Routledge, 1997).

22. For details on each, see the following sites: www.arabhra.org; www.assoc40.org; www.adalah.org; www.mosawa.org; www.mada-research. org; www.ilamcenter.org; and www. al-aqsa.org.

23. Martin Chemers and Roya Ayman, eds., *Leadership Theory and Research: Perspectives and Directions* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1993).

24. See Amal Jamal, "On the Morality of Arab Collective Rights in Israel," *Adalah's Newsletter* 11 (2005), online at www.adalah.org, and "The Ambiguities of Minority Patriotism: On the Love for Homeland versus State among Palestinian Citizens of Israel," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 10, no. 3 (Autumn 2004), pp. 433–71.

25. On the meaning of habitus, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

26. Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

27. On the salience of personal politics in Arab politics, see Khaldun Hassan al-Naqib, *The Authoritarian State in the Arab East: Comparative Structural Study* (Beirut: Markiz darasat al-wihda al-'Arabiya, 1991).

28. Hisham Sharabi, *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

29. Halim Barakat, *Arab Society in the Twentieth Century: A Study of Conditions and Relationships* (Beirut: Markiz dirasat al-wihda al-'Arabiya, 2000).

30. For a critique of dichotomous modes of analyzing Arab society, see Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 3–41.

31. This phenomenon can also be seen in the Palestinian Authority. See Amal Jamal, *The Palestinian National Movement: Politics of Contention,*

1967–2005 (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005).

32. Diana Mutz, *Impersonal Influence: How Perception of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

33. See the treatment of personified politics in the Palestinian political culture in Bassem Ezbeidi, *Palestinian Political Culture* (Ramallah: Muwatin, 2002).

34. For a discussion of Arab patriarchy, see Deniz Kandiyoti, ed., *Women, Islam, and the State* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).

35. For data on education in Arab society, see "The Arab Population of Israel 2003," Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, Statisti-lite no. 50, available online at www.cbs.gov.il.

36. Lisa Hajjar, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Arab Women, Liberal Feminism and the Israeli State," *MERIP Report*, July 1998, online at www.merip.org.

37. Rhoda Ann Kanaaneh, *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Hanna Herzog, "The Status of Women in Israel: A Fifty Years Perspective," in S. A. Cohen and M. Shien, eds., *Israel Culture, Religion and Society 1948–1998* (Capetown: Jewish Publications, 2000), pp. 53–74.

38. Noah Lewin-Epstein, Majid al-Haj, and Moshe Semyonov, *The Arabs in Israel in the Labor Market* (Jerusalem: Floersheimer Institute for Policy Research, 1994).

39. See "The Statement by the Working Group on the Status of Palestinian Women Citizens of Israel to the Committee for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on the Third Periodic Report from the Government of Israel," *Adalah's Newsletter*, 15 July 2005, online at www.adalah.org.

40. Nitza Berkovitch, "Motherhood as a National Mission: The Construction of Womanhood in the Legal Discourse in Israel," *Woman's Studies International Forum* 20, no. 5-6 (1997), pp. 605–19.

41. Hanna Herzog, "Why So Few? The Political Culture of Gender in Israel," *International Review of Women and Leadership* 2, no. 1 (1996), pp.1–18.