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The Political Mobilization of the Arab Minority in Israel: Shifts in Political Demands and Activities

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Abstract

Previous scholarly work on the demands and political activities of the Arab minority in Israel have focused on studying Arab political parties and parliamentary participation, asserting that Arab demands fall into one of two categories: radical or adaptive. That is, in studying Arab participation, or lack thereof, in parliamentary processes, one can claim that Arabs want either complete separation from the state of Israel (radical demands) or complete integration into the state of Israel (adaptive demands). However, recent trends have witnessed a decrease in Arab Israelis' interest in political parties and parliamentary participation, such as voting in Knesset elections and attempts to pass legislation. This disinterest is a direct result of the inability and inefficiency of parliamentary processes to make practical changes in the daily lives of the Arab minority, who are underprivileged, socio-economically, politically, and legally. However, disinterest in parliamentary processes does not translate into disinterest in political mobility, and consequently, Arab Israelis have turned to other means, particularly extra-parliamentary organization, to achieve their demands. This paper then takes a different approach in that I study extra-parliamentary organizations to explore the nature of Arab demands towards the Israeli government. In studying extra-parliamentary organization, I have found that the nature of Arab demands no longer fall within the radical-adaptive dichotomy proposed by previous scholars. Rather, the Arab minority's demands can be described as being ethnoregional in nature. That is, the Arab minority in Israel demand collective national rights based on the fragmented geographical regions they occupy.

Keywords

Arab-Israelis, ethnic civil society, ethnoregionalism, extraparliamentarism, Social Sciences, Political Science, Robert Vitalis, Vitalis, Robert

Disciplines

Comparative Politics | Ethnic Studies

**“The Political Mobilization of the Arab Minority in Israel:
Shifts in Political Demands and Activities”**

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Senior Honors Thesis
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Dedicated to Professor Eve Troutt Powell whose love for teaching inspired my desire to pursue academia, and my parents, whose endless love and support, brought me this far.

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Abstract

Previous scholarly work on the demands and political activities of the Arab minority in Israel have focused on studying Arab political parties and parliamentary participation, asserting that Arab demands fall into one of two categories: radical or adaptive. That is, in studying Arab participation, or lack thereof, in parliamentary processes, one can claim that Arabs want either complete separation from the state of Israel (radical demands) or complete integration into the state of Israel (adaptive demands). However, recent trends have witnessed a decrease in Arab Israelis' interest in political parties and parliamentary participation, such as voting in Knesset elections and attempts to pass legislation. This disinterest is a direct result of the inability and inefficiency of parliamentary processes to make practical changes in the daily lives of the Arab minority, who are underprivileged, socio-economically, politically, and legally. However, disinterest in parliamentary processes does not translate into disinterest in political mobility, and consequently, Arab Israelis have turned to other means, particularly extra-parliamentary organization, to achieve their demands. This paper then takes a different approach in that I study extra-parliamentary organizations to explore the nature of Arab demands towards the Israeli government. In studying extra-parliamentary organization, I have found that the nature of Arab demands no longer fall within the radical-adaptive dichotomy proposed by previous scholars. Rather, the Arab minority's demands can be described as being ethnoregional in nature. That is, the Arab minority in Israel demand collective national rights based on the fragmented geographical regions they occupy.

Introduction

As a young Arab Israeli youth living in the States, I never understood why Arabs in Israel did not organize and struggle for their rights to equal citizenship. Hearing many of my family members and friends complain about being second class in their own country made me question the reasons behind a lack of political mobility for change. Why did we not have a Martin Luther King or an NAACP? I knew that we had Arab political parties in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), yet there was a sense of hopelessness in political parties – everyone around me seemed to complain about the lack of productivity, efficiency, and unity amongst these various parties. As I began my research to answer this question, I realized how wrong I was – I had limited the definition of political mobility to social protests and ignored the various avenues with which a people can mobilize. The Arabs in Israel, it seems, have had a long history of political mobilization. This meant my research question had to change.

The year 2006 brought about two events that triggered the modified question this paper seeks to explore. The first was the publication of the Future Vision Documents – a combination of four white papers by various Arab Israeli nongovernmental organizations and the National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities. (The Documents focused on the current status and position of Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel.) The second was the sharp decline of Arab participation in the 17th Knesset elections.¹ On the surface, the two happenstances seem paradoxical: The language of the Future Vision Documents clearly represents a growing sense of identity awareness among the Arab Israelis and an active process to reclaim their identity and rights as a national minority. The decline in voting participation, on the other hand, seems to denote indifference and disinterest in the political scene and inaction against the political system. However, the following claim can shed some light on the causal relationship between the two factors: due to the inability of parliamentary

¹ Elie Rekhess, "The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel," *Israeli Studies* 12.3 (2007): 1.

processes to effect change, many Arab Israelis have turned to national organizations and extra-parliamentary activity (activity independent of the Israeli parliamentary structure, such as grassroots organizing, protests, and national committees) to demand individual and collective rights from the Israeli government. If this hypothetical is true, the question this paper asks is the following: “How has the shift from parliamentary participation to extra-parliamentary organization affected the kinds of political demands that Arabs in Israel make of the government?” I suggest that extra-parliamentary political demands of Arabs in Israel are, what Oren Yiftachel calls, “ethnoregional” in character.² This paper describes the historical political mobilization of the Arabs in Israel to show why extra-parliamentarism has risen in its importance to make political demands. I then test whether or not these demands are in fact ethnoregional in character by assessing the demands of two extra-parliamentary activities – Adalah and the Future Vision Documents.

Paper Structure

I begin by first discussing how various scholars understood the demands of Arab Israelis. Scholars have generally studied these demands by either looking at political parties or radical groups, characterizing the demands as being either adaptive or radical, respectively. This framework suggests that Arabs either want to adapt and become integrated into the Israeli society, or they want complete separation from the state of Israel. I explore these two narratives but suggest that they fail to take into account the increasing importance of extra-parliamentary activity and, consequently, to provide a comprehensive analysis of current Arab-Israeli demands. Instead, I propose that Oren Yiftachel’s ethnoregional theory provides a more appropriate framework to understanding the most recent shift towards extra-parliamentary organizing in Arab political mobility. Ethnoregionalism suggests that Arabs

² Oren Yiftachel, "Between Nation and State: 'Fractured' Regionalism among Palestinian-Arabs in Israel," *Political Geography* 18 (1999)

want neither full integration nor full separation. Rather, they demand individual and collective rights based on distinct geographical units.

Second, I provide a history on the political mobilization of Arabs. This history is necessary to understanding why Arabs have given up on parliamentary political parties and have turned instead to extra-parliamentary organizing. Though parliamentary and extra-parliamentary means admittedly have existed side by side all along, the relative importance of one over the other has shifted over the years. This paper demonstrates that shift. In providing a history of political mobility, I establish that Arabs have indeed been organizing to have their voices heard, in some form or another. I explain that historically, Arabs have used political leverage to demand economic, social, and political benefits in regards to equal citizenship. An example of such political leverage is voting. Although Arab voting trends have changed over the years, the fact that Arab voting was generally high translates into the existence of some form of Arab political activity. The emergence of Arab political parties for whom to vote reinforces the existence of Arab political activity.

Recent years, however, have witnessed a decline in political participation by Arab voters and in correlation, a rise in the mobility of ethnic civil society. The third section thus explores the shift to extra-parliamentary means of political mobility. Indeed, non-parliamentary activity has been in existence since the late 1950s, but it has not always been popular. Al Ard movement, for example, was formed in 1959, but was considered too radical of a group and thus banned by the state in its later years. I will discuss Al-Ard in more depth in later sections. This section demonstrates the following claim: If indeed Arabs are, and have been, politically active, yet there has been a sharp decline in voting patterns, then there must be another pursued form of Arab mobility. Due to the incompetence of Arab political parties to represent and achieve Arab interests, I suggest that one needs to look further, and in particular at extra-parliamentary means of activity, to assess how Arabs are responding to

their inferior status as a minority within the state of Israel. By extra-parliamentary activity, I mean activity that is outside of the Israeli parliamentary structure – that is, activities that are not part of the political process like running for national or local elections. Extra-parliamentary activity includes, but is not limited to, nongovernmental organizations, grassroots activities, and social movements. Based on the previous phenomena, the demands of the Arab populous can indeed be assessed by looking at extra-parliamentary activity. It is insufficient to simply study Arab political parties to assess Arab demands. My research suggests that these demands are ethnoregional in character. That is, the demands converge towards not only individual rights, but also collective rights based on distinct geographical units.

The fourth section seeks to merge ethnoregionalism and extra-parliamentary organization: that is, it puts the theory in practice. If Yiftachel's ethnoregionalism framework to understand Arab demands is valid, then the demands of extra-parliamentary organizations must be ethnoregional in character. If extra-parliamentary means of pursuing Arab demands is indeed rising in importance, then Yiftachel's theory must hold true when analyzing extra-parliamentary demands. To do so, I assess and analyze the language, activities, and impact of two major extra-parliamentary activities: Adalah and the Four Vision Documents. Adalah is a nongovernmental organization. The Four Vision Documents are a set of documents written by Arab Israeli scholars and politicians that was the first of its kind to explicitly establish and define the demands and identity of the Arabs within Israel. As a disclaimer, this paper is not a research study on Adalah or the Future Vision Documents. Rather, both are relevant to the paper insofar as these activities allow me to study the *demands* they make. They are two forms of significant extra-parliamentary activities that I use to test whether or not the nature of their demands is ethnoregional. Similarly, background information about Adalah and the

Future Vision Documents are presented for the sole purposes of analyzing the nature of both of these activities' demands.

A number of reasons exist for choosing Adalah and the Future Vision Documents as the litmus test to extra-parliamentary activities. First, representatives from Adalah and the Documents stated that their findings were based on a collection of surveys of the general Arab Israeli public. Thus, their demands reflect, for the most part, the demands of the Arab Israeli minority. Second, both the Documents and Adalah were solely Arab Israeli in character – that is, they were started by Arab Israelis, focus on the status of Arab Israelis, and are run by Arab Israelis, as opposed to organizations or documents focused on Arab-Jewish coexistence. Third, as opposed to other organizations, Adalah keeps a detailed record of its activities and like the Future Documents, has had a large impact on the political activity of Arabs in Israel. Fourth, both Adalah's published reports and the Documents could be found in English. Fifth, both Adalah and the Vision Documents represent two different methods of political activity that can easily be accessed and analyzed. Finally, Adalah and the Future Vision Documents represent two of the most important extra-parliamentary activities amongst the Arab minority in Israel.

Theoretical Analysis of Arab Mobilization

For years, the Arab minority has had a problem identifying itself, its interests, objectives, and demands as a minority. Many theorists, ranging from political scientists, to sociologists and anthropologists, to psychologists, have attempted to explain this minority and to provide a theoretical framework with which to understand it.³ Although previous literature on the Arab minority in Israel has been limited, the literature has multiplied over the past couple of decades.⁴ Much of the literature that describes the process of Arab

³ Political Scientists include Lustick, Landau, Smooha to cite a few. For more information on a social-psychological model, see Rouhana's book, *Palestinian Citizens in an Ethnic Jewish State*

⁴ Oren Yiftachel, "The Arab Minority in Israel and Its Relations with the Jewish Majority: A Review Essay," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 27.2 (1992): 57-83.

mobilization and self-identity in Israel has proposed two extremes: adaptation or radicalization. Other terminology that has been interchangeably used to describe the same process includes radicalism and incorporation⁵; Palestinization or nationalism⁶ and assimilation; civic mobilization and ethnonationalism.⁷ All such duos are used to explain the direction of Arab mobilization as going along one of two paths: either complete separation from the state of Israel, due to the increasing influence of Palestinization on this minority, thus radicalization; or the integration into Israeli society, considering that integration does not necessarily imply becoming “Jewish” or assimilating into the majority culture, and thus adaptation. For the purposes of this paper, adaptation is the utilization of the political, or parliamentary, system to bring about change and demand equality. This paper will use the terms adaptation and radicalization to refer to these two orientations.

Smooha fully describes the two orientations, but contends they are insufficient to conclusively describe the nature of Arab demands. He proposes a third orientation to the literature, or factionalism. The views of Arabs toward the state of Israel, he maintains, have focused on three, not two, main orientations: incorporation (adaptation), radicalism, and factionalism. To Smooha, the Arab minority is incorporated into the Israeli society so long as their “Israelization” outweighs their “Palestinianism.” What he claims to be a process of Israelization refers to the Arabs speaking Hebrew on a daily basis; adopting western values and cultures in place of the Palestinian culture they have historically practiced; and having more contact and interdependence with Israeli Jews rather than Palestinian Arabs. Thus, incorporation, or adaptation, is the idea that the Arab community is “closer” to the Jewish community rather than the Palestinian community. Radicalism, on the other hand, implies the rejection of the dominant majority’s views. But, such radicalism is only radical to the extent

⁵ Sammy Smooha, *The Orientation and Politicization of the Arab Minority in Israel*, Revised ed, (Haifa: University of Haifa, Jewish-Arab Center, Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, 1984) 12

⁶ Rekhess, “The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel,” 7

⁷ Yiftachel, “Between Nation and State: ‘Fractured’ Regionalism among Palestinian-Arabs in Israel,” 289

that the minority is in disagreement with the majority's views – therefore, radicalism is only but a function of the majority's views at the time of measurement.⁸ In supplement to those two orientations, Smooha claims that the Arab minority can also be described as factional: “In addition to disagreeing with the majority, the minority may be internally divided.”⁹ Accordingly, Smooha proposes a new framework based on the interplay of all three: “In contrast to the simple radicalization theme, the Arabs as a whole are radical by Israeli standards, yet politically divided as to their minority status and largely incorporated into Israeli society.”¹⁰ He uses sociological research models to test this theory and finds that indeed, Arabs are fragmented. Such fragmentation is predominantly based on Arabs' social status, that being divided into Druze, Bedoins, Muslims, and Christians. He also finds that education and income have little or no significant impact on political ideology. Thus, Druze are least radical, Bedoins are medium radical, and Muslim and Christian Arabs are the most radical. He then uses these divisions to explore his thesis further and prove that indeed, Arabs are internally factionalized, but are also radical in that they do not accept the Jewish status quo.¹¹

Some scholars, however, criticize Smooha's work stating that it is limited. Smooha, for example, overlooks significant factors such as the geographical influence on the orientation of this minority and the external ethnocratic regime within which it operates.¹² Smooha's thesis is particularly challenged by Rekhess's central thesis, which adopts a radicalist framework. According to Rekhess, the period between 1967- 1993 can be described as a period of radicalization, or Palestinization, within the Arab minority. For Rekhess, radicalization does not imply the move away from the mainstream, so much so the move

⁸ Smooha, 11-15

⁹ Smooha, 13; Since factionalism only exists within a radical framework, I do not ascribe it its own framework.

¹⁰ Smooha, 13

¹¹ Smooha, 145-148

¹² As'ad Ghanem et al., "Questioning "Ethnic Democracy": A Response to Sammy Smooha," *Israel Studies* 3.2 (1998): 253-267.

towards a new Palestinian national identity. For after the 1967 war, and the increased mobility of the Arabs in Israel, a process of returning to the roots emerged. He defines this process as “Palestinization.” A national Palestinian identity was reinforced by Egypt’s former President Gamal Abd El Nassir and Nassir’s call for an Arab National Movement; by the creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, which became a leading representative voice for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza; and by other major developments in the region.¹³ This new period of political mobilization towards “Palestinization” was driven by and centered on Arab political parties and political figures that did not “stimulate a revised ideological-political program.”¹⁴ Rather, political parties were simply forced to push for an Arab-Palestinian identity within the existing Israeli political framework. In describing this challenge, Rekhess branches off from Smootha’s definition of radicalism. Rekhess defines radicalization as the process of nationalization amongst political parties and other extra-legal or extra-parliamentary groups such as the “Sons of the Village,” who refused to work within the system or participate in any Israeli governmental activity. Radicalism, to Rekhess, is not a function of the majority and how distant the minority’s views are from this majority. It is inherent to the minority views and is independently linked to the activities of this minority. To Rekhess, radicalization is not only applicable to groups who work outside the political system, but also to political groups who work in Parliament. This view of radicalism is different from that of various authors, who understand radicalism as being the orientation of extra-parliamentary groups that work outside the state structure and call for complete separation from Israel. For these authors, political parties are not radicalized, but rather, politicized, or adaptive. That is, though political parties’ views may be interpreted as radical, their working within Israel’s political system must be noted as a distinguishable factor from groups or individuals who refuse to work within this system. Such scholars define the

¹³ Rekhess, “The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel,” 7-11

¹⁴ Ibid, 8

orientation of political groups as politicized – they are active, as opposed to submissive, but still not radical.¹⁵ Rekhess then diverges from the mainstream definitions of radicalism and politicization (or adaptation) in that he defines radicalism to include political parties that work within the state to create change, rather than solely to parties who operate outside the legal or parliamentary system.

Since 1993, a new set of literature emerged, considering that the demands of the Arab collective changed. A new collective minority was coming together – united on identity issues and demands, that were neither politicized nor radicalized, nor as Smootha suggests, radicalized but factionalized. Arabs in this new period became increasingly aware of the contradiction between Israel being Jewish and being democratic, thus inherently excluding them as non-Jews. The widening socioeconomic gap between the Jews and the Arabs only further complicated this dichotomy.¹⁶ Additionally, the Oslo Accords had left the Arabs in a state of desperation as to their national status. If a Palestinian state were to be recognized (which became a potential possibility after the signing of the Oslo Accords) what was to come of the Arab minority, who had so far linked its own cause within Israel to the creation of a Palestinian state outside of Israel? This confusion was reinforced when many Arabs realized that if a Palestinian state were to be created, they would not want to relocate and live within its borders. Rather, previous and current surveys show that if a Palestinian state were indeed recognized, the majority of the Arabs would prefer to stay in Israel. This realization created a series of self-reflection processes within the Arab minority, and along with it, an analysis of what their demands were, as a unit independent of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. Previous theorists had to readjust their writings to this new change. Rekhess, for example, shifted his writings to describe the dynamic transition of the Arab minority to their collective identity. Increasing protests and demands for the collective rights of a national minority were

¹⁵ Smootha, 158-163

¹⁶ Rekhess, “The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel,” 12

becoming more mainstream. Druze, Christians, and Muslims were all becoming part of this national collective. And the discourse on a national collective, or an “indigenous minority,” was cutting across all spectrums – politics, social life, extra-parliamentary activity, and independent Arab newspapers, whereby all of Arab lawyers, political figures and educators were beginning to operate within this discourse.¹⁷

Ethnoregionalism

With a shift in the demands of the Arab minority, scholarly work on the topic, which may have been applicable in previous decades, was no longer sufficient for the analysis of the emergence of a new trend. This new trend was marked by the decline in political participation and a move towards extra-parliamentary organization. As Al-Haj suggests, “both parliamentary and local political mobilization has proved ineffective since the vote is split over ideological, religious, kinship and other local issues... Arabs have developed a third strategy of political mobilization through extra-parliamentary national organizations.”¹⁸ In addition to ignoring extra-parliamentary activity, previous theoretical analyses tended to ignore the significance of geography in Arab national movements. I now turn to Oren Yiftachel’s ethnoregional framework, which helps better explain the new trend, providing a novel approach to understanding this trajectory.

Ethnoregionalism as an approach is not a new phenomenon. It has been widely used to analyze ethnoregional parties and separatist groups in Europe.¹⁹ The fundamental unit of an ethnoregional structure is a region that is culturally and ethnically distinct, as opposed to a civic non-homogenous state. The first proposition of such a framework of study was introduced by the joint work of Michael Hechter and Margaret Levi to explain causal factors

¹⁷ Ibid, 11-17

¹⁸ Majid Al-Haj, “The Changing Strategies of Mobilization among the Arabs in Israel: Parliamentary Politics, Local Politics, and National Organizations,” 1993. In *Local Communities and the Israeli Polity*, edited by Efraim Ben-Zadok (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 68-69.

¹⁹ Lieven de Winter, “The Impact of European Integration on Ethnoregionalism,” Working Paper, (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2001), 3; Anwen Elias, “Europeanisation and the Symbolic Politics of Ethnoregionalism: Towards an Expanded Framework of Analysis,” (Edinburgh, March 28 – April 2, 2003): 2.

of separatism. Regions “having significant separatist movements includes areas such as Scotland, Wales, Quebec, Catalonia, the Basque regions of Spain, Brittany, Eritrea, and Shaba Province.”²⁰ However, whereas Hechter discusses ethnoregionalism to the extent that it leads to a separatist movement, Yiftachel looks at ethnoregionalism in the context of Arab demands. Yiftachel contends that no Arab wants to completely separate from the state of Israel. In fact, scholars have generally agreed that were a Palestinian state ever established, Arab Israelis would *not* want to move there. Arab Israelis are connected to their land as much as, if not more than, they are connected to their nationality. Had they been interested in being Palestinian and did not care where a Palestine was set up, one could argue that creating a Palestinian state would encourage Arab Israelis to relocate. However, that is not the case.²¹ Thus, as Yiftachel states, any analysis of Arab demands and the mobilization of Arab Israelis must take into consideration the political geography of the region. (Most theories mentioned above dismiss the significance of this contention.) Additionally, the idea of discussing Arab mobility in politicization/radicalization terminology suggests that the two are mutually exclusive. Yiftachel, on the other hand, suggests that Arab mobilization can be both politicized and radicalized, but this framework only explains the means to which this minority achieves its ends. Ethnoregionalism, which takes into consideration, national and civic aims, as well as the importance of geography, is the framework one should use to understand and explain the aims and goals of Arab mobilization. As he claims,

“...the impact of both Zionist and Palestinian nationalism, and the civil affiliation of the Arabs with Israel, have combined to cause a discernible redefinition of Arab collective identity in Israel... Whereas before 1948, they formed an integral part of a fledgling Palestinian nation, and between 1948 and 1967 were isolated as Israeli Arabs, since 1967, they have been in the process of collective

²⁰ Michael Hechter, “On Separatism and Ethnicity: A Response to Sloan’s ‘Ethnicity or Imperialism?’” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21.1 (1979): 127

²¹ Yiftachel, “Between Nation and State: ‘Fractured’ Regionalism among Palestinian-Arabs in Israel,” 292

reimagining into a *distinct ethnoregional community*. This community is caught in a fixed geography, positioned in a 'double periphery' in both Israeli and Palestinian societies."²²

Yiftachel develops his theory by looking at geography, class, protests, and votes of the Arab citizenry. Hechter explains in his original work that the basic unit in analyzing ethnoregionalism demands is the 'region.' Indeed, the Arab 'region' has changed little since 1948, or when Israel was first established. As Figures 1 and 2²³ below show, the majority of the Arabs in Israel have, since 1948, lived in three fixed regions: the Negev, the Triangle, and the Galilee. Although mixed towns of Arabs and Jews do exist, neighborhoods remain segregated.²⁴ Admittedly, the Arab region is not one geographical unit like that of the Basque regions of Spain or that of Scotland – that is, the Arab region is geographically fragmented within the state of Israel, as shown in the map below. In his book *The Arabs in a Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority*, Ian Lustick explains how the Israeli government has repeatedly used land as a form of control. In addition to Arab land being expropriated in 1948, the Absentee Property Act of 1957 expropriated more Arab land to government control.²⁵ Institutionally, the government has attempted to maintain fragmented Arab geographical units to control them. The expropriation of Arab land solely for Jewish use has resulted in Arabs not only losing control of their own land, but also losing their "collective territorial assets."²⁶ Ironically, attempts to contain the Arab minority have allowed this minority to come to terms with their national identity. Eventually, Arabs were able to use their segregated geographical units to find a common national identity.

Yet as fragmented as this ethnic region is geographically, it is, in other ways, connected. Socially, politically, economically, and culturally, the various regions have found unity in

²² Ibid, 293

²³ Nurit Yaffe and Dorith Tal "The Arab Population in Israel," Central Bureau of Statistics, State of Israel Prime Minister's Office, November 2002.

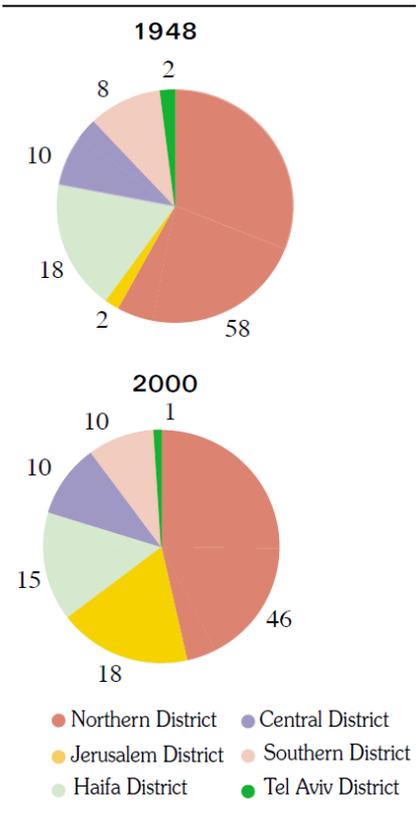
²⁴ Yiftachel, "Between Nation and State: 'Fractured' Regionalism among Palestinian-Arabs in Israel," 293-294

²⁵ Ian Lustick, *Arabs in a Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980) 57.

²⁶ Yiftachel, "Between Nation and State: 'Fractured' Regionalism among Palestinian-Arabs in Israel," 294

their “otherness” by the majority.²⁷ Though geographically fragmented, the Arabs are also geographically united across regions. This unity is exemplified in the three other factors Yiftachel discusses: class, voting, and protests.

C-1. Arab population, by district, %, 1948, 2000



QuickTime™ and a TIFF (LZW) decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Figure 1: Arab Israelis’ Geographic Distribution, 2000

Figure 2: Arab Israelis’ Geographic Distribution in 1948 and 2000

Michael Hechter explains, “cultural distinctions...can serve as a basis for the crystallization and maintenance of separate ethnic identities. This is likely to occur when culturally distinct groups occupy extreme positions in a cultural division of labor.”²⁸ Yiftachel describes how being economically deprived, the Arab minority has again found a sense of unity as a collective. The economic disparities between the Arab and Jewish sectors

²⁷ Ibid, 294
²⁸ Hechter, 126

are nothing new, but it has placed the Arabs in their own social class. Even Arabs who are as educated as Jews have a difficult time finding similar jobs. It has been said earlier that due to military government, Arabs entered the labor market late. Even when they did enter the labor market, due to continuous attempts at containment, Arabs were always behind. They started late, and were furthermore, stigmatized when they did eventually enter the labor market. Due to this “economic stratification”²⁹ the Arabs have formed a distinct class within Israel. This class is formed along the lines of Arab geographical regions. In adapting to their economic space, the Arab minority has developed their own economic sector. As such, even firms who operate in Jewish localities, carry out most of their transactions within this Arab sector.³⁰

The third process Yiftachel uses to analyze the Arabs’ ethnoregional character is the intensity and types of protests carried out. Protests have generally been a common form of opposition to Israeli discriminatory policies. Since *Land Day*, Arabs have realized the positive effects of organizing and protesting against specific policies. Accordingly, protests’ intensity increased over the years, but witnessed a decline in 1990. It should be noted, however, that Yiftachel’s study was done in 1999, and therefore lacks data to measure the intensity and number of protests since the second Intifada.³¹ Rather than study the number of protests taking place, Yiftachel looks at the intensity of the protests and comes to the following conclusion: when measuring protests by intensity, three dominant issues prevail. Arabs generally protest over “land and planning policies, socioeconomic conditions, and Palestinian nationalism.”³² Thus, though the number of protests is not equally spread amongst the three, the intensity of the three issues over the years is almost equal, as shown in Figure

²⁹ Yiftachel, "Between Nation and State: 'Fractured' Regionalism among Palestinian-Arabs in Israel," 295

³⁰ Ibid, 294-296

³¹ Yiftachel does not provide a methodology by which he measured intensity of protests; however, many sources confer that thousands came out in protest over the second *Intifada*, and then also, the court’s decision over the killing of 12 Arab Israeli citizens in 2000.

(<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2008/02/200852512627883980.html>)

³² Yiftachel, "Between Nation and State: 'Fractured' Regionalism among Palestinian-Arabs in Israel," 297

3.³³ That is, land and planning policies formed thirty three percent of protest intensity, socioeconomic conditions formed twenty eight percent, and Palestinian nationalism formed thirty eight percent of total protest intensity. These numbers imply that Arabs are equally concerned about all three issues. According to Yiftachel, if Arabs were either radicalizing or adapting, as the other theories propose, then the focus of the protests would be either on Palestinian nationalism or socioeconomic conditions, respectively. Yet neither cause's intensity is dominant. Furthermore, Arabs are concerned as much about their land and fragmented geographical regions as they are concerned about the previous two issues. All these factors contribute to the ethnoregional thesis Yiftachel is advancing. Arab demands reflect a call for a collective Palestinian national identity with equal rights in an Israeli state focused around their fragmented regions. Interestingly enough, many of such protests were led and joined by extra-parliamentary organizations, such as the National Committee for the Heads of Arab Councils, the High Follow-Up Committee, and the Islamic Movement. The coming together of Arabs from various regions and various political affiliations further supports the thesis that Arabs' demands are converging towards ethnoregionalism. Of course, as with any group, internal differences still exist, but these differences no longer stand in between the Arabs uniting over a common cause, particularly when it comes to protests.³⁴

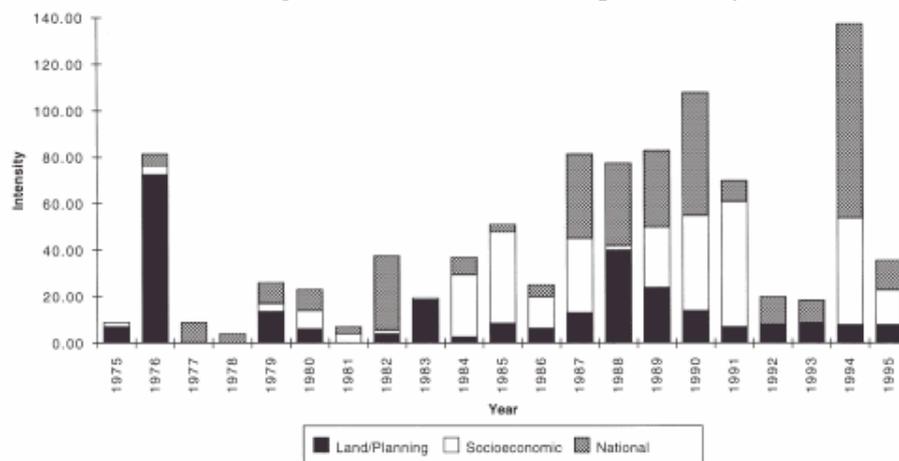


Figure 3: Arab Protest by Issue

³³ Ibid, 297

³⁴ Ibid, 296-298

The final method of analysis Yiftachel uses is voting, whereby he is interested in the kinds of parties Arabs voted for over the years. Generally, the Arab vote has been high, but Yiftachel is concerned with the shift in the Arab vote from Zionist to non-Zionist parties. Prior to the 1970s, the majority of the Arab vote went to the major Zionist parties. Beginning in the late 1970s and until the early 1990s, the Arab vote for the Arab and Communist parties dramatically increased. Again, there are differences in voting patterns amongst the various Arab groups. For example, the Druze, who have always been loyal to the Israeli state, have historically voted predominantly for Zionist parties, whereas Muslims and Christians vote more so for the non-Zionist parties. Similarly, Bedouins have generally voted for Zionist parties. Recent records, however, show that there has been a convergence in this pattern, as shown in Figure 4.³⁵ More and more Bedouins and Druze are voting for non-Zionist parties, aligning themselves closer with the political orientation of the Muslim and Christian Arabs. Voting again suggests a convergence towards the ethnoregional thesis where support for non-Zionist parties reflects the political awareness and understanding of a common national identity.³⁶

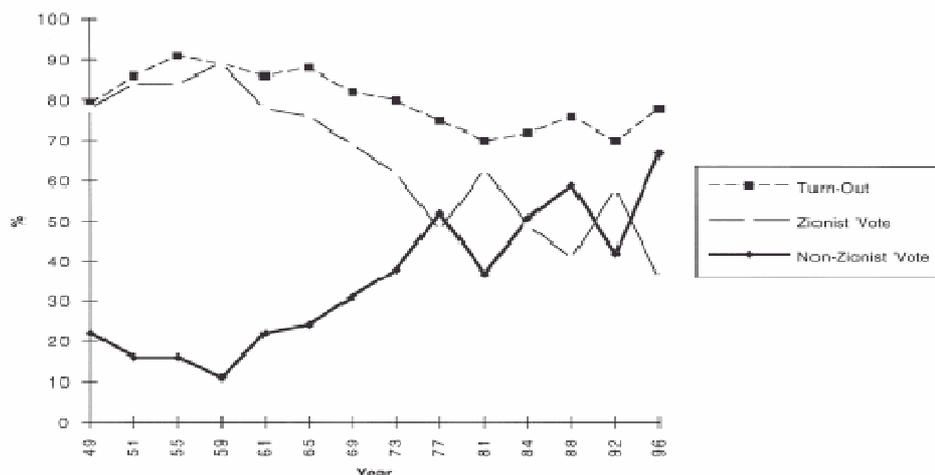


Figure 4: Arab Voting in Knesset Elections from 1949 – 1996

³⁵ Yiftachel, "Between Nation and State: 'Fractured' Regionalism among Palestinian-Arabs in Israel," 298

³⁶ Yiftachel, "Between Nation and State: 'Fractured' Regionalism among Palestinian-Arabs in Israel," 298-300

The nature of Arab geography, class, protests, and voting patterns reflects a minority that is struggling for civil rights as an ethnic minority in a Jewish state according to the fragmented regions it occupies within the Israeli regime. As such, the “Palestinian-Arab regionalism in Israel aims to ground its civil, cultural, and ethnic rights in the fragmented (but linked) Arab places, aiming to increase the share of resources and autonomy of the Arab ‘region’ vis a vis the Israeli state.”³⁷ Yet even Yiftachel fails to take into consideration the increasing importance of extra-parliamentary activity in the analysis of Arab demands, and his thesis is thus inconclusive. A shift in Arab demands came in tandem with a shift in political activity. That is not to say the two changes had a causal relationship. However, the simultaneous change in demands and activity could be linked to provide a more comprehensive account of Arab political mobility, both of which need to be understood from the historical events that led to them.

History of Arab Mobilization

Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, Israeli politicians and leaders have emphasized the need to incorporate the Arab Israeli minority into Israel, providing them with equal rights and treatment as that provided to the Jewish majority.³⁸ But that process has proven itself to be easier said than done.

Submission

Historically, the Arabs in Israel were not always cognizant of their national minority status, and furthermore, were incapable of doing anything to change that status. Since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, two factors made Arabs extremely dependent on the state, thus making Arab political activity near impossible. The first was the establishment of military rule over all Arab communities. From 1948 to 1966, the Israeli government had

³⁷ Ibid, 301

³⁸ Don Peretz, "The Arab Minority of Israel," *The Middle East Journal* 8.2 (1954): 139.

forced military rule over the Arabs limiting their freedom of movement and travel.³⁹ This policy had major consequences. Arabs, whose income was agriculturally based, had already lost a lot of their land and were forced to find other means of employment. Yet they could not be part of the Jewish labor force, for military rule restricted movement. This meant that Arabs were dependent on “state authorities for the distribution of resources and employment possibilities.”⁴⁰

In addition to military rule, existing social structures within the Arab community increased and reinforced their dependency on the Jewish state authorities. With the end of the war, many Arab political leaders and elites fled the country, leaving the rest of the Arab minority in Israel in a state of confusion and havoc. At the time, the structure of the social Arab system was based on the hamula, or clan. Once the most powerful hamulas left, a power vacuum emerged and smaller hamulas began forming new coalitions. Thus, the political scene, which had relied on previous hamula leadership, was also in disarray. Hamulas became power hungry and selfish, and thus vulnerable to Jewish requests.⁴¹ The leftover Palestinian Arabs, or those Palestinians who remained within the newly created state of Israel, were not considered a major problem by Israeli leaders and officials. Israel had not seen this “Arab problem”⁴² of any significance and instead, handed it to lower officials to deal with. This meant that no specific policy was formed to deal with the ethnic minority that had been created. Rather, what later came to be termed as the “Arab problem” was dealt with in an ad hoc manner, based on the needs and objectives of the Israeli regime at the time – needs that have mostly focused on land and security.⁴³

³⁹ Ibid, 141-143

⁴⁰ Andrea Carla, "Pointless Representation: The Tyranny of the Majority in Proportional Electoral System," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (Marriott, Loews Philadelphia, and the Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, PA, Aug 31, 2006) <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p152252_index.html> (December 1, 2009) 8.

⁴¹ Lustick, 50-51

⁴² Lustick, 66

⁴³ Ibid, 54, 58; Jacob M. Landau, *The Arab Minority in Israel, 1967-1991: Political Aspects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 2.

The combination of military rule and dependency of Arab individuals on their hamula leaders defined the period between 1948 up until the early 1970s as one of Arab submission and vulnerability. As the state of Israel was formed based on Zionist ideology, there was no strong Arab leadership to challenge it.⁴⁴ Left in a state of confusion, the hamula leaders were desperate to provide for the families in their tribe. Naturally, the establishment of the state of Israel led to the rise of Jewish political parties, the most powerful of which was Mapa'i. With such significant power, Mapa'i was able to make promises to hamula leaders in return for hamula support. Considering that the hamula was a tribe with different families and members, gaining the support of a hamula leader translated into the support of all the other clan members. The dominance of Mapa'i over the Israeli government at the time allowed the party to live up to the promises it made to hamula leaders. Such promises granted immediate material gains to the hamula leaders in exchange for political support. Due to this Arab vulnerability, many scholars have characterized the Arab response to the Israeli government in the time period between 1948 and the early 1970s as submissive and quiescent.⁴⁵

The late 1970s brought about a change in Arab responsiveness to their minority status. This change was due to two major structural developments: the first was the abolishment of military rule in 1966; the second was the decentralization of the Israeli government in 1977.⁴⁶ With the removal of military rule, Arabs were able to travel more often. As a result, and after the 1967 war, they were able to have more contact with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. They also had increased interaction with the surrounding Jewish communities and the Arabs dispersed within other regions of the state. Free movement allowed for economic opportunities, allowing Arabs to find jobs. Although

⁴⁴ Lustick, 6; Oded Haklai, "Decentralization, Civil Society and Ethnonationalism: Arabs in Israel," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (Philadelphia Marriott Hotel, Philadelphia, PA, Aug 27, 2003) <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p62714_index.html> (December 1, 2009)

7

⁴⁵ Lustick, 61; Haklai, 7-10

⁴⁶ Haklai, 7-10

blue collared jobs, they were jobs nevertheless. New independent means of income decreased the Arab minority's dependency on the head of the hamula, who had been dispersing the gains he had been receiving from Mapa'i.⁴⁷ In addition to economic changes, political changes led to a change in Arab responsiveness. A new political party rose to challenge the undisputable Mapa'i who was in control over the military and resource distribution of the nation since 1948. In 1977, Jewish immigrants from North Africa and other Middle Eastern nations were "discontent with their marginalization by the old elites,"⁴⁸ voting Likud into power in 1977, thus ending nearly 30 years of Mapa'i government control.⁴⁹ This meant that Mapa'i could no longer keep its promises for Arab hamula leaders, reinforcing decreasing Arab dependence on these leaders.

Less dependency resulted in less vulnerability of the Arab populous, and more movement increased Arab awareness and understanding of, not only their status as an ethnic minority in a Jewish majority, but also of their Palestinian nationality. As the wars of 1967 and 1973 brought about more confrontation with the Arab world, Arab Israelis were beginning to become politically active, establishing their own political parties.⁵⁰

A New Age: Politicization

Scholars vary on the terminology of this period but most agree that some form of politicization was definitely taking place. That is, the Arab populous in general moved from being a submissive minority to one that began understanding and realizing their Palestinian roots and actively attempting to consolidate their two conflicting identities. The means with which these attempts were carried out, however, differed. And it is in identifying and defining the exact process of politicization that scholars mostly diverge on, thus making it difficult to identify a particular dominant theoretical framework with which to understand the

⁴⁷ Carla, 11

⁴⁸ Haklai, 10

⁴⁹ Ibid, 8-10

⁵⁰ Rekhess, "The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel,"7-11

process. The two major streams of thought, however, can be placed under radicalization and adaptation.

For the purposes of this paper, radicalization is the term used to describe the phenomenon of acting outside of or against the state. In other words, radicalization emphasizes complete separation from the state of Israel, and thus refusal to work within the governmental structure of the state. Radical groups reject the Zionist character of an Israeli state. The first of such radical groups formed in 1957 and was called Al-Ard. They were soon banned by the government, however, because they were “considered to be a danger to the state.”⁵¹ Al-Ard was the first Arab movement of its kind, making broad political demands for Arab-Israeli self-determination and for an independent Palestinian nation.

Adaptation, on the other hand, refers to the acceptance of an Israeli state that is inherently Zionist, but also acknowledges the unequal status of the Arab minority in Israeli society and uses legal and parliamentary means to bring about equal rights and equal status. Groups such as political parties and nongovernmental organizations that promote equal rights, for example, understand the “second citizenship” status of the Arab minority but in attempting to bring about equality, do not challenge the existence of the state.

Why the move from submission to politicization? The series of events triggering this trend began with the break out of the Six Day War in 1967, which was fought between Israel and the rest of the Arab nation states. After the 1967 war and the increased mobility of the Arab Israelis, a process of returning to the roots emerged, which Rekhess termed “Palestinization.” A national Palestinian identity was reinforced by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser’s call for an Arab National Movement; the creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, which became a leading representative voice for the Palestinians in

⁵¹ Carla, 10

the West Bank and Gaza; and other major developments in the region.⁵² These events brought about an identity crisis for many Arabs: for one, they were Israeli citizens, but on the other hand, they were Palestinian nationals. The two identities were conflicting, especially at a time when Israel was fighting wars with its Palestinian and Arab neighbors. The ensuing period experienced a surge in Arab activism, both radical and adaptive in nature. Both Arab-Israeli political figures and political parties emerged in this period and made calls for an independent Palestinian state with Israeli withdrawal from the territories. Yet such calls did not resolve the identity conflict of the Arab Israelis. Demands and activism by rising politicians focused on Palestinian nationhood, which led the Arab Israelis to acknowledge and accept their Palestinian identity. However, Arab Israelis were not only Palestinian. They were Israeli as well. As such, a “back to the roots” movement establishing a Palestinian identity did not provide means with which Arab Israelis could simultaneously embrace both identities. Addressing the contradictions of the two identities, and particularly the Israeli one, was not a challenge political parties who represented the interests of Arab Israelis were ready to take on at the time. That job was left for the radicals. By the 1970s, radical young activists formed the “Sons of the Village Movement,” which had its ideological roots in the Al-Ard movement. The “Sons of the Village” challenged Israel’s existence as a Jewish Zionist state. Unlike political parties, the Sons of the Village addressed the contradiction of being Israeli and Palestinian, and suggested a move towards a more unified Palestine. They argued for self-determination, but did not distinguish between Israeli Arabs and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Thus, the Sons of the Village’s resolution to the Arab Israeli identity crisis was the uniting of all Palestinians under one nation. However, this kind of radical politicization did not gain popularity amongst the Arab Israelis – the Sons of the Village

⁵² Rekhess, “The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel,” 7-11

lacked an ideological position and an action-oriented strategy.⁵³ Their activities, however minimal and unpopular, were significant in that they symbolized the development of Palestinian Arab mobilization in Israeli society. It was the emergence of Arab political parties that politically moved the rest of the Arab populous.

Adaptation: The Rise of Political Parties

Besides the Labor party, the only other party appealing to the Arab minority was Maqi, the Israeli Communist Party. Though Maqi could not offer Arabs the same economic incentives as Mapa'i did, Maqi had Arab members and represented Arab interests in the government.⁵⁴ In 1965, Maqi split in two factions. The Arab members of the party were becoming increasingly anti-Zionist, so they broke off and formed their own Communist party called Raqah.⁵⁵ Raqah became "the most important force representing the Arab interests from 1973 to 1981."⁵⁶ However, Raqah was first and foremost a Communist party. With political decentralization and economic mobility, Arab politicians understood the need for an independent Arab political party. Indeed new Arab political parties eventually emerged. By the mid 1980s, the "Progressive List for Peace" and the "Democratic Arab Party" emerged as direct Arab representatives. They were the first political parties whose interests and priorities was the Arab minority. Unlike Raqah or Mapa'i, for example, who had taken positive stands towards the Arab status, the PLP and DAP's primary interest was the Arab minority. As such, the PLP and DAP represented the first parties with a nationalist orientation that was not necessarily Communist, and that was not interested in appealing to the Jewish community at large. Although PLP had Jewish members, it placed an Arab at the head of the party. DAP

⁵³ Rekhess, "The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel," 7-9

⁵⁴ Carla, 9; Al-Haj, 71

⁵⁵ "Parliamentary Groups in the Knesset," The Knesset Website, <http://www.knesset.gov.il/faction/eng/FactionPage_eng.asp?PG=62> (February 14, 2010).

⁵⁶ Carla, 11

was the first party with no Jewish members at all. Both were parties with no Zionist affiliations focusing on demanding Arab rights and equality.⁵⁷

Though such parties emerged to represent the Arab people, their effects and influences were limited, to say the least. To begin with, neither DAP nor PLP had structural organization. They were meant to represent an Arab nationalist agenda, but they did not necessarily explicitly identify or explain what the Arab minority was, or what their demands were, on a broader political spectrum. Rather, they focused on Arab issues in an ad hoc manner. The rise in various parties further divided the Arab people and the Arab vote. Rather than having one united representative voice, the Arabs and their interests were now divided amongst three different parties with similar ends but different means – Raqah, PLP, and DAP. Though attempts were made to unify all three under a single list, such attempts failed due to “rivalries between the Arab political leaders.”⁵⁸ Many political leaders became more concerned with garnering votes than implementing change for the betterment of the people. All these factors were exponentially limiting because of the governmental structure they worked within.⁵⁹

Israeli Governmental Structure and Arab Political Parties

The Israeli governmental system is a parliamentary representative democracy divided into three branches: the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch.⁶⁰ The executive branch’s power lies in the hands of the prime minister, who gets elected by the President based on the legislative votes his party gets in the general elections.⁶¹ For a short period of time (1996-2003), the Israeli Knesset (parliament) tried to have elections whereby

⁵⁷ Ibid, 14-15

⁵⁸ Carla, 15

⁵⁹ Carla, 14-15; Rekhess, “The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel,” 10-11

⁶⁰ “Israeli Democracy - How Does It Work,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Branches+of+Government/Executive/Israeli+Democracy+-+How+does+it+work.htm>> (February 17, 2010).

⁶¹ “Basic Law: The President of the State,” The Knesset Website, <http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic12_eng.htm> (February 17, 2010).

the prime minister would be directly elected by the people.⁶² After realizing the shortcomings of such a system, the Knesset reverted to the electoral system that was in place prior to the 1996 transition.⁶³ This system is one wherein the president consults the major party heads about who they support for the prime ministerial position and nominates the leader. The nominee must then gain a vote of confidence by the Knesset to become prime minister, a move reinforcing the system's desire to ensure the unity of the legislative and executive branches. The ministers in the executive branch (cabinet ministers) are then appointed by the prime minister and approved by the Knesset.⁶⁴ In the history of Israel, there has only been two Arab Cabinet members: the first was a Druze Arab who served in Sharon's Cabinet, but was later ejected due to controversies over corruption; the second was Raleb Majadele, the first Muslim Arab Cabinet Member, who was appointed in 2007.⁶⁵

The legislative branch's electoral process is more complicated. It is comprised of 120 members who serve for four-year terms. The number of seats a party holds in parliament (the Knesset) is directly correspondent to the percentage of votes that party gets. The party, accordingly, has a list of the candidates in order of highest ranking. Thus, the first five seats a party gets are given to the first five names on its list. As such, the voters have no control over which candidates to vote for, but only the party itself. There are no district elections either, since the Knesset is a unicameral parliament. Additionally, there is a minimal threshold one must meet to get any seats in Parliament, and at this point, it rests on 2% (previously being set at 1% and then 1.5%).⁶⁶ This means that a party must have at least 2% of the total votes to

⁶² "Basic Law: The Government (1992)," The Knesset Website, <http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic7_eng.htm> (February 17, 2010).

⁶³ Carla, 4

⁶⁴ "Israeli Democracy – How Does It Work"

⁶⁵ "First Arab Joins Israeli Cabinet," *BBC News* (January 28, 2007) <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6307673.stm>> (February 25, 2010); Yoav Stern, "Labor MK Raleb Majadele to be Appointed First Arab Minister," *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), October 1, 2007 <<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/812014.html>> (February 25, 2010); The appointment of Majadele was controversial on both sides. Arab Israelis saw it as an act to hide Israel's discrimination against its Arab population. Right-winged Israelis simply criticized the appointment of an Arab Muslim in the Cabinet.

⁶⁶ Carla, 3

be officially registered as a party and get a seat.⁶⁷ This proportional representation framework theoretically works to reflect the interests of the citizens and protect the rights of minorities – it should, theoretically, reflect the composite groups of the state. “In this way this electoral system guarantees what Hanna Pitkin calls descriptive representation, by creating representative bodies that reflect almost exactly the various political divisions of the electorate.”⁶⁸ Since this system of governance encourages party coalitions, many minority parties have been able to get their interests across after joining forces, or forming government coalitions, with the major parties. Majority parties have an interest in forming coalitions with minority parties since they need their votes to pass legislation.

Although this framework has been successful for underrepresented Jewish groups, it has not fared well for underrepresented Arab groups. For example, although the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community is a minority in Israel, they have a lot of say in governmental decision making because they are able to form coalitions with larger groups. On the other hand, the Arab minority has not been able to enjoy the same protective privileges. The suggested governance framework works, and has historically worked, differently for Arab political parties. In the “Political Representation: The Tyranny of the Majority in Proportional Electoral System,” Andrea Carla presents two major reasons for why the Arab minority in Israel have not been represented in the Knesset despite such a proportional electoral system. First, he suggests that Arab Israeli political leadership and awareness has been lacking, both because of the disunity of the Arab leaders themselves and the inherent discriminatory nature of the Israeli governmental structure. Second, due to the Zionist Jewish nature of the state of Israel, Arab Israelis “do not enjoy complete citizenship, since they cannot attend to the common good and do not participate in decisions regarding the nature of the state.”⁶⁹ An

⁶⁷ “The Electoral System in Israel,” The Knesset Website, http://www.knesset.gov.il/description/eng/eng_mimshal_beh.htm (February 17, 2010)

⁶⁸ Carla, 4

⁶⁹ Carla, 3

example that shows exactly how those two reasons ensured Arab parties' inability to form government coalitions that would give them decision-making leverage came in the election of 1988. At that point, the two Arab parties that had formed (PLP and ADP) and the Communist Party (Raqah) decided to unite and form one bloc. By doing so, PLP and Raqah had to abandon their radical positions. The three parties together had planned to form a coalition with a major party – the Labor party. However, the Labor party did not accept the formation of a coalition with the Arab parties and proceeded to form a coalition government with the other major party, Likud. Additionally, despite their willingness to join forces with a major party, the Arab parties failed to unite under a single list. This happenstance was a representation of how divisions amongst Arab political leaders and denial of Jewish parties to accept them into government coalitions have rendered Arab political parties almost completely ineffective in bringing about broad political changes to the status of the Arab minority in Israel.⁷⁰ Such divisions highlighted the beginning of a shift that would soon force the Arab minority to look elsewhere, particularly towards extra-parliamentary opportunities, to fulfill their demands – a shift that has thus far been underrated by scholars.

Implications for Arab voters

The various political changes in the government directly affected the Arab citizenry and the nature of their voting patterns. As mentioned earlier, the time period between 1948 and early 1970s reflected the submissive nature of the Arab populous. After the war of 1948, the Arabs who resided within the newly formed state were left leaderless. The new political system was foreign to the Arab citizens who were relying on their hamula leaders for survival. Regionally, the Arabs were segmented, wherein “traditional local heads were unknown at a national level.”⁷¹ The Jewish authorities reinforced segmentation, both politically and economically. Politically, they referred to Arabs as “non-Jews” so as to not

⁷⁰ Ibid, 15-16

⁷¹ Ibid, 8

have to acknowledge them as a national minority. Economically, they provided different resources to different groups. For example, Druze were provided with more resources than Christians and Muslims, and as a result, Druze were consistently more loyal to the state.⁷² To gain the Arab vote, Jewish parties created sponsored lists, a list of Arab political figures who traditionally came from elite Arab families. These lists were only symbolic, for Arab figures had no legitimate power in the Jewish parties. The Arab names were only as good as the votes they could garner from their societies. Thus, if an Arab figure on a sponsored list was not doing what the party asked of him, he could easily be substituted. The only incentive for Arabs to be part of this process was economic. Needless to say, this created a system of patronage within the Arab society. So when Maqī (the Communist Party) was formed in 1961, it only received 23% of the Arab vote even though its political stance was more aligned with Arab interests than Mapa'i's political stance was. It was not until years later that the Arab populous understood the political system and began voting for parties that directly represented their interests.⁷³ The aforementioned rise in Arab political parties reflected the politicization of the Arab citizens on lower levels. More Arabs were becoming more economically independent (due to political decentralization and the end to military rule) and an increasing number of Arabs were becoming more educated and more aware of their status. Slowly but surely, the Arab vote was reflecting this awareness: By the 1977 elections, Raqah (formerly Maqī; it eventually changed its name to Hadash) garnered 51% of the Arab vote. This marked the peak of Raqah's popularity amongst Arabs.⁷⁴ For after the election of 1977, Arab support for Raqah dramatically decreased, a decline portrayed in the 1981 elections, where Raqah gained 38% of Arab votes. This decline was a result of two major factors. The first was the general decline of the Arab vote due to calls from the Palestinian Liberation Organization to boycott the Israeli elections. The second was the ability of Mapa'i to

⁷² Carla, 8

⁷³ Ibid, 10-11

⁷⁴ Rekhess, "The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel," 10

convince the Arabs to vote for them: Mapa'i was undoubtedly more responsive to the Arabs than Likud, the right wing party, and if the Arab vote, which was essential to a Mapa'i victory, did not go to Mapa'i, Likud would dominate.⁷⁵

The past two electoral processes had significant implications for the Arab vote. First, "support for Raqah [in 1977] symbolized a political maturation of the Arab-Israeli population which started to realize the importance of its electoral weight..."⁷⁶ Second, the elections of 1981 represented Mapa'i's shift in strategy and the end of sponsored lists. Mapa'i, rather than sponsoring an Arab list, began appealing directly to the Arab electorate. This reinforced the importance of the Arab vote in Israeli politics.⁷⁷

Raqah's Communist agenda and rigidity brought about the need for other Arab parties. By 1984, a new party was created whose agenda focused on gaining equality for the Arab minority. The Progressive List for Peace (PLP) was a party of both Jewish and Arab intellectuals who provided a non-Communist option with an Arab focus. It not only demanded equal rights for the Arabs, but it also focused on national aspirations and the Palestinian identity of the Arab populous. In its first election cycle, the PLP received 18% of the Arab vote giving it two seats in the Knesset. This presented a major challenge to Raqah, which received 33% of the Arab vote.⁷⁸ The next election cycle proved less promising for the PLP. The second name on the PLP's list was that of a Jewish general. Needless to say, this was not appealing to the Arab constituency. Besides, a new Arab party emerged that ran on an agenda focusing on equal rights and had less nationalist tendencies. The Arab Democratic Party formed in 1988 and was more moderate than the PLP, which meant it would be more effective in making political progress on Arab issues. The ADP was also the only pure Arab Israeli party since there were no Jewish members in the ADP, as opposed to the PLP. The

⁷⁵ Carla, 12

⁷⁶ Ibid, 13

⁷⁷ Ibid, 12

⁷⁸ Mark Tessler and Audra K. Grant, "Israel's Arab Citizens: The Continuing Struggle," *American Academy of Political and Social Science* 555 (1998): 105 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1049214>> (January 11, 2009)

ADP got 11% of the Arab vote and one seat in Knesset in the 1988 elections, a vote that signified the aspiration of the Arab minority to make political changes. Table 1 below summarizes the percentages of Arab votes for the respective parties between the years 1948 to 1999.⁷⁹ Arab voting trends suggested that the Arab minority no longer voted for the party that would give them more economic resources; rather, they voted for the party that would also provide them with more political results.⁸⁰

Table 1: Percentage of Arab Vote by Political Party from 1949 to 1999

	Number of Knesset Members	Mapa'I/ Labor %	Sponsored Lists %	Communist Party/ Hadash/ Raqah%	PLP%	ADP%	Zionist Parties ⁸¹ %
1949	3	10	28	22			40
1951	8	17	55	16			12
1955	8	22	48	15			15
1959	7	20	42	11			27
1961	7	24	40	22			14
1965	7	24	38	23			15
1969	7	16	40	28			16
1973	6	12	27	37			24
1977	7	10	16	51			23
1981	6	26	12	38			24
1984	6	23		33	18		26
1988	6	17		34	14	11	24

⁷⁹ Tessler and Grant, 106; Carla, 14-15; Rekhess, "The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel," 10

⁸⁰ Carla, 23-24

⁸¹ This list does not include Labor, which is considered a Zionist party, but has historically been more friendly towards the Arab minority and has thus garnered relatively much higher votes than other parties

1992	5	20		23	9	15	33
1996	9	18		38	-	25 (formed coalition with Islamic movement)	19
1999 ⁸²	10	8		22	-	31	22

The table portrays the characteristic of the Arab vote over the years.

Political parties eventually disappointed the Arab minority, however. Not only could they not unite, but they had also failed to bring about any significant changes. Both in the election cycles of 1988 and 1992, there were attempts to unify Raqah, the ADP, and the PLP yet internal rivalry prevented this from happening. The disappointment of the Arab minority was reflected in their voter turnout in 1992, which was 70%, a four percent drop from the turnout in 1988. Not only was the voter turnout lower, but votes for the Arab political parties were also low. With three Arab-centered parties running in 1992, Zionist parties still received 50% of the Arab vote (compared to 41% in 1988), which can be noted in Figure 4 and Table 1. The failure of the Arab parties to unite dispersed the Arab vote and was a cause for disappointment. Here again, Mapa'i convinced the Arabs that only through aligning themselves with the establishment could they achieve any form of political progress.⁸³

From 1996 to 2003, the Israeli electoral process temporarily changed. Elections for the prime minister and the Knesset were held separately. Thus, the Arabs felt they had the opportunity to prove their Israeli citizenship, yet simultaneously vote for Arab parties. The majority of the Arab vote went to the Labor candidate, Shimon Peres, in the prime ministerial

⁸² The National Democratic Alliance, a newly formed Arab party led by Azmi Bishara, received 17% of the total Arab vote in 1999.

⁸³ Carla, 14-15; Elie Rekhess, "The Arab Vote," Paper presented at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (Washington, D.C., January 24, 2003), 1.

elections.⁸⁴ During these elections, new political formations amongst Arab parties formed and 25% of the Arab vote went to the ADP, which had formed a coalition with a faction of the Islamic movement. The PLP on the other hand, did not meet the threshold of 1.5% in 1992, and thus dissolved as a party.⁸⁵

The Arab vote in the 1999 elections in 1999 was similar to that of the elections in 1996,⁸⁶ wherein separate elections for the prime minister and the Knesset only reinforced the importance of the Arab vote: the candidate for the Labor party, Ehud Barak, had won the elections with the essential support of the Arab minority. However, this new electoral process only marginalized Arab parties even further. Coalitions were less popular since parties did not need to win the majority of seats in the Knesset to win the prime ministerial position. Though Arab parties won 70% of the Arab vote, they were still more or less ineffective in government and Prime Minister Barak felt no pressure to assign any ministerial positions for Arabs or consider Arab interests while forming his government.⁸⁷

In 2000, the second Intifada broke out. Israel and the PLO were at war again and many Arab Israelis came out in protest against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. In October 2000, demonstrations turned violent and 12 Arab Israeli citizens were killed. This only aggravated the preexisting tensions between the Arab minority and the state.⁸⁸ Thus, when a call from the Arab Israeli parties to boycott the next prime ministerial elections came, Arab Israelis gave a lending ear. Whereas previously, the Arab vote was considerably high, only 19% Arab Israelis showed up at the polls in the 2001 prime ministerial elections. Indeed, the Arabs' point did not go by unnoticed. The election results brought Likud candidate, Ariel Sharon, to office, reinforcing the importance of the Arab vote

⁸⁴ Tessler and Grant, 109

⁸⁵ Tessler and Grant, 108

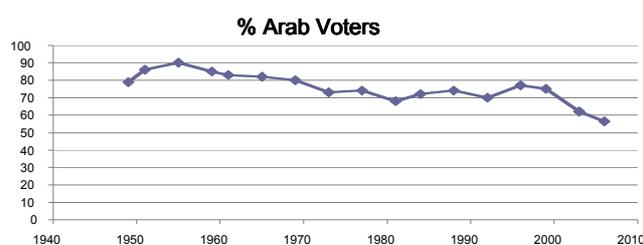
⁸⁶ Hillel Frisch, "The Arab Vote in the Israeli Elections: The Bid for Leadership," *Israel Affairs* 7.2-3 (2001): 153.

⁸⁷ Frisch, 156

⁸⁸ Rekhess, "The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel," 15

in the eyes of the Labor party.⁸⁹ Admittedly, the Arabs did not boycott the Knesset elections and had a turnout rate of 62% in 2003, which was still relatively lower than previous elections. The compelling difference between turnout rates in the Knesset and prime ministerial elections demonstrated that Arabs were not indifferent to the political process. They still asked for representation in government, but they were making a statement to the Labor party. By 2006, the electoral process had gone back to what it was before 1996. Prime ministerial and Knesset elections were held simultaneously, rather than separately. Due to a number of factors, the Arab vote began declining in 1996, eventually reaching a record low of 56.3% in the 2006 election year,⁹⁰ as shown in Table 2 and Figure 5.⁹¹ Not only was there another call to boycott elections, but Arab frustration with both the political system and their own leadership had also reached a peak.⁹² They were no longer interested in change via the political system.⁹³ As a result, a shift towards extra-parliamentary activity gradually increased its role in political mobility, a role that has been more or less disregarded by major theoretical frameworks and analyses of Arab political demands.

Figure 5: Total Participation of Arab Voters from 1949 - 2000



⁸⁹ Carla, 17; Rekhess, "The Arab Vote," 2

⁹⁰ Rekhess, "The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel," 15

⁹¹ Data based on information from Carla 23-24; Rekhess, Elie. "Has Anything Changed?" *Elections 2009 Update: Arab Politics in Israel and the 18th Knesset*. (2009)

<www.dayan.org/kapjac/files/Elections2009eng1.pdf> (December 13, 2009); and Tessler and Grant.

⁹² Rekhess, "The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel," 15-16

⁹³ Rekhess, "Has Anything Changed?" 4

Table 2: Total Participation of Arab Voters in Knesset from 1949 - 2000

Year	Participation of Arab voters %
1949	79.0
1951	86.0
1955	90.0
1959	85.0
1961	83.0
1965	82.0
1969	80.0
1973	73.0
1977	74.0
1981	68.0
1984	72.0
1988	74.0
1992	70.0
1996	77.0
1999	75.0
2003	62.0
2006	56.3

Extra-Parliamentary Organization

With the history of Arab activism, it would be naïve and shortsighted to assume the Arab minority suddenly became politically indifferent. Though Arabs never completely gave up on the political system, Arab Israelis increased their focus in the extra-parliamentary field. Extra-parliamentary organization was not necessarily a new phenomenon in the late 1990s. It had only become more popular. In fact, the first signs of extra-parliamentary organization began in the 1950s with the Al Ard movement, a group of elite Arab Israelis created in 1959

denouncing the Zionist character of Israel and calling for a new state that was not based on a Zionist agenda. The movement excluded Jews and within the initial stages of its creation, the leaders called on Arab Israelis to boycott the 1959 Knesset elections. However, their calls were unsuccessful. To begin with, they were structurally disorganized given that the government refused to register them as an official association. The movement as a whole was considered to be a danger to the state of Israel since its members refused to recognize it. After the failure of an appeal to the Supreme Court, the group was banned from existence in Israel and many of its members were arrested. At this point, political parties were gaining popularity over radical activism, but extra-parliamentary activity on the whole was far from being discarded. Though al Ard's activities were put to an end, the idea of extra-parliamentary organizing was only beginning.⁹⁴ In 1969⁹⁵, a new radical movement called Abna al Balad "took the baton" from al-Ard. Abna al Balad was more organized in that they understood how to work within the system. Since Arabs at the time were not free to organize, Abna Al Balad (Sons of the Village) worked instead through local municipalities. They also did not call for a pan Arab movement, but rather, a Palestinian national movement within the state of Israel. That said, unlike Al Ard, Abna al Balad recognized the state of Israel but demanded recognition as a Palestinian minority. Abna al Balad began working with communal Arab issues and grew to represent broader political aims, such as their Palestinian national identity and their rights to a homeland. It is worthy to note that Abna al Balad were aware of old traditional family feuds that were dividing the Arab community in Israel; accordingly, they worked with local municipalities (they boycott political participation and

⁹⁴ Haklai, 8; Carla, 10

⁹⁵ "English Index," Abnaa elBalad - Sons of the Land, <<http://www.abnaa-elbalad.org/engballad1.html>> (March 2, 2010).

elections on the national level) to get over such divisions. The movement is still active and currently has its own website.⁹⁶

The 1970s saw the rise of other extra-parliamentary activity. Non-governmental organizations began to form to deal with both local and national social and economic issues.⁹⁷ One such organization began as a local organization but transitioned into a national one. The Association of Forty was initially created when an elderly man in a Palestinian Arab village, Ein Hod, called on a few of its residents to form a committee that would demand services from the government. The residents believed the government to have made an honest mistake in giving them limited resources. However, as the committee eventually found out, their problem was not a local one, but rather a national one based on institutionalized state policies. The committee was only meant to be a temporary action until the village got the services it needed. Accordingly, the committee turned into an organized association that recognized broader national demands.⁹⁸ Other organizations were formed as a direct response to the need for national and broader political demands. In 1974, The National Committee for the Heads of Arab Local Councils (NCHACL) and Defense of Arab Lands (NCDAL) were created, the former as an organization for broad Arab demands, and the latter to deal exclusively with Arab Israeli land issues. When Israeli officials released a plan to expropriate Arab land in the Galilee on a large scale, politicians from Raqah called on the Arab minority to rise up in protest. With the support of NCDAL, and despite threats by the Israeli government, protestors from the Galilee to the Negev came out to protest the confiscation of their land. Though the day ended with the death of six civilians, the protestors achieved their

⁹⁶ Pamela Ann Smith and Mohammed Kiwan, "'Sons of the Village' Assert Palestinian Identity in Israel," *Middle East Research and Information Project*, no. 68 (1978): 15-18 <<http://www.jstor.org/>> (March 2, 2010).; "English Index"

⁹⁷ Shany Payes, "Palestinian NGOs in Israel: A Campaign for Civic Equality in a Non-Civic State," *Israeli Studies* 8.1 (2003): 71-72 <<http://muse.jhu.edu>> (March 2, 2010)

⁹⁸ Payes, 71

goals and the government withdrew from the plan. March 30, 1976 came to be commemorated by the Arab minority as *Land Day*.⁹⁹

Besides the immediate and short-term success, the protests had a long-term effect as well. *Land Day* symbolized the first large-scale protest by the Arab Israelis on a national level, indicating the beginnings of a politically mobilized minority. As Payes put it,

“Land Day had three main consequences, so far as the history of PINGOs is concerned. First, it highlighted the leadership role of several civic organizations, foremost among them the National Committee of Heads of Arab Local Councils (NCHALC), an organization that set the tune for extra-parliamentary Palestinian protest in Israel for a generation. Second, it defined a shared national agenda for Palestinians in Israel organized around such issues as land expropriation, unequal access to public services, and other forms of discrimination. Third, it established nation-wide strikes and demonstrations as patterns of protest that continue to characterize Palestinian protest in Israel to the present day.”¹⁰⁰

Within a few years, NCHALC established other lower committees to deal with specific issues concerning the Arab minority. For example, the Follow-Up Committee for Arab Education was created in 1984 to deal with the Arab educational system. In 1986, the Follow-Up Committee for Health Services was established to “lobby for the improvement of medical and health conditions of Arab citizens.”¹⁰¹ By 1987, the High Follow-Up Committee for the Arabs in Israel was created to consolidate all such lower committees, becoming the umbrella organization for Arab minority affairs in Israel.¹⁰² The High Follow-Up Committee was an all-inclusive committee that had political figures, mayors, and other representative figures from the Arab populous. Though both committees, the High Follow-Up Committee and the NCDAL, were significant in uniting and vocalizing Arab demands, they received no legitimate recognition from the government.¹⁰³ Both served as a threat to the state’s

⁹⁹ Carla, 13

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 73

¹⁰¹ Al-Haj, 82

¹⁰² Ibid, 82

¹⁰³ Al-Haj, 82-83; Payes 74, 83

existence, for they were demanding an end to Zionist structure of the state. They were also mobilizing for a Palestinian national identity, and their demands were accordingly influenced by the events taking place in Palestine. In this case, the symbolic existence of these committees was significant enough to create the space for other NGOs and extra-parliamentary activities. The creation of the committees alone suggests the political mobilization of the Arab minority and its move away from acquiescence and submission, of which I have spoken of earlier.

In 1980, the Knesset passed the Law of Associations, which required all nongovernmental organizations to be registered with the Ministry of Interior. The law was a double-edged sword in that it allowed Arab NGOs a legal and legitimate structure within which to operate, but served to control the extra-parliamentary means with which Arabs organized. The Registrar of Associations was given the power to refuse organizations whose “name will be offensive to public feeling”¹⁰⁴ or the organization itself would potentially serve as a threat to the state’s security or carry out illegal activity. On numerous occasions, the registrar refused to accept the registration of Arab organizations based on the names of the organizations or the terminology they used. Nevertheless, between 1980 and 1998, over 1000 organizations focused on Arab Israeli issues were instituted. Such organizations were legitimately recognized by the state, and hence had more active power than the committees.¹⁰⁵ This period was also a time of increasing Arab political mobility in general, as witnessed in the rise of political parties. Thus, though Arabs were becoming increasingly involved in extra-parliamentary organizations, the focus of politicization was still on political parties and voting. That is, the avenue of politicization was the electoral process rather than the extra-parliamentary process.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Payes, 67

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 62-68

¹⁰⁶ Rekhess, “The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel,” 7-11

The Islamic Movement was another important extra-parliamentary institution created during this period. Since its inception, the Islamic movement was against participating in Zionist political processes, acting outside the state. Whereas before 1980, many Islamic Movement activists worked underground and were arrested, the Law of Associations registered the movement as an organization, allowing it to work within the legal framework. Though members refused to participate in national elections, many worked with the Arab minority through local elections. Indeed, the Islamic Movement's popularity grew, particularly in the Arab localities.¹⁰⁷ "While in the 1983 elections only one mayor was affiliated with the Islamic Movement, in the 1989 elections it gained the mayorship in five local governments and was represented in the local councils of another nine settlements."¹⁰⁸ Admittedly, the Islamic Movement split in 1995. From its inception, the movement attempted to balance three different, yet seemingly conflicting, identities: its Muslim character, Palestinian nationality, and Israeli framework. In attempts to maintain this balance, controversies over whether to participate in the Knesset arose amongst different leaders in the party. Leaders from the northern faction of the movement disapproved of such a move; those in the southern movement suggested that running in the Knesset would gain the Movement more political leverage.¹⁰⁹ Thus, in 1996, the southern branch of the Movement aligned with the ADP under the name, the United Arab List, and together received 25% of the Arab vote.¹¹⁰

All previous forms of extra-parliamentary organizing (with the exception of the southern branch of the Islamic Movement) have been receiving increased attention and support amongst various scholars on the topic, yet not enough attention so as to be included part of a

¹⁰⁷ Al-Haj, 80; Tessler and Grant, 107; Payes, 75

¹⁰⁸ Al-Haj, 80

¹⁰⁹ Elie Rekhess, "The Islamic Movement in Israel: The Internal Debate over Representation in the Knesset," Lecture, Between Jihad and Peace - Islamist Alignments in a Changing Middle East from Moshe Dayan Center (Tel Aviv, March 31, 1996).

¹¹⁰ Carla, 24

major theoretical framework or given in depth analysis. All of Eli Rekhess, Mohamad El Haj, and Oded Haklai have written about the trajectory of this means of mobilization. Although extra-parliamentary organizing, which Haklai terms ethnic civil society, began taking form as early as 1959, it was not till the 1990s that it increased in significance. Extra-parliamentary organization, in accordance with the political mobilization of the Arab minority, became possible with the decentralization of the Israeli government and the end of military rule.¹¹¹ Unlike political parties, extra-parliamentary organizing challenged the Jewishness of the state since they were not limited to working within the Knesset (although they sought to change it). Rather, they either worked within Arab municipalities and localities, like the Islamic Movement, or through the legal framework, like Adalah and Mossawa (two organizations advocating for the collective national rights of the Arab minority). The decentralization of the government gave more power to the courts, which gave many Arab organizations a legal space with which to challenge the government.¹¹²

By the 1990s, extra-parliamentary organizing grew, in both numbers and importance. Organizations became more professional and institutionalized, a phenomenon facilitated by the Law of Associations.¹¹³ Furthermore the growth from European and Western funding to NGOs in developing nations, in general, and to Arab Israeli NGOs in particular, provided such NGOs funding to organize properly (24% of total Arab Israeli funding comes from Europe).¹¹⁴ These NGOs were also able to provide immediate services to Arab localities and employment for the Arab minority. NGOs provided employment opportunities for educated Arabs who, besides teaching, could not find jobs in the respective sectors of the Israeli economy.¹¹⁵ The fourth factor that facilitated this growth was the Arab minority's realization of their role in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. Peace talks between Israel and Palestine

¹¹¹ Haklai, 9

¹¹² Haklai, 13

¹¹³ Payes, 75

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 77

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 64

did not involve the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Their hope for being a bridge for peace was slowly unsubstantiated by their exclusion in peace talks. They thus shifted their focus to their struggle in Israel and increased their mobilization for political demands through extra-parliamentary means.¹¹⁶ The growth of Arab civil associations was additionally influenced by non-Arab civil associations, such as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI).¹¹⁷ In its own words,

“The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) is Israel's oldest and largest human rights organization and the only one that deals with the entire spectrum of human rights and civil liberties issues in Israel and the Occupied Territories. ACRI's work encompasses litigation and legal advocacy, education, and public outreach as the most effective way in which to build toward our long-term vision of a just and democratic society that respects the equal rights of all its members.”¹¹⁸

Not only did Arab NGOs receive direct training and funding from such organizations, but they were also able to take advantage of these organizations' triumphs in Supreme Court cases. Arab NGOs used precedents set by non-Arab organizations to argue for civil and individual rights of their people. The activities of ACRI and other organizations like it challenged state power and state authority. It reversed the relationship between the state and civil society and demanded more accountability from the government for its citizens. Undoubtedly, the interactions between the government and non-Arab civil societies directly affected the structure and framework by which Arab civil society operated. Arab civil societies began using the courts and the legal system to gain more political leverage.¹¹⁹ The final factor that led to the institutional implementation and rising importance of NGOs was two Basic Laws passed in 1992 and 1994. Though Israel does not have a Constitution, there

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 82

¹¹⁷ Haklai, 14-15

¹¹⁸ "The Association for Civil Rights in Israel," לארשיב חרזאה תייכזל הדוגאה , <<http://www.acri.org.il/eng/>> (March 3, 2010).

¹¹⁹ Haklai, 13-15

are 11 basic laws by which the Supreme Court operates.¹²⁰ The Knesset passed the Human Dignity and Liberty Law in 1992 and the Freedom of Occupation Law in 1994.¹²¹ Both laws were passed to protect civil and human rights in Israel.¹²² Using precedents set by ACRI, organizations like Adalah and Mossawa used these laws to demand more collective, rather than individual, rights from the Supreme Court.¹²³

Many skeptics argue that the activities of extra-parliamentary organizations are futile since many court decisions in favor of these organizations do not lead to practical implementation.¹²⁴ However, proponents contend that extra-parliamentary organizations inherently change the political discourse of the state and carve a space for different modes of thinking.¹²⁵ In that sense, extra-parliamentary organizing is effective in bringing about new political ideologies and perspectives to the table, leading to a positive change in the public discourse. In addition, such organization provides opportunities of expression that are limited or ignored in the national arena. All such factors are applicable to the Arab NGOs in Israel, in general, but extra-parliamentary organizing has particularly reinforced the collective identity of the Arab minority, wherein they transcend religious or ideological differences that political parties may be vulnerable to.

Admittedly, extra-parliamentary organizing faces many challenges: they heavily rely on outside funding; do not have state access to the same funds as Jewish organizations do; and they are subject to closure and investigations by the government. Yet, as I will show from studying Adalah and the Future Vision Documents, extra-parliamentary organization

¹²⁰ When contradiction on the interaction between the Basic Laws and the ordinary laws arises, the Supreme Court generally rules in favor of the Basic Laws.

¹²¹ Payes, 79-80

¹²² Daphne Barak-Erez, "Israel: Citizenship and Immigration Law in the Vise of Security, Nationality, and Human Rights," *International Journal of Constitutional Laq* 6.1 (2008): 188-189

¹²³ Haklai, 15-16

¹²⁴ Adalah, "Adalah's Annual Report 1999," <<http://www.adalah.org/eng/publications.php>> (December 27, 2010) 3; Haklai, 17

¹²⁵ Payes, 61

has brought about tangible results to the Arab minority, both in the short term and the long term, and has served as an alternative for political mobility.

Ethnoregionalism and Extra-Parliamentarism

The objective of this paper is two-fold: the first is to analyze the political mobility of the Arabs in Israel and the avenues taken to pursue their goals; the second is to analyze the nature of these pursued goals. Historically, the Arabs have pursued their goals through various means. Initially, the minority was submissive. With time, however, there was a move towards politicization and much of Arab political mobility focused on political parties and voting. However, I have established in the previous section that a new trend is emerging: Due to the inefficiency of the political system in general, and the Arab political leadership in particular, Arabs have been pursuing other avenues of mobility and many scholars agree on the increasing importance that extra-parliamentarism plays in attempts to achieve the goals of the Arab minority yet do not give it the in depth analysis it deserves.

What *are* the goals of this minority? Previous scholarship suggested either complete separation from the state of Israel or integration into the state with equal human rights. Ethnoregionalism suggests that both such trends are not mutually exclusive and are, in fact, missing the whole picture. Radicalism and adaptation are but means to achieving collective national rights as an ethnic minority based on the geographical regions they populate. In other words, the Arab minority's goals are based on an ethnoregional framework. In his analysis of ethnoregionalism, however, Yiftachel leaves out extra-parliamentarism. Admittedly, Yiftachel acknowledges the importance of grassroots and extra-parliamentary organizing in moving the Arab minority and representing Arab localities. However, though he suggests extra-parliamentarism has been increasingly important in Arab political mobility, he does not

give extra-parliamentarism due credit. Rather, he analyzes geography, class, protests, and voting patterns. The first three remain relevant in the analysis of an ethnoregional framework. This paper, however, has already established that voting has generally been declining amongst the Arab minority. Since the writing of Yiftachel's thesis, extra-parliamentarism has increased in importance, and by contrast, political parties have fallen. Hence, voting patterns can no longer serve as the method of analysis. Rather than use voting patterns as an analytical tool, one needs to instead assess extra-parliamentarism, which provides a more relevant method of analysis to the demands of the Arab minority. I now turn to two extra parliamentary activities in an effort to analyze their language, methodology, and implications, as a means to reinforce the ethnoregional thesis.

Future Vision Documents

The Future Vision Documents are a report published in December 2006 outlining the future vision of the status of Palestinian Arabs in Israel – by the Arabs and for the Arabs. The process of drafting the Documents took a year and a half and was organized by the High Follow Up Committee and the National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities, both extra-parliamentary organizations.¹²⁶ The Documents had two overarching goals: to propose practical and effective change within the state of Israel with respect to the treatment of the Arab minority; and to encourage public and political discourse and dialogue on the status of this minority.¹²⁷ Both goals are attempted via the provision of a detailed outline on who this minority is and what they want. As such, the chair of the High Follow Up Committee gathered around 40 academics and activists to draft the Documents. Most drafters came from prestigious and elite institutions such as Haifa University, The Hebrew University

¹²⁶ “The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel,” The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel (2006) 2-4 <www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/dec06/tasawor-mostaqbali.pdf> (November 1, 2009).

¹²⁷ “The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel,” 2-4; Orly Halpern, "Jerusalem Takes a Fresh Look at Malign Vision for Arab Equality," *Forward* (New York), March 2, 2007 <<http://www.forward.com/articles/10247/>> (January 17, 2010).

of Jerusalem, Sikkuy, Mossawa Institute, Adalah, and others.¹²⁸ Accordingly, the process was divided into two stages. The first stage was the creation of a steering committee to determine the objectives and strategies of the Documents. The second stage was the research, implementation, and articulation of these objectives. The steering committee accordingly created 8 committees, each focusing on a particular field of research and study constituting the major issues of the Arabs of Israel. The decided upon areas of study were the following:

- 1) The Relation between the Palestinian Arabs and the State of Israel
- 2) The Legal Status of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel
- 3) Land and Housing
- 4) Economic Development
- 5) Social Development
- 6) Strategic Vision for Arab Education
- 7) Arab Palestinian Culture in Israel
- 8) Institutions and Political Work¹²⁹

Each committee was headed by a researcher assigned by the steering committee. Consequently, each research topic has four major parts: historical conditions, current situation, future vision, and the means to achieving that future vision.¹³⁰ Members of the committees came from the various religious, cultural, geographic, and political backgrounds of the Arab minority and special efforts were made to ensure the participation of women, who made up 30% of the respective committee members.¹³¹ According to As'ad Ghanem, one of the drafters of the Documents, all of the Arab public, local authorities, and political

¹²⁸ All of Adalah, Mossawa, and Sikkuy are some of the leading NGOs in the struggle for equal rights for Arab citizens of Israel.

¹²⁹ "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel," 5-7

¹³⁰ Dorit Shippin, "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel," Oasis of Peace, (March 2007)

<<http://www.nswas.com/spip.php?article733>> (February 17, 2010).

¹³¹ Ibid

figures were consulted prior to drafting the Documents so as to ensure the representation of various Arab perspectives.

The Documents were inherently significant since they consciously aimed to unite and define the Arab minority by ensuring the process itself was all-inclusive. Recognizing that various social, religious and political differences existed within the community, the Documents' drafters hoped to achieve unity on the basis of their "national collective principles and interests."¹³² Furthermore, the Documents are significant to this research paper because it clearly allows for a legitimate and representative analysis of Arab demands and evaluation of whether or not such demands are characteristically ethnoregional.

The Documents begin with an introduction from the Chairman of the High Follow Up Committee and the National Committee for the Heads of the Local Arab Councils in Israel, Mr. Shawqi Khateeb. In it, he emphasizes the importance of the work is not solely the research and strategies provided, but rather, it "lies within the discussion which will follow" for the "main goal is to spark the public discussion concerning the future of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel."¹³³ The Documents go on to define who the Arabs in Israel are, in first person, reinforcing the idea that they were written by and for Arabs.

The first area of study discusses the general relationship of the minority to the state. It premises the ethnocratic nature, rather than the democratic nature, of the Israeli state and discussed the historic discriminatory actions the state took to control the Arab minority. The state has historically maintained this ethnocracy by allocating resources based on ethnicity, rather than citizenship, and additionally separating the Palestinians within Israel from other Arabs and Palestinians and crushing organized opposition to the state. However, the section provides general and specific ways in which the Palestinian Arabs need to change this status. It demands self-autonomy from the state in the fields of education, culture and religion. This

¹³² "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel," 5

¹³³ Ibid, 3-4

does not imply separation from the state, but rather, a need for autonomy and move away from state dependency. Along with this autonomy, Palestinians must demand recognition from the state as an indigenous national group and their right of “social, religious, cultural and national continuity with the rest of the Palestinian people and the Arab and Islamic nation.”¹³⁴ The proposal further urges a change in the structure of the state towards a consensual democracy, if a real democracy and leadership were to emerge.¹³⁵

The second area of study discusses the legal status of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel and is divided into the four major parts. Historically, Israeli laws have encouraged and reinforced the Arab’s marginalization by and dependency on the state, thus leading to inequality between the Arabs and Jews in issues such as citizenship, political decision making, and land ownership. This has led to the creation of citizenship levels – canonized, second, and third – of which the Arabs occupy the lowest levels. Such official discrimination has been institutionalized and reflected in the current socioeconomic status of the Arabs. The legal vision of the Arabs is shared citizenship rights where the legal system ceases to pass discriminatory policies and simultaneously acknowledge the legal rights of the Arabs as a collective national minority indigenous to the land, guaranteeing them access to resources. One suggested proposal is the right to veto in “matters concerning their living.”¹³⁶ Others include rights to representation in the political system, equality on a collective national basis, and “self-rule in fields of education, culture, religion, and media with respect to their collective life complementing their partnership with the state.”¹³⁷ Again, this does not suggest a separation from the state, but rather, a move towards regional self-autonomy based on political and geographic factors, reflecting the ethnoregional character of these demands. The means to achieving this vision, according to the drafters, need to be pursued both in the short-

¹³⁴ “The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel,” 10

¹³⁵ *ibid*, 9-11

¹³⁶ *ibid*, 15

¹³⁷ “The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel,” 15

term and the long-term and via partnership with the state in order to obtain equality for the Arabs.¹³⁸

The third issue area concerns the land, planning, and housing policies of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel. The authors emphasize the importance of land to the Arab minority – both historically and currently – and discuss the issues of not only physically occupying the space, but also ownership over the land. The importance of land to the Arabs is evident in the significance of *Land Day* as a “turning point in the struggle over land between the Israeli state and the Palestinian Arabs.”¹³⁹ The Israeli state has been adopting and continues to adopt policies that geographically divides the Arab minority, and it politically controls it, perceiving the growth of the minority as a demographic threat. Accordingly, any future vision must first ensure the state’s acknowledgment of the historic injustice towards the Arabs, and allow for expanded Arab jurisdiction over their lands. That said, new administrative reconstruction of land planning and housing projects need to include Arab representation, conforming with the nature of a consensual democracy. In order to achieve those objectives, a structural change needs to occur within the state. Though political and legal struggles, public activism, and international advocacy can help in the short-term, only a transition to a consensual democracy will truly allow such changes to take place. Demands of the Arab minority towards land yet again emphasize the natural connection of the populous to the land and the link between political and geographical aims.¹⁴⁰

The fourth issue area concerns the economic development of the Arab minority. Historically, the Arab minority has been economically disadvantaged, which has led to a collective low quality of life in all aspects, whether it be educational, economical, or professional. The geographic fragmentation of the Arabs and low economic development in Arab regions make it difficult to maintain a separate Arab economy. This section thus

¹³⁸ Ibid, 12-15

¹³⁹ Ibid, 16

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 16-18

discusses the merging of the Arab economic interests with the larger Israeli economic interests and towards more equal employment opportunities. This merge needs to begin with an internal economic movement that will also allow for a break from dependency and “attain social unity and equality.”¹⁴¹ In order to achieve such objectives, extra-parliamentary organizations, politicians, and businessmen all need to work together. Economic institutions, research centers, and a committee for overseeing such institutions need to be created to encourage technical and economic professions. Organizations need to encourage women participation in the workforce, with a committee to secure rights of the Arab minority in the workforce. Admittedly, this section does not emphasize a completely autonomous economic Arab sector, yet it encourages the establishment of independent Arab economic institutions that should merge with, but not be dependent on, the larger Israeli economy. This reinforces the duality of the Arab national and civic identity. Arabs acknowledge their ethnicity and nationalism, yet they also recognize their Israeli citizenry. Efforts are being made to consolidate both, a move ethnoregional in nature.¹⁴²

The fifth issue area concerns the social development of the Arab minority. Rather than focus on the effects of the Israeli state on the Arab minority, this section analyzes the internal social problems created by a patriarchal society, historically divided amongst clan-based, caste, and family lines. The results of the researchers’ study pointed towards the significance of the nuclear family, rather than the clan, on individuals’ moral and financial capacities. The absence of social institutions to prevent social diseases and maintain local order has only hindered the social progress of the minority. All factors have significantly hurt the status of women in society, which is why all suggested development strategies make conscious efforts to raise the level of women participation in all fields. Social change, according to the authors, need to begin at the roots, with the participation of individuals in creating this change. The

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 20

¹⁴² Ibid, 19-21

future social vision must rid society of clan bigotry and “deep structural transformation of prevailing values, norms, and behaviors.”¹⁴³ Links amongst the neighborhoods and villages need to be created to encourage collective participation in the development process. This could be done through the creation of committees focused on maintaining social order, neighborhood cleanliness, and communal and religious understanding. Programs to reinforce and educate individuals on the national collective identity need to be established, again with a focus on promoting the status of women. Accordingly, the idea of creating communal social links towards a collective social development within the fragmented Arab region depicts, yet again, an ethnoregional attitude.¹⁴⁴

The sixth area of concern is Arab education, which has two major problems: general discrimination by the government against the Arab educational system and rejection of the government of certain educational elements that enhance the national and civil identity of the minority. Other problems in the educational system stem from the lack of investment on the political, local, and private level, and the inability of the system to prepare students for a modern developing world. Any attempts to resolve these problems must consider “the right of Palestinian Arabs in Israel (as an indigenous people in their homeland) to self-administration of the educational system.”¹⁴⁵ By pursuing a number of avenues, such as the legal one and the public one, the High Follow Up Committee should work with the local and political authorities to establish better educational systems that develop student potential and leadership. The authors’ suggestions are based on an independent Arab educational system focused on establishing the national collective identity in the Arab homeland, reinforcing an ethnoregional framework.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ “The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel,” 24

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 22-26

¹⁴⁵ “The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel,” 28

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 27-29

The seventh field of study is about the culture of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel. The Palestinian culture in Israel historically went through 5 stages. After 1948, a “culture of nothingness”¹⁴⁷ was being discussed in the public discourse. Eventually, renaissance literature came out, preparing for the third stage: a reconnecting with the Palestinian people and Arab nation as a whole. The fourth stage was additionally described as a cultural renaissance, triggered by the Land Day. The final and current stage is one in which Arabs lack a sense of unity, whereby the author terms it the setback stage. The Palestinian culture cannot be separated from the homeland, which is the “unifying element”¹⁴⁸ for all Palestinians. This created a double identity where Palestinians were forced to become part of the “other” culture – that is, the Israeli culture. Since the state of Israel does not acknowledge the Arab minority as a national collective, a board of cultural affairs supporting existing cultural institutions and disengaged from politics, must be established. Additionally, the High Follow Up Committee should see to the organization of a Palestinian cultural conference discussing three core issues – the Arab identity, the relation of the Arab identity with the Jewish one, and the relation of the Palestinian Israeli culture with the global Palestinian identity. This analysis of the author is a clear reflection of an ethnoregional framework – a common culture of a national collective grounded in distinct geographical units, which the authors consider to be the homeland.¹⁴⁹

The final portion of the Documents focuses on institutional and political public work, emphasizing the importance of social institutions to any collective vision. The social institution framework in the Arab region is weak and fragmented, needing organization and structure across the various fields with the aims of obtaining collective and individual rights. Cultural, political, economic and social development structure needs organized and

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 31

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 32

¹⁴⁹ “The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel,” 30-34

institutional development aiming to balance “the ability to act freely and independent.”¹⁵⁰ This needs to be done by creating bonds, linkages, and coordination amongst the various existing institutions – NGOs, political parties, local authorities, the media, and the public. To establish the necessary national and political frameworks, an “executive professional body responsible for the planning stage and finding sources of funding”¹⁵¹ for activation should be established. This establishes the work of extra-parliamentary organizations in establishing the collective vision across the Arab region.¹⁵²

The Future Vision Documents achieved what it set out to do: it triggered both public and political discourse over the Arabs’ status as an ethnic minority, and received funds from a variety of organizations to implement parts of the vision. After publication, 30,000 copies of the Documents were distributed to Arab homes. Many Jewish liberals on the center left, generally sympathetic to the marginalized minority, termed the Documents a “declaration of war,”¹⁵³ hindering progressive efforts to strengthen relations between the Arabs and the state. Many news articles, both in Israel and abroad, covered the Documents, stating that it had “prompted consternation and debate across the country.”¹⁵⁴ Jewish public officials did not ignore it, and meetings and conferences to discuss the Documents, were immediately organized. Whereas some meetings were held to undermine the Documents, others were held to support it and discuss the implementation of its suggested solutions.¹⁵⁵ Many Arab NGOs directly involved in the drafting of the Documents (such as Mossawa and Adalah) risked losing funding from Jewish organizations, at home and abroad. Meetings were held as to whether or not foreign organizations that support Arab civil and human rights in Israel should

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 35

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 39

¹⁵² Ibid, 35-39

¹⁵³ Halpern, “Jerusalem Takes a Fresh Look at Maligned Vision for Arab Equality”

¹⁵⁴ Isabel Kershner, “Noted Arab Citizens Call on Israel to Shed Jewish Identity,” *New York Times*, February 8, 2007 <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/08/world/middleeast/08israel.html?_r=2> (February 17, 2010)

¹⁵⁵ Halpern, “Jerusalem Takes a Fresh Look at Maligned Vision for Arab Equality”; Dina Kraft, “Arab Minority Antagonism Irks Coexistence Funders,” *Jewish Exponent*, January 24, 2008 <<http://www.jewishexponent.com/article/15161/>> (March 7, 2010); Shippin, “The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel”

continue funding those local organizations that supported such a Future Vision, which threatened and challenged the Jewish nature of the state.¹⁵⁶ Needless to say, the Documents provoked public discourse over the status of the national collective identity of the Arab minority in Israel.

There are a few major points that each and every issue touches on as a major topic of discussion relevant to every field. The first is the idea of a national collective. Every committee emphasized the need for the state to acknowledge the rights of the Palestinian minority as an indigenous national ethnic minority, with collective and individual rights. The second is the emphasis on the “homeland” as the basic element of unity for this minority, and the expansion of geographic jurisdiction over this homeland. The third is the language used to identify this minority. All authors use the terminology, the Palestinian Arabs in Israel, recognizing the multi-faceted identity of this community – one that is connected to the broader Arab nation, the Palestinian people, and the Israeli state. This also emphasizes the acceptance of the Israeli state and rejection of notions of separation. The fourth recurring theme is the need for structural and administrative change within the regime – Israeli political, educational, social, legal, economic, and cultural institutions require a structural change that takes the aforementioned factors into consideration. That said, the Documents advocate for a consensual democracy in place of the existing ethnocracy where Israel becomes a state for all its *citizens* rather than a state that discriminates based on ethnicity. Fifth, the Arabs demand authorities over cultural, religious, and educational institution so as to enforce the national identity of the people. Finally, all sections emphasize the need for Israel to recognize the historic discrimination of the Palestinian people as a whole, beginning with the Nakbah – a term translating into “Tragic Disaster” representing the day that Israel gained independence in 1948 and expelled the Palestinian people from the land. All themes

¹⁵⁶ Shmuel Rosner, "Jewish Money and the Arab citizen," *Haaretz*, April 6, 2007 <<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/845106.html>> (accessed March 11, 2010).

are common throughout the text, reinforcing the ethnoregional character of the demands – the recognition of the minority as a national collective with historic discrimination calling for rights for their distinct geographic units.

Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel

Adalah is a legal, non-partisan, non-profit organization established in November 1996 that uses the court system to bring about individual and collective rights for the Arab minority. Although many are trained by the Association of Civil Rights in Israel, Adalah activists and lawyers focus not only on universal human rights, but also emphasize the need for legal mobilization of Arab collective rights in the face of a Jewish state.¹⁵⁷ Those who work for Adalah are professional lawyers, and not only voluntary activists. As a non-profit, Adalah receives funding from donors in Israel and abroad (United States and Europe). Two major donors of Adalah are the New Israel Foundation and the Ford Foundation.¹⁵⁸

Adalah's work can be divided into mostly four issue areas: litigation before the Supreme Court and other municipal courts and university tribunals; international advocacy; legal education; and institutional development. Throughout this process, Adalah defines the Palestinian Arab community "as a distinct group with a common language, history, culture, and national identity."¹⁵⁹ It additionally works and links with other nongovernmental organizations, political officials and political parties, and Arab local authorities, symbolizing attempts to unite the Arab community across all levels and sectors. Since Adalah is an independent, nonpartisan organization, its constituency is the whole of the Arab community. Unlike political parties, it is under no pressure to appeal to a particular religious or cultural group. Adalah represents the interests of the Arab community as a whole, and thus, a lot of its

¹⁵⁷ Haklai, 15

¹⁵⁸ "Adalah's Summary Report on Activities January-December 2000," Adalah, <<http://www.adalah.org/eng/publications.php>> (December 27, 2010) 8; "Adalah's Annual Report 1999," 5

¹⁵⁹ "Adalah's Annual Report 1999," 11

work includes representation for Druze and Bedouins, who represent a minority within the Arab community in Israel.

Adalah began as a legal organization focused on issues concerning the Arab minority as a collective. As such, it brought cases to the Supreme Court that concerned issues related to discriminatory land and planning policies, educational, cultural, political, socioeconomic, and civic rights. It was not until 2001, due to political changes on the ground, that Adalah began accepting individual cases “regarding civil and political rights violations.”¹⁶⁰ Since 1996, Adalah has developed institutionally. Its main office is in the city of Shfa ‘amr in the North, but over the years, Adalah built a branch office in the Negev and another official office in Beer el Sheva in the South. Thus, Adalah attempts to build geographical communal links amongst the whole of the Arab minority.

Adalah’s reputation as one of the most prominent legal organizations for the Arab minority in Israel stems from its successes over the years across a variety of fields. The first was the significant Supreme Court victories won over the years. Over the course of a year, Adalah files tens of petitions and appeals to the Supreme Court, and although many of its cases are dismissed, remain pending, or lack implementation by the government, Adalah has certainly made accomplishments towards advancing the Arab community in Israel. The first of those accomplishments was its struggle to cancel a plan by the government dividing the country into “National Priority Areas.” National Priority Areas were areas designated by the state to receive generous economic, social and educational benefits due to their socioeconomic status. The majority of cities on the National Priority List were Jewish towns and villages when studies have consistently proven that the least developed areas in Israel were Arab towns and villages. Since 1997, Adalah has been fighting for the cancellation of the list on the basis that it discriminated against Arab areas, and the qualifications to be on

¹⁶⁰ “Adalah 2001 Summary Annual Report,” Adalah <<http://www.adalah.org/eng/publications.php>> (December 27, 2010) 1.

the list were not solely economic. After a long sought after battle, the Supreme Court finally declared the cancellation of the plan based on its discriminatory policies. The cancellation of the plan was in and of itself a victory. In addition to that, however, the Supreme Court's decision implicitly recognized the collective rights of the Arab minority. The case was not an individual victory, but a collective one whereby the Court confirmed the discrimination by the state towards its Arab minority.¹⁶¹

Another victory came about concerning language rights. Needless to say, the Arabic language is a uniting cultural factor for the Arab minority in Israel. Thus, achievements to the practical implementation of the language as an official language in the country solidify and institutionalize the collective right of this ethnic minority. In June 1999, Adalah filed a petition demanding that mixed municipalities (such as Nazareth, Tel Aviv, Jaffa, and others) add traffic and warning signs in Arabic. The signs in these mixed cities appeared in English and Hebrew, but not Arabic. In July 2002, the Supreme Court ruled that indeed, Arabic must be added to these signs, considering Arabic's official status in the country. (*H.C. 4112/99, Adalah, et. Al. v. The Municipalities of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, et. Al.*). In writing his minority opinion on the issue, however, Justice Mishael Heshin ruled that such a politically sensitive issue was not a judicial one, since it officially recognized the collective identity of the Arab minority and the status of the Arabic language as an official language of the country.¹⁶² Such issues, in his opinion, were for political and parliamentary discussions. Nevertheless, Adalah won the case and signs in mixed cities created informational, warning, and traffic signs in Arabic.

Another significant Adalah victory was the recognition of an unrecognized village in the Negev by the Supreme Court. Since its establishment, Adalah has been fighting, through a variety of legal cases, for the recognition of the unrecognized villages in the Negev.

¹⁶¹ "Adalah's 2006 Annual Report of Activities – Executive Summary," Adalah (May 2007) <<http://www.adalah.org/eng/publications.php>> (December 27, 2010) 3.

¹⁶² "Adalah's Supreme Court Litigation Docket-2003," Adalah (Jan 19, 2004) <<http://www.adalah.org/eng/publications.php>> (December 27, 2010) 9.

Although no official data exists on these villages, non governmental organizations who struggle for the rights of unrecognized villages estimate the ethnic population in the Arab villages around 80,000 – 70,000 in the Negev, and an additional 10,000 in the North. Unrecognized villages are predominantly Arab Bedoin villages, which the state refuses to recognize. Non-recognition of these villages exempts the state from providing any sort of facilities, resources or basic rights to the villages and the people living in them. Thus, many of those villages have no “basic infrastructure such as running water, electricity, health services and schools...”¹⁶³ Although the state does not allow Jewish settlements in these areas, it has historically demolished houses and evicted residents there, using the land for agricultural purposes and for building public parks and natural reserves. Adalah’s petitions to the Supreme Court have generally not thematically approached the recognition of the villages. Instead, they file various cases demanding, for example, injunctions over demolition of targeted buildings by the government¹⁶⁴ and water rights in specific areas. One major achievement was the opening of “six mother and child health care clinics”¹⁶⁵ as a result of a petition submitted by Adalah to the Supreme Court. Although not always successful, Adalah continues to file petitions for the establishment of schools and other services in the unrecognized villages.¹⁶⁶

After 2001, Adalah began accepting cases on behalf of individuals. This shift was due to political changes on the ground, most prominently the break out of the second Intifada – the emerged conflict between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. Many in Israel came out in protest of Israeli actions taken against the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. In one demonstration, the police fired at and killed 13 Arab Israeli citizens. Adalah took the case on behalf of the families of those killed. After an eight year struggle, however, the “Attorney

¹⁶³ Haklai, 16

¹⁶⁴ “Adalah’s 2004 Annual Report of Activities – Executive Summary,” Adalah (April 2005) <<http://www.adalah.org/eng/publications.php>> (December 27, 2010) 3.

¹⁶⁵ “About Adalah,” Adalah, <www.adalah.org/eng/about.php> (December 27, 2010).

¹⁶⁶ “Adalah’s 2004 Annual Report of Activities – Executive Summary,” 2, 3, 4, 7, 10

General issued a discriminatory decision not to indict any of those responsible for the killings.”¹⁶⁷ Adalah also represented Arab Knesset Members and political parties before the Central Elections Committee (CEC). Several right-winged politicians had filed motions to the CEC to ban Arab political parties from running. After the CEC accepted the ban, Adalah appealed to the Supreme Court, which overturned the CEC’s ban and allowed Arab parties and Knesset Members to run in the upcoming elections.¹⁶⁸ Adalah’s representation of these individuals was a joint effort with other extra-parliamentary organizations, such as the High Follow Up Committee, and other independent lawyers. This signified the joint work amongst extra-parliamentary organizations and political parties.

The second major type of work that Adalah does is providing legal education. As such, Adalah has generally held conferences and events on the issues it works on, such as land rights and recognition of the unrecognized villages in the Negev. One example of such a conference was held in 2004 entitled “Planning, Control, and the Law in the Naqab.”¹⁶⁹ Additionally, Adalah publishes newsletters, annual reports, and journals. In 2004, Adalah began providing these publications, as well as its website, in all three languages – Hebrew, English, and Arabic. This move increased the number of subscribers and users. Adalah has also completed its first documentary in 2006, entitled “The Unrecognized,”¹⁷⁰ a film is about the “plight of Arab Bedouin living in the unrecognized villages in the Naqaab.”¹⁷¹ Another major achievement in the field of legal education was the publication of a proposal for an Israeli constitution. Israel does not have a constitution, but rather, operates on the premise of Basic Laws established throughout the years. As such, moves by various Israeli parties have proposed a number of constitutions. Adalah’s proposal, entitled “The Democratic

¹⁶⁷ “About Adalah”

¹⁶⁸ “Adalah’s Supreme Court Litigation Docket-2003,” 3

¹⁶⁹ “Adalah’s 2004 Annual Report of Activities – Executive Summary,” 7

¹⁷⁰ “Adalah’s Annual Report of Activities 2007,” Adalah (May 2008)

<<http://www.adalah.org/eng/publications.php>> (December 27, 2010), 41

¹⁷¹ *ibid*

Constitution” was the first proposed by an Arab human rights group in Israel, and it focuses on protecting basic civil and human rights for all of the state’s citizens, as well as the minority and ethnic rights of disadvantaged groups.¹⁷²

Adalah’s third avenue of work deals with international advocacy. Throughout the years, Adalah as an organization has become increasingly influential in the provision of information for international organizations, such as the United Nations and the European Union. Adalah completes briefings and provides consultations on a variety of legal, human rights, and women’s rights¹⁷³ issues. Additionally, Adalah has worked with foreign embassies in Israel and “undertook advocacy tours to Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Brussels.”¹⁷⁴

Finally, Adalah has worked on its own institutional development, opening up more offices, increasing the number of staff and board of directors, and gaining more funds from donors. The institutional development of Adalah has been reflected in the increased productivity over the years in the other three work avenues. In-depth meetings, board elections, and grant writing have allowed for more efficiency within the organization.

The analysis of Adalah’s work and activities as a nongovernmental organization has many positive implications, but also two caveats. First, Adalah does not always win its cases. Many of its cases remain pending. Furthermore, some cases that do receive judicial support, do not actually get implemented by the government. Second, Adalah does not directly challenge the institutional establishment of the state as the Documents do. Adalah calls for a democratic state, but does not explicitly challenge the Jewishness and Zionist nature of the state of Israel. It attempts to reach democracy through the legal field, in an ad hoc manner, based on the premise of achieving equal individual and collective rights for the Arab

¹⁷² “Adalah’s 2006 Annual Report of Activities – Executive Summary,” 2

¹⁷³ “Adalah’s 2005 Annual Report of Activities – Executive Summary,” Adalah (April 2006)

<<http://www.adalah.org/eng/publications.php>> (December 27, 2010) 5; “Adalah’s 2006 Annual Report of Activities – Executive Summary,” 8; “Adalah’s 2004 Annual Report of Activities – Executive Summary,” 7

¹⁷⁴ “Adalah’s 2006 Annual Report of Activities – Executive Summary,” 5

minority. That said, Adalah's achievements do bring about practical change within the Arab community. Adalah's petitions have increased funding to educational and health facilities across Arab communities. Their cases also brought about increasing cultural, religious, and educational rights to the Arab minority and helped with the establishment and recognition of the Arab community as a minority with specific collective needs and rights. Adalah's focus on regional and geographic rights is reflected in their cases on the land and planning policies of the state. Admittedly, land cases are the most challenging for Adalah since jurisdiction for Arab villages and towns is unlikely to be expanded due to institutionalized state policies. Yet the offices set up in the North, South, and the Negev reflect the geographical locations of the Arab community. Adalah's conferences and events are also held in Arab localities and municipalities in attempts to reach out to the whole of the Arab community and create links throughout the fragmented Arab region. The nature of the cases and demands of Adalah presented above clearly point to an ethnoregional framework, supporting Yiftachel's proposition of a new ethnoregional trend emerging amongst the Arabs in Israel.

Conclusions

The Arab minority in Israel is a disadvantaged ethnic group, legally, politically, and socio-economically. Ever since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the Palestinian Arabs went from a majority to a minority within a few days. Due to internal social structures, such as hamula-based politics and rivalries, and external political structures, such as the establishment of military rule, the Palestinian minority in Israel initially went through a period of submissiveness with regards to its relations with the state. However, with the lifting of military rule and the decentralization of the Israeli government, many Arabs took advantage of the new freedom of movement and gradually broke their dependency on hamula heads, and consequently, the state. The period between the early 1970s to the early 1990s experienced a surge in the political mobilization of the Arab community. Both political

parties and radical movements emerged establishing the minority's Palestinian national identity. This period of nationalism was reinforced by political developments – Egyptian President Gamal Abd El Nasser's call for an Arab National Movement, the Six Day War between Israel and Arab nations in 1967, and the creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. In the 1990s, and after the signing of the Oslo Accords, the Arab community became frustrated with their political leadership who were not able to bring about tangible change to their constituency, creating a gap between the Arab political leaders and the Arab community, which carved a space for the establishment and rising importance of extra-parliamentary organizing. Nongovernmental organizations increased in number and importance bringing about much more tangible results and creating links and unity throughout the Arab community.

Scholars have generally analyzed the demands of the Arab community in a radical/adaptive framework. That is, they suggested the Arab community wants either complete separation from the state of Israel or complete integration with equal rights. Even Smooha's analysis, which adds factionalism to these explanations, still works within this dichotomy. In 1999, Oren Yiftachel proposed that none of the existing scholarly theories truly represented the demands and trends of the Arab minority in Israel, especially because they ignored the geographical connection to those demands. As such, he proposed that the demands of the Arab minority revolve around an ethnoregional framework. Yiftachel applied Hechter's groundbreaking work to the Arab community in Israel, and suggested that the Arab minority is seeking collective and individual rights within Israel, hereby accepting the existence of the state, but simultaneously recognizing their national ethnic status as a collective minority. Additionally, though geographically fragmented, this minority's demands revolve around the geographic regions they occupy. Per Yiftachel, the Arabs are moving

towards an ethnoregional trend whereby they demand collective rights to their distinct geographical units.

Yet even Yiftachel fails to fully consider extra-parliamentarism as a fundamental unit of analysis. In an effort to advance Yiftachel's thesis and determine its applicability, this paper looked at the work of extra-parliamentary organizations, chiefly because this form of activity has been increasingly significant in representing Arab interests yet neglected in the work of scholars. Though Yiftachel recognizes the importance of nongovernmental organizations in making ethnoregional demands, his work does not conclusively analyze the significance of extra-parliamentary organization.

Recognizing the simultaneous shift in Arab demands and political activity, this paper explored the relationship between them. The shift in demands towards an ethnoregional character and the shift in political activity towards extra-parliamentarism were linked together by researching the demands of two of the most important extra-parliamentary activities in Arab mobilization: Adalah's legal work and the joint cooperation amongst various extra-parliamentary organizations to publish the Future Vision Documents. In examining the work, influence, and demands of both activities, this paper has found that indeed, they reinforce a trend towards an ethnoregional, rather than an adaptive or radical, character of Arab Israeli demands.

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