

**Divided We Fall:
Cohesion and Fragmentation in Excluded Minority Movements**

by

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Abstract

Ethnic minorities face a-priori incentives to form cohesive political movements when confronting structurally advantaged majorities in ethnic states. In spite of these incentives, scholarship has consistently shown organizational fragmentation to be the norm. Why? Why are ethnopolitical minority movements organizationally fragmented in some cases, and cohesive in others? What is the impact of ethnic exclusion on minority movements' cohesiveness?

This dissertation argues that ethnic minority leaders' perceptions of opportunity and threat shape their movements' internal organizational patterns and strategies. It illustrates a variety of ways in which the attribution of opportunity and threat informs leaders' strategic choices, facilitates and constrains inter-ethnic coalition-building, and ultimately, shapes the patterns of cohesion and fragmentation within ethnopolitical minority movements. Overall, this project argues that movements are most likely to fragment when their leaders perceive the environment as either extraordinarily open or closed; environments which are perceived as moderately challenging are associated with organizational cohesion. Ideological and strategic differences serve as intermediary variables: political actors face incentives to reconsider their broad strategies in extraordinarily challenging, closed political environments (causing fragmentation), set aside internal strategic and ideological differences in moderately challenging environments (leading to increased unity), and differentiate along ideological lines in exceptionally open political environments (causing fragmentation). Each of this dissertation's three articles adds a component to this overall theory. The first article traces changes in Palestinian leaders' perceptions of opportunity and threat within Israel since 2015. The second compares and contrasts the strategic choices of Palestinian and Kurdish leaders within Israel and Turkey

(respectively) over longer timespans, since these states' establishment. The third makes the case that Palestinian and Jewish activists are integrated into a broader, binational, counter-hegemonic movement within Israel, resisting the state's ethnic-hierarchical order. This project primarily relies on data from 35 semi-structured interviews with 36 Palestinian and Jewish politicians and activists, conducted between 2017-2023, as well as extensive media and archival research. The argument is established through primarily qualitative methods, including process tracing, discursive content analysis, and diachronic comparative analysis in the Israeli case, supplemented by synchronic analysis using additional evidence from Turkey.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|--|
| ACAP | Arab Center for Alternative Planning |
| ACRI | Association for Civil Rights in Israel |
| AKP | <i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> or Justice and Development Party |
| AMR | Arab Movement for Renewal |
| CHP | <i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i> or Republican People's Party |
| CSO | Civil society organization |
| DFPE | Democratic Front for Peace and Equality |
| EU | European Union |
| HDP | <i>Halkların Demokratik Partisi</i> or Peoples' Democratic Party |
| HEP | <i>Halkın Emek Partisi</i> or People's Labor Party |
| HR | Human rights |
| HÜDA PAR | <i>Hür Dava Partisi</i> or Free Cause Party |
| ICP | Israeli Communist Party |
| JL | Joint List |
| MHP | <i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi</i> or Nationalist Movement Party |
| MK | Member of Knesset |
| NCL | New Communist List |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| NDA | National Democratic Assembly |
| OPT | Occupied Palestinian Territories |
| PIK | <i>Partiya İslamiya Kurdistan</i> or Kurdistan Islamic Party |

| | |
|------|--|
| PKK | <i>Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan</i> or Kurdistan Workers' Party |
| PM | Prime minister |
| SHP | <i>Sosyaldemokrat Halk Partisi</i> or Social Democratic Populist Party |
| SMI | Social movement industry |
| SMO | Social movement organization |
| SMT | Social movement theory |
| SND | Social network diagram |
| UAL | United Arab List |
| US | United States |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| ZP | <i>Zafer Partisi</i> or Victory Party |

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The rise of ethnonationalism, irridentism and xenophobia around the world presents a challenge for vulnerable national, political and religious collectives, who find themselves marginalized, excluded, and threatened (Bonikowski, 2017; Thielemann & Zaun, 2018; Torre, 2018). This problem is especially acute in ethnic states, where titular majorities are formally privileged. Structurally disadvantaged minorities have historically adopted a variety of organizational responses to such challenges. In some instances, minorities responded to increased marginalization by consolidating different factions, joining forces to increase their strength in the political and civic spheres. Examples include the Kurdish movement in Iraq following the 1988 Al-Anfal campaign, and the Palestinian national movement following the first Intifada (Bakke et al., 2012; McLaughlin & Pearlman, 2012). In other cases, minorities were unable to overcome their internal political differences despite hostility, oppression or exclusion, instead remaining fragmented, disorganized and ineffective. Examples include the Albanian leadership during and after the Kosovo War, and the Sikh movement in India between the mid-‘80s and mid-‘90s (Bakke et al., 2012; Seymour et al., 2016). While the effects of organizational fragmentation on a variety of political outcomes are relatively well-understood, its causes are not (Seymour et al., 2016, p. 3). What explains this variation? Why are ethnopolitical movements organizationally fragmented in some cases, and cohesive in others?

The Palestinian minority in Israel has experienced marked fluctuations in its patterns of organization, including cohesion and fragmentation, since the state’s establishment (Ghanem, 2001; Haklai, 2011). Since 2015, the minority underwent a series of quick organizational transformations, oscillating between periods of cohesive and fragmented mobilization (Haklai &

Abu Rass, 2022). These long- and short-term temporal variations makes the Palestinian community within Israel an ideal case study of organizational cohesion and fragmentation, allowing for diachronic comparative analysis (comparing different periods within the same case; Lijphart, 1971, p. 689; Van Evera, 1997, pp. 56–58). What drove Palestinian leaders apart, and what brought them back together? What explains the leadership’s long- and short-term organizational transformations? Against the rising tide of right wing ethnonationalism around the globe, other ethnic minorities have also faced increasing exclusion and delegitimization (Brubaker, 2017; Torre, 2018). What can we learn from other cases? What is the relationship between exclusion and the level of cohesion in ethnopolitical movements, broadly?

1.2. Research questions and theoretical background

Why are ethnopolitical minority movements organizationally fragmented in some ethnic states, and cohesive in others? What is the impact of ethnic exclusion on minority movements’ level of cohesion?

a. The rarity of cohesive mobilization

Scholars have demonstrated that appeals to ethnicity can facilitate political mobilization (Horowitz, 1985). Ethnic identities “can become focal points around which people coordinate their actions in pursuit of a wide variety of goods” (Hale, 2008, p. 45). Ethnicity provides “stable but flexible” information shortcuts in democratic electoral systems, effectively and quickly informing voters’ choices (Birnir, 2007, pp. 9–12). Although ethnic identities are not primordial, scholars have also shown that, once formed, they become durable, reflecting grassroots individual-level preferences in deeply divided societies (rather than serving only as political tools

at the hands of elites). They have also shown that ethnicity has greater potential to serve as the basis for mass mobilization compared to class or ideology (Hale, 2004; Horowitz, 1985; McGarry & O’Leary, 2004; Varshney, 2003). It stands to reason, then, that ethnicity should be even more effective as a political catalyst among minorities in ethnic states, where titular majorities claim ownership over the state and its institutions, and where minorities are systemically excluded. Part of the puzzle arises from this intuitive, conventional wisdom, that systemic disadvantages ought to provoke mobilization – especially among ethnic minorities in deeply divided societies. Indeed, some scholars have established a link between minority exclusion and mobilization (Brubaker, 1996; Nordås, 2014). Scholars have also linked states’ institutional characteristics – including their ethnic hierarchical structures – with the adoption of political identities among individuals, and in turn, with the ‘political salience’ of ethnic boundaries in domestic politics (Haklai, 2011; Posner, 2005; Wimmer, 2008). Since ethnic states are more likely to produce ethnic mobilization, including ethnic minority mobilization (if not especially so), should they not also produce cohesive minority movements?

Considering that minorities are relegated to the status of perennial outsiders in ethnic states, one might expect ethnic minority movements to tend toward greater organizational cohesion compared to other social movements in similar settings (Haklai & Norwich, 2016). Since ethnicity facilitates mobilization in these settings, and since deeply divided societies are characterized by inter-group adversity, ethnic leaders face a-priori incentives to mobilize in a cohesive fashion. Indeed, scholars have shown that political confrontations of this type – struggles that are interpreted by belligerents in zero-sum terms – incentivize unity (Posen, 1993). One would assume that disadvantaged, excluded *ethnic* minorities would face additional

incentives to unify when facing more powerful majorities in an ethnic states, in control of state institutions. And yet, scholarship has repeatedly shown organizational fragmentation to be the norm in ethnic states, in deeply divided societies, and when ethnic conflict turns violent (Bakke et al., 2012; Cunningham, 2014; Findley & Rudloff, 2012). Furthermore, while some scholars agree that political exclusion can strengthen the collective identity of ethnic minorities, they disagree on its effects on their leaderships' organizational patterns, specifically (Birbir, 2007; Marx, 2002). Why are minority ethnopolitical movements so often fragmented, despite these incentives to unify, and what are the effects of exclusion on these movements' organizational patterns? This study assumes that all groups – including ethnic minorities – are internally diverse; some degree of political, cultural, social, ideological and organizational fragmentation within groups should be expected (Brubaker, 2004; Haklai, 2011, pp. 2–3; Wimmer, 2008). Still, the absence of organizational cohesion under such circumstances – the difficulty of setting aside differences for the sake of forming cohesive alliances, despite the existence of strong incentives to establish united fronts – is puzzling.

b. Exclusion in civic and ethnic states

While some scholars are skeptical of the civic-ethnic distinction, others insist it is analytically meaningful. In Hans Kohn's original formulation, the civic-ethnic distinction was meant to differentiate between illiberal, ethnic "Eastern" states, in which nationalism predated state-formation, and liberal, civic, "Western" states, in which state-formation predated the emergence of nationalism (Clark, 2019; Kohn, 1944). Kohn argues that ethnic states have exclusive national membership criteria, often based on an ethnic identity; to be considered a member of the national community, one must also be perceived as a member of the ethnic community. Civic states, on

the other hand, have inclusive national membership criteria, based on citizenship; all citizens are equally considered members of the national group. In liberal, civic democracies, the state serves the needs of all citizens by virtue of their citizenship, while ethnic states systemically privilege an ethnic majority (Rouhana & Ghanem, 1998). Skeptics, however, argue that this distinction is historically false, since supposedly “civic” states, like the United States, only recently adopted inclusive national membership criteria (Kuzio, 2002). Furthermore, critics argue that even in “civic” states, there continues to exist a socio-politically privileged core group; not only does the civic-ethnic distinction falsely imply historical inclusion in supposedly civic states, but it also fails to capture contemporary realities, since no state has truly universally inclusive national membership criteria (Clark, 2019; Kuzio, 2002). Further yet, skeptics argue that the use of the distinction has important normative consequences, as it implies that certain states are more inclusive and therefore better than others, when in fact every state privileges a core, dominant group (Brubaker, 1999). They conclude that “civic states are a myth”, and that supposedly civic and ethnic states have, in practice, many more similarities than differences (Kuzio, 2002, p. 21).

While these criticisms are valid, I argue that the distinction is analytically meaningful as a shorthand for systemic political exclusion. Edward Koning, for example, recognizes these criticisms’ validity but insists that the distinction “still offers a useful heuristic device to compare and classify different nation-building practices” (Koning, 2011, p. 1975). The distinction can, then, be thought of as a spectrum, measuring the degree of inclusion or exclusion based on a variety of variables including language, immigration and cultural policies. On the extreme, liberal, civic end of the spectrum, the “boundaries of citizenship and nationality overlap”, while in idealized ethnic states, they do not (Haklai, 2014, p. 19). Thus, while the distinction is false in

a historical, socio-evolutionary sense, and while it is often used carelessly, it still reflects real, measurable differences in states' levels of political inclusion. In fact, when used in this fashion, the distinction allows for grouping together certain categories of states that are often treated as separate: ethnocracies and theocracies are different in important ways, but they are similar in that they fall closer to the ethnic, exclusive side of the ethnic-civic divide; their national membership criteria are based on exclusive categories. And while notable "civic states" like France, the United Kingdom, and Canada all privilege majority populations, they measurably fall closer to the civic end of this spectrum in Koning's comparative study of immigration policies, as their national membership criteria are based on more inclusive categories (Koning, 2011). This study uses the ethnic-civic distinction in this sense, conceived as a continuum rather than a dichotomy, while recognizing that no state is purely "civic". All states have privileged core groups.

The puzzle concerns ethnic minorities in ethnic states; states that fall closer to the ethnic end of the spectrum, where ethnic hierarchies are officially institutionalized. In these settings, ethnic minority politics is necessarily counter-hegemonic, since mobilizing and making demands in the name of an ethnonational identity necessarily challenges the ethnic hegemonic order (Jamal, 2011; Peleg, 2007; Rouhana & Ghanem, 1998). In this study, the term hegemony is employed in its original, Gramscian sense, defined as "[t]he 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). Hegemony refers to the 'normal', commonsensical or socially acceptable values, practices, and beliefs a given population consents to, propagated by a dominant class of traditional intellectual and moral leaders – a "historic bloc" (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 3–6). One of Gramsci's key insights was the realization that, although hegemony is achieved

by consensus, it has to be manufactured and maintained, and is therefore actively promulgated by states and challenged by “organic intellectuals” representing political opposition groups. In ethnic states, ethnocentric nationalism forms a boundary of tolerable political discourse; questioning the titular ethnic majority’s ownership of the state is seen as illegitimate (Lustick, 1993, pp. 439–451).

Zionism is deeply hegemonic in Israel (Del Sarto, 2017). Parties that reject Zionism are technically ineligible to participate in general elections (although, in practice, non- and anti-Zionist Palestinian representatives have been elected to Knesset; Masri, 2018). Indeed, Israel’s “mono-ethnic”, exclusivist, historically settler-colonial characteristics are well understood (Aktürk, 2012; Degani, 2017; Peleg, 2007; Shafir, 2017; Yiftachel, 2006). In 2018, Israel’s parliament – the Knesset – passed the “Nation-State law”, a basic (constitutional) law which demoted the status of Arabic from an official language, specified Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, and denied the right to self-determination for all but the dominant Jewish majority (Ben-Youssef & Samaan Tamari, 2018). Furthermore, a large majority of Jewish Israelis self-identify as Zionists (Israel’s Religiously Divided Society, 2016). Facing an entrenched, hegemonic ethnic majority, would it not be in the ethnic Palestinian minority’s best interest to mount a unified, counter-hegemonic front? Assuming most people prefer not to be discriminated against on grounds of their ethnonational identity (Azar, 1990), it stands to reason that ethnic groups should seek to reverse their systemic discrimination in ethnic states by waging counter-hegemonic struggles in the civic and political spheres (*a war of position*, in the Gramscian lexicon; Lustick, 1993, p. 122; Rouhana & Ghanem, 1998). Assuming ethnic minorities do not consent to their second-class citizen status in ethnic states, their politics are likely to turn toward

counter-hegemony. Ethnopolitical minority movements that advocate a civic ‘state-of-all-citizens’, greater political inclusion or greater autonomy from the ethnic state (territorial or otherwise) necessarily fall outside the boundaries of legitimate political discourse in these settings. Whether these structural adversarial dynamics result in increased organizational cohesion among ethnopolitical minority movements – and why, so often, they do not – are the central questions guiding this multifaceted research project.

1.3. Project overview, methodology and outcomes

This research project uses primarily qualitative methods, relying on data from 35 de-identified, semi-structured interviews with 36 Palestinian and Jewish politicians and activists. Interviews were mostly conducted in Arabic and Hebrew (two were conducted in English, with native speakers), with an average length of 42 minutes. Participants were asked open-ended questions about their working routine, about the obstacles they faced, and about the external actors with whom they collaborated most frequently. Appendix B includes a comprehensive list of questions. Since the interviews were semi-structured, however, I considered this list a guideline while conducting the interviews; most participants were only asked a subset of questions. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed conversations to flow in a natural manner, stepping beyond formal organizational ‘party lines’, reaching high levels of contextual nuance which would have otherwise been difficult to achieve (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002). Participants – Palestinians and Jews – were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, with the goal of maximizing diversity in gender, religiosity and political-ideological affiliation (Guest et al., 2013, pp. 48–53; Lynch, 2013). They included 25 men and 11 women, five serving Members of Knesset (MKs), 24 employees and directors of advocacy organizations, six

grassroots activists, and one mayor (see Appendix C for a full list of interviews). The initial 11 interviews were conducted in person, in Israel, between July and August 2017. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the subsequent 11 interviews were conducted remotely, between October 2021 and November 2022. The remaining 13 interviews were conducted in person, in January 2023. I personally transcribed, de-identified and translated the interviews from Arabic or Hebrew to English. Additional, relevant data (for example, background information regarding other organizations mentioned by the participant) were gathered from organizations' own printed and on-line publications, and from media sources. Interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying recurring topics after reading each transcript multiple times (see Appendix D for the full list of codes used in data analysis; Guest et al., 2012). The data was coded, organized and analyzed using Obsidian, a data management package and markdown editor capable of cataloging, tagging and linking related interviews, and of generating social network diagrams based on these data. The open-source "Gephi" software package was also used to generate social network diagrams, which were included in this project's third article.

This project's first article, entitled "The two-pronged Palestinian response to exclusion within Israel", lays the foundations of my overarching theory of cohesion and fragmentation. It argues that declining political opportunities and mounting threats led the Palestinian leadership to pursue unity as a strategic choice in 2015. Crossing a threshold, however, the perception of further diminishing opportunities elicited divergent strategic responses between a group that I label "hegemonic-accommodationist", spearheaded by Mansour Abbas' United Arab List, and a group that I label "hegemonic-rejectionist," representing the rest of the Palestinian political leadership. Overall, it shows that unity and disunity within ethnopolitical movements are linked

to leaders' perception of opportunity (and the lack thereof). It suggests that minority ethnopolitical movements in ethnic states are most likely to fragment when the political environment is either exceptionally open or closed, and most likely to cohere when the environment is neither very open nor very closed. Ideological and strategic differences serve as intermediary variables: political actors face incentives to reconsider their broad strategies in extraordinarily challenging, closed political environments (causing fragmentation), set aside internal strategic and ideological differences in moderately challenging environments (leading to increased unity), and differentiate along ideological lines in exceptionally open political environments (causing fragmentation). It was published in the journal *Palestine/Israel Review* in August 2024 (Abu Rass, 2024).

To supplement the primary, diachronic analysis of the Palestinian case, this project's second article, entitled "Ethnic and lateral underbidding: Evidence from Israel and Turkey", tests the theory against an additional case – the Kurdish minority in Turkey – using Mill's Method of Difference (Lijphart, 1971). This article applies insights from recent studies within the field of ethnic politics, which specify alternatives to the *outbidding* model of intra-ethnic competition. These alternatives, including *ethnic* and *lateral underbidding*, are illustrated using evidence from among the Palestinian and Kurdish leaderships in Israel and Turkey (respectively). While elites chose to moderate their positions in both cases, even when facing internal competition (rather than outbidding one another), only Kurdish elites successfully bid laterally, attracting support from among members of the Turkish majority. This difference is explained by reference to historical differences in the permeability of ethnic hegemonic boundaries – the extent and method in which ethnic hierarchies are institutionalized – in each case. Overall, this article lends

credence to the idea that exceptionally closed political environments can cause organizational fragmentation by amplifying strategic differences among allies (as in the Palestinian case). It also shows that the existence of cross-cutting identities (and, more broadly, low levels of ethnic segmentation in the electoral market) provides incentives for inter-ethnic collaboration, encouraging political cohesion.

The last article, entitled “Israel’s counter-hegemonic social movement industries”, argues that ethnic minorities’ civil society organizations in ethnic states ought to be conceptualized as movements due to their counter-hegemonic nature. While some classify Palestinian organizations within Israel as part of an ethnocentric civic sphere, others emphasize their emancipatory and liberal goal. Both approaches emphasize Palestinian organizations’ distinctiveness. This article challenges that assumption, arguing that Palestinian organizations within Israel are part of a broader network of Jewish and Palestinian counter-hegemonic organizations, forming a social movement that struggles against the state’s ethnic-hierarchical nature. This approach reconciles some past scholarly differences and, more broadly, bridges theoretical gaps between the ethnic politics, social movements, and civil society literatures.

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Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1. Introduction: ethnic minority leaderships as social movements

Since this project seeks to uncover the processes driving sociopolitical outcomes (political-organizational cohesion and fragmentation) among minority leaderships, theoretical guidance was sought at the intersection of sociology and political studies. This project takes an inclusive approach to the study of ethnic leadership, incorporating a variety of different actors into the frame of analysis. Traditionally, scholars operating within ethnic politics and conflict studies tended to treat ethnic groups as relatively stable, unchanging, singular entities (even when ethnicity was viewed as socially constructed; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Horowitz, 1985; Kaufmann, 1998), although more recently, scholars have undertaken a research agenda aimed at disaggregating them into their constituent actors (Bakke et al., 2012; Brubaker, 2004; Pearlman & Cunningham, 2012). A following approach aggregates minority political parties and organizations in an inclusive and holistic fashion into *ethnopolitical movements* – social movements in which “ethnicity serves as the basis for collective political action” (Seymour et al., 2016, p. 4). Some of these scholars have focused their efforts on these ethnopolitical movements’ internal organizational dynamics, specifically (Asal et al., 2012; Seymour et al., 2016; Shoughry, 2012). Asal et al., for example, situate their study “at the intersection of organizational theory and behavior literature and the research on social movement organizations (SMOs) and contentious politics” (2012, p. 96). They argue that “ethnopolitical organizations ... are bonded by a shared ethnic identity and ideological consensus” (p. 96). Similarly, Van Cott synthesizes the ethnic politics and social movements literatures, emphasizing the roles ethnic movements played bolstering ethnic parties in Latin America (2005, pp. 22–48). Others use the social movements framework to explore ethnic protests and self-determination campaigns

(Cunningham, 2014; Cunningham et al., 2012; Seymour et al., 2016). While some scholars examined the Middle East and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT; the West Bank and Gaza Strip) through the social movements prism (Pearlman, 2012), only a few have used it to analyze Israel's Palestinian citizens, specifically (Sa'di, 2016; Shoughry, 2012).

In the following, I begin by outlining major traditions within social movement studies, which was chosen as a primary analytical lens due to its focus on sustained political campaigns, movements' internal organizational dynamics, and its actor-agnosticism (its capacity to incorporate a wide range of organizations into the frame of analysis, including parties, civil society, and grassroots organizations). Section 3 of this literature review outlines the ways scholars conceived of, and measured, organizational cohesion within social movements. This is followed by an extensive review of the literature on the causes of organizational cohesion and fragmentation in section 4, which is subdivided into intrinsic independent variables (emanating from within movements and movement organizations) and extrinsic ones (emanating from the external political environment), for the sake of organizational clarity. Lastly, I review the literature on the Palestinian minority within Israel, focusing on its early history (which is not covered extensively in this project's constituent articles), as well as its ideological and political-organizational development since the state's establishment.

2.2. Social movements and opportunity structures

There is no single, agreed-upon definition of social movements. Scholars have historically emphasized movements' rational (J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977), networked (Diani, 2003), structurally constrained (Tarrow, 1998), and socially constructed dimensions (Benford & Snow,

2000). Despite this wide spectrum of interpretations, scholars have increasingly agreed on a core set of characteristics, reaching some consensus in recent years. According to one authoritative formulation, movements “are collective actions through which aggrieved collectivities give voice publicly to various grievances and press relevant authorities to attend to the associated claims and/or demands” (Snow, 2013). Furthermore, scholars agree that: (1) movements are change-oriented; they either promote or oppose change, (2) by extension, movements either oppose or defend existing institutional structures or systems of authority, (3) they are collective, collaborative endeavors (individual actors cannot form social movements alone), and (4) they have “staying power”; they are not temporary fads (Snow, 2013). Additionally, most scholars agree that movements must use unconventional or contentious means – demonstrations, petitions, sit ins, etc. – to *some* extent. At the same time, some scholars agree that movements can make extensive use of routine and formal means; the use of contentious politics, alone, does not define movements (Gamson, 1975; Zald & Ash, 1966). These scholars view bureaucratization, institutionalization and professionalization as means of bolstering movements’ political capacities. According to this strand of the literature, bureaucratized, professional movement organizations can be integrated into movements alongside other, less formal, more radical organizations, playing a variety of vital roles (Staggenborg, 1988).

A central question within the study of social movements concerns their emergence. How can we explain the formation, maintenance, growth and decline of social movements? When and how do individuals and organizations come together to form sustained movements? Early theories of collective action provided social-psychological, grievance-based explanations (Gurr, 1970; Smelser, 1962; Turner & Killian, 1957). While these theories are not identical, they offer a

consistent causal mechanism to explain mass popular mobilization, broadly: the spread of grievances in society motivates people to act collectively, ultimately giving rise to social movements (McAdam, 1982, pp. 6–7). In the 1970s, however, scholars began to note the empirical shortcomings of this model, finding no correlation between the spread of grievances in society and the level of protest; that grievances, alone, are an insufficient cause for mass mobilization (McAdam, 2003; J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Skocpol, 1979). In response, a new generation of social movement scholars developed two competing approaches – the “resource mobilization” and, later, “political opportunity” (also known as “political process”) approaches – to explain movements’ emergence and evolution (Opp, 2009, p. 161).

The resource mobilization approach is closely related to (but not perfectly nestled within), the rationalist tradition in the social sciences. It sees movement actors – organizations and individuals – as rational, unitary, instrumental actors whose primary purpose is the mobilization of resources in pursuit of movement goals (Opp, 2009, pp. 127–160). In a foundational study for the resource mobilization approach, Jenkins and Perrow explain their objection to grievance-based explanations, and their proposed alternative: “We do not deny the existence of discontent but we question the usefulness of discontent formulations in accounting for either the emergence of insurgent organization or the level of participation by the social base. What increases, giving rise to insurgency, is the amount of social resources available to unorganized but aggrieved groups, making it possible to launch an organized demand for change” (1977, p. 250). Due to the emphasis on power disparities, manifested in material and human resource availability, resource mobilization theorists tend to focus on political elites rather than ordinary participants in their explanations, operating under the assumption that power

is usually concentrated in the hands of a select group of leaders (McAdam, 1982, pp. 25–29). Thus, social movements are rare because disadvantaged groups rarely possess the necessary material and human resources to mount successful political campaigns. Movement organizations are instrumental, then, as a means for mobilizing necessary resources – including allies and sponsors – to help overcome power disparities in pursuit of movement goals (McAdam, 1982, pp. 20–22). The working hypothesis for this research project – that exclusion ought lead to cohesion among ethnopolitical minority movement organizations, since this would help them overcome power disparities in ethnic states – flows from similar assumptions.

Resource mobilization scholars introduced the concept of social movement organizations (SMOs). These have since become central units of analysis in the field of social movement studies, broadly. According to McCarthy and Zald’s classical definition, an SMO is “a complex, or formal organization which identifies its preferences with a social movement or a counter-movement and attempts to implement those goals” (1977, p. 1218). This definition, which focuses on political goals, encapsulates many different types of organization, including civil society, advocacy, and grassroots organizations. SMOs make demands and mobilize resources in collaboration with others in order to achieve movement goals. Thus, in contrast with other traditions in political science, which emphasize the distinction between parties, formal (registered) civic associations and grassroots organizations, the social movements tradition defines movement organizations by reference to shared identities and goals, as well as sustained and institutionalized cooperation (Bakke et al., 2012). Many scholars emphasize the role played by inter-organizational networks in the formation and maintenance of movements. Indeed, as della Porta and Diani argue, social movements are characterized by “dense interorganizational

networks and collective identities that transcend the boundaries of any specific organization and encompass much broader collectivities” (della Porta & Diani, 2011, p. 69).

Another early approach, which is associated with the structuralist tradition in the social sciences, is political opportunity theory (also known as the political process approach). Unlike the resource mobilization approach, which assumes bounded rationality and focuses on the relative distribution of resources between political actors, this approach emphasizes structural variables – “opportunity structures” – to explain the development of social movements (McAdam, 1996a; Opp, 2009, pp. 161–203). Although this term can be quite vague, as some scholars warn (Gamson & Meyer, 1996; McAdam, 1996a), it has also proven useful when used carefully and precisely. According to McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly:

“Political opportunity structures are features of regimes that affect the likely outcomes of actors’ possible claims. A largely consensual list of those features would have to include:

- a. the multiplicity of independent centers of power within the regime
- b. the regime’s openness to new actors
- c. instability of current political alignments
- d. availability of influential allies or supporters for challengers
- e. the extent to which the regime represses or facilitates collective claim making
- f. decisive changes in items a to e” (McAdam et al., 2009, p. 263).

Political opportunity theorists tend to emphasize changes in these dimensions of political opportunity, rather than their absolute value. Incorporating ideas from the cultural turn in the

social sciences, some now emphasize challengers' *perceptions* of change rather than absolute changes in the structure of political opportunity (Goldstone & Tilly, 2001, p. 182; McAdam et al., 2001). Following these conventions, this project uses leaders' perceptions of change in political opportunity structures, in addition to this variable's absolute values, to explain organizational changes within ethno-political movements. Some scholars argue for a direct, positive, linear relationship between expanding political opportunity structures and collective action (Opp, 2009, pp. 190–192), while others – like Peter K. Eisinger, who is one of the founders of this approach – argue for a curvilinear relationship between the two (Eisinger, 1973). As I further elaborate in this project's first article (p. 85) and in its conclusion (p. 221), my findings support and expand upon Eisinger's; organizational cohesion has a curvilinear, n-shaped relationship with leaders' perceptions of political opportunity (environments which are perceived as exceptionally open *or* closed are associated with fragmentation; moderately challenging environments are more likely to produce cohesive mobilization).

Following, interrelated approaches – namely, the “collective identity” and “framing” approaches – rose in prominence since the cultural turn in the social sciences, over the last four decades (Benford & Snow, 2000; van Stekelenburg, 2013). These approaches analyze actors, their immediate cultural surrounding, their subjective interpretations of the political environment and their construction of meaning to explain social movement phenomena (McAdam et al., 2009). Collective identity scholars contributed to the field by highlighting the importance of a social identity – a ‘we-ness’; an ‘us vs. them’ – to social movement formation and maintenance. Framing scholars tend to explain individual participation in social movements; they emphasize “collective action frames”, which are the political narratives movement participants use to attract

new supporters (Aslanidis, 2018; Benford & Snow, 2000). Theoretically, these approaches reject the rationalistic assumptions of the two earlier, resource mobilization and political opportunity approaches, adopting a social-constructivist orientation while relying on interpretivist methodologies (Opp, 2009, p. 204). Despite these theoretical and methodological differences, many collective identity and framing scholars elaborate upon rather than completely discard earlier models, by incorporating collective identity formation and framing processes into the frame of analysis (Opp, 2009, pp. 204–303). Likewise, rather than rejecting the insights brought about by the cultural turn, prominent political opportunity scholars incorporated them into their own theories (McAdam, 1996b, pp. 340–345; McAdam et al., 2001, 2009).

This project benefits from a theoretically eclectic approach to social movements, incorporating elements from each of these traditions. The resource mobilization approach is well-suited for the study of formal organizations and long-term, sustained interactions, making it a useful framework for the Palestinian movement within Israel, in which civic associations play a prominent role. At the same time, to account for protest events, episodes of contention, and the effect of structural variables – including political exclusion, opportunities and threats – this project benefits from incorporating elements of political opportunity theory. Indeed, this theory is well-represented in the literature on movement cohesion: as explored later in this literature review, the relationship between opportunity structures and movement cohesion is contentious. Lastly, to account for changes in public support and internal cultural movement processes, elements of the identity and framing approaches were incorporated into each article’s frame of analysis. These approaches can be – and have been – used in a complementary manner; while they are associated with different theoretical traditions in the social sciences, they are not

necessarily incompatible. Indeed, some of the reviewed studies – especially the ones written in the last three decades – explicitly call for such a synthesis (della Porta & Diani, 2006; McAdam et al., 1996; Opp, 2009). And though the existing literature on the causes of organizational fragmentation and cohesion is still sparse, existing studies have taken a similarly synthetic, theoretically eclectic approach (Balser, 1997; Kretschmer, 2013; Peters, 2018; Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010c).

2.3. Conceptualizing organizational cohesion

Scholars offer several ways to measure organizational cohesion within social and ethno-political movements, including (1) noting changes in the overall number of movement organizations (Cunningham, 2011; Cunningham et al., 2012; Lawrence, 2010), (2) counting instances of organizational splitting (Asal et al., 2012; Balser, 1997), (3) counting instances of armed conflict between factions (McLauchlin & Pearlman, 2012), and by (4) counting instances of coalition building and breakup (Chávez, 2011; McCammon & Campbell, 2002; Meyer & Corrigan-Brown, 2005). Although these simple, one-dimensional approaches to measurement are suitable for some studies, like large-n analyses, they miss out on important dimensions of political-organizational cohesion and fragmentation. They say little, for example, about the quality of relations between different organizations, or the ways in which broad patterns of linkage and separation evolve over time. Furthermore, as Bakke, Cunningham and Seymour argue, these conceptions of cohesion omit theoretically significant antecedent variables that can ameliorate or exacerbate inter-organizational conflict, like the institutionalization of cooperation between organizations (2012). Thus, while an increase in the number of movement organizations is a necessary precondition for fragmentation, it is ultimately insufficient: movements can have large

or growing numbers of organizations, but still be cohesive if they maintain centralized, coordinated decision-making structures. And while individual instances of coalition breakup can serve as indicators for movement fragmentation, they might obscure durable, long-term cohesion facilitated by existing movement institutions.

To reveal broad patterns of cohesion and fragmentation without overlooking the micro-level processes that comprise them, this study uses Bakke, Cunningham and Seymour's multidimensional definition, which incorporates several preceding approaches. Bakke et al. focus on "intra-movement dynamics, or more precisely, the interaction of organizations mobilized around a collective identity in pursuit of particular interests related to this identity in a fundamental way" (Bakke et al., 2012, p. 267). They consider cohesion and fragmentation "as a scale ranging from unified to fragmented, and on different dimensions" (p. 268), including: (1) the overall number of movement organizations, (2) the presence and strength of coordinating institutions, and (3) the degree to which power is distributed between movement organizations (Figure 1). The first dimension is measured by counting the number of organizations "that recognize no higher command authority, have their own leadership and organizational structure (including resources and memberships), and actively make demands related to the group's collective aims or status" (p. 268). The second dimension measures the "absence, weakness, or strength" of movement institutions – both formal and informal – that coordinate joint political action (p. 269). The third dimension measures power distribution between movement organizations: a movement consisting of few powerful and many weak organizations is less fragmented than a movement consisting of several, equally powerful organizations (Bakke et al., 2012, p. 271).

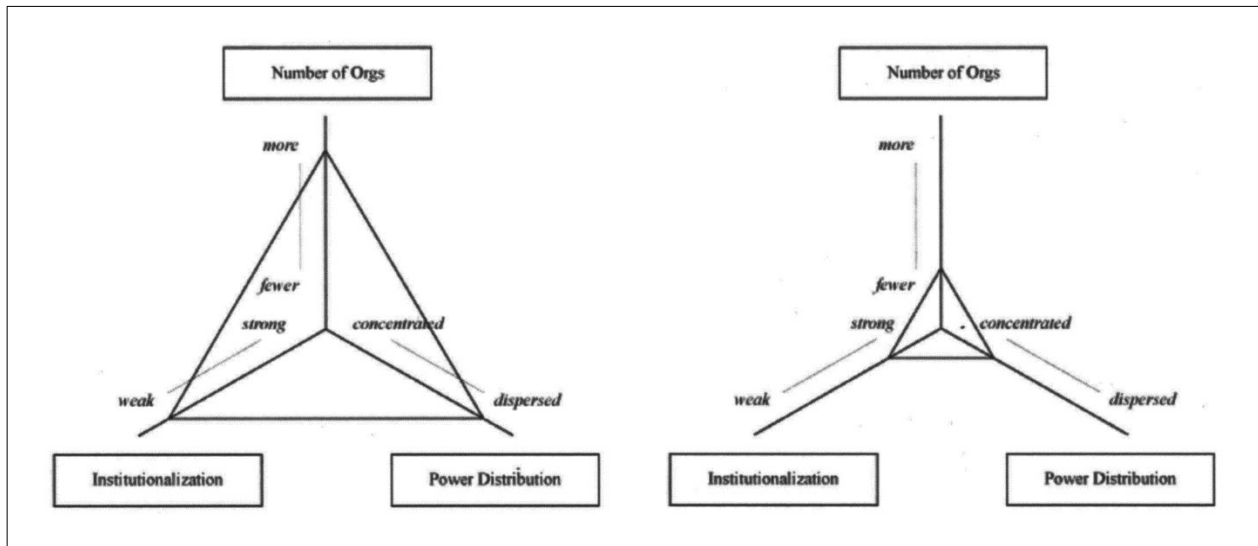


Figure 2.1: Extreme fragmentation and cohesion on three dimensions (Bakke et al., 2012, p. 273)

The second and third dimensions are qualitative. Their values depend, to an extent, on one's definition of institutional strength and inter-organizational power distribution. For example, drawing a boundary around formal institutions or chooses to include informal coordinative institutions will impact the value of this dimension. The authors are aware of this and offer some guidelines for measurement: they suggest scholars limit their scopes to formal institutions (as informal ones can be too hard to measure), focusing on institutional breadth ("how encompassing they are in their membership") and depth ("how constraining they are for member organizations"; Bakke et al., 2012, p. 269). For power distribution, they urge researches to include both material and non-material factors ("like ideology, political institutions, culture, legitimacy, and links to local communities"); since these can prove difficult to measure, they suggest scholars "use outcomes to infer power distributions *ex post*, [since] the results of elections, splits, battles, bargaining, and other turning points can all reveal information about

relative power and perceptions of power” (p. 271). In addition to these guidelines, the authors provide an extensive discussion of possible pitfalls in measuring each dimension, acknowledging antecedent variables that may impact these dimensions a-priori, as well as the likely consequences of operationalizing them one way or another. Ultimately, they argue that the second and third dimensions should be measured in accordance with prevailing conventions in the research project’s appropriate field. Power distribution, for example, may be measured by international relations scholars through military and economic strength, by conflict scholars through the level of involvement in intra-ethnic armed violence, and by social movement scholars through available material resources, social support, and access to policy makers (Bakke et al., 2012, p. 271). Since this project is situated at the intersection of social movement studies and ethnic politics, it follows these fields’ conventions when measuring these dimensions: values for inter-organizational power distribution was obtained by combining common measures like the relative availability of material resources, social and electoral support, access to policy makers and executive positions (Chandra, 2005; McAdam, 1982; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Movement institutionalization was measured by identifying formal and informal institutions (organizations, coalitions, conventions and agreements) that facilitate coordination between organizations, and by measuring their breadth (of membership) and depth (of cooperation; Aveni, 1978; McAdam, 1982).

2.4. Explaining political-organizational cohesion and fragmentation

The majority of studies that examine organizational cohesion consider it the independent, rather than the dependent, variable. Scholars have chiefly been interested in the *effects* of cohesion and fragmentation on a variety of phenomena, including the attainment of movement goals (Cable &

Shriver, 2010; Cunningham, 2011; Pearlman, 2009), the prevalence of violent or nonviolent tactics within movements (Bloom, 2004; Cunningham et al., 2012; Pearlman, 2011), and the distribution of funding between movement organizations (Haines, 1984). And yet, as Seymour, Bakke & Cunningham argue, the *causes* of organizational fragmentation among ethnopolitical movements are poorly understood, “despite the centrality of fragmentation as an explanatory factor in recent research” (2016, p. 3). A sizable minority of studies consider the degree of fragmentation and cohesion as the dependent variable. I will focus on these studies in this section. This literature is highly variable in its findings, units of analysis, methodologies, and theoretical orientations. Indeed, ascertaining the causes of social movement cohesion and fragmentation is an active area of research. Several studies take social and ethnopolitical movements as their units of analysis, incorporating different types of political actors, including CSOs, grassroots organizations, political parties, and individual political elites. Others analyze factionalism within individual movement organizations, or coalition building among select groups of organizations. Overall, this literature offers a variety of explanations for fragmentation and cohesion; it does not favor a single independent variable, type of variable, or a particular theoretical orientation. Structural, rationalistic, and cultural variables have all been offered to explain fragmentation and cohesion within movements and organizations, roughly corresponding to the political opportunity, resource mobilization, and framing & identity approaches. Lastly, scholars disagree on the impact of certain variables – including organizational inclusivity, leadership centralization, political opportunities and threats – on movement cohesion, reaching contradictory conclusions. Indeed, the literature on the causes of organizational fragmentation

among ethnopolitical and social movements is varied and variable – at times, contentious. One of this project’s main aims is to contribute to this debate.

The literature on the sources of organizational cohesion and fragmentation can be divided along several lines. One salient differentiation can be found between intrinsic and environmental explanations (McLauchlin & Pearlman, 2012, pp. 43–46). Some scholars emphasize intrinsic variables (originating from within movements and movement organizations), including internal ideological differences, the strictness of organizations’ membership criteria, and social differences between individual members, to explain organizational cohesion. Another group of scholars emphasizes the impact of external variables, originating from the political environment, such as repression, resource availability, conflict with out-groups. Of the reviewed studies that offer intrinsic variables to explain movement cohesion and fragmentation, some adopt a resource mobilization perspective, often rooted in rational choice, focusing on diverging tactical preferences within political organizations. Others offer sociocultural explanations, including ideological, social and demographic differences between individual social movement participants. Others yet find that environmental and structural variables trigger internal processes that act as intervening variables.

a. Intrinsic variables

An early debate concerns the effect of organizational membership criteria on organizational cohesion. Zald & Ash argue that political organizations with more exclusive membership criteria are more likely to experience fragmentation: while inclusive organizations “require minimum levels of initial commitment” from new recruits, exclusive organizations are more “likely to hold

the new recruit in a long ‘novitiate’ period, to require the recruit to subject himself to organization discipline and orders” (1966, pp. 330–331). This creates tension between junior and senior members, leading organizations to expend resources on “organizational maintenance” instead of their goals, ultimately leading to schism. Contrarily, William Gamson argues that organizations’ membership criteria have little to no bearing on their cohesiveness (1975, pp. 105–106). Gamson suggests, instead, that centralized, bureaucratic organizations are more likely to avoid fragmentation – but only marginally so (1975, p. 108). Though Gamson’s study is based on a sample of 53 political groups, only five groups were categorized as exclusive, and so, this finding should be taken with a grain of salt. Similarly, conflict scholars Victor Asal, Mitchell Brown and Angela Dalton found that competitive internal leadership structures lead to schism within ethnopolitical movements (Asal et al., 2012). On the other hand, in a study of the protest movement against nuclear power in the United States, Steven Barkan found that the movement’s decentralized power structure, as well its use of consensual, democratic decision-making processes, led to increased movement cohesion (1979, pp. 28–29). These studies are some of the few in the reviewed literature that use internal *structural* variables to explain cohesion and fragmentation. Their findings are contradictory.

Some scholars who offer internal variables can be associated with the identity and framing approaches to social movement studies. Indeed, within-movement disagreement over the framing of grievances and goals, as well as differing perceptions of external threats and opportunities, were identified by several scholars as sources of organizational fragmentation. In *Cohesion and Fragmentation in Social Movements*, Ina Peters identifies six internal and three environmental variables to explain movement cohesion and fragmentation (2018, pp. 203–236).

Internally, Peters finds divergences in collective action frames – leading, in turn, to diverging goals and tactical preferences – as the primary variable responsible for organizational fragmentation (p. 233). Along a similar vein, Steven Barkan argues that differing perceptions of external opportunity and threat between movement organizations can drive them apart (Barkan, 1986). Barkan shows that hostility between SMOs can be exacerbated by moderates’ fears that radical organizations would alienate potential external allies, in turn causing organizational fragmentation within movements. Similarly, Sherry Cable and Thomas E. Shriver show how internal disagreements over framing led to fragmentation in the case of the Gulf War Illness Movement (Cable & Shriver, 2010). Although their overall argument concerns the *effects* of fragmentation (reducing the likelihood of accomplishing movement goals), they also show how an internal lack of consensus between movement organizations resulted in schism and ineffectiveness. Taken together, these studies show that divergences in strategic and tactical preferences can drive organizational fragmentation.

According to scholars of ethnic politics, *outbidding* can drive organizational fragmentation among ethno-political movements (Bloom, 2004). Originally formulated by Rabushka & Shepsle (1972) and later elaborated by Horowitz (1985), the ethnic outbidding model of intra-ethnic competition predicts that factions will turn toward increasingly extreme positions to secure the support of their ethnic communities. This is linked to incentive structures in competitive political environments (for example, in majoritarian, multi-party democracies). In addition to driving leaders to adopt more extreme ideological positions in the formal, electoral arena, outbidding may also drive the adoption of more radical, violent strategies (Horowitz, 1985, pp. 358–359; Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972, p. 83). The resulting range of tactical

preferences may produce intra-ethnic organizational fragmentation. Oded Haklai shows how expanding opportunity structures – particularly, lowered barriers toward participation in formal politics – can facilitate ethnic party fragmentation and enable an outbidding dynamic between them (Haklai, 2011, pp. 146–172). Sherrill Stroschein associates demographic segregation with outbidding and, ultimately, organizational fragmentation (Stroschein, 2011). Over the last two decades, scholars have specified a variety of alternatives to the outbidding model of intra-ethnic competition (Chandra, 2005; Coakley, 2008; Sanjaume-Calvet & Riera-Gil, 2022; Stewart & McGauvran, 2020; Zuber, 2013). This project’s second article (p. 134) explores these alternatives in depth, connecting two of them (ethnic and lateral bidding dynamics) to changing political opportunity structures in ethnic states, using evidence from Israel and Turkey.

Other scholars focus on social and demographic differences between activists to explain organizational fragmentation. John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, for example, argue that “[t]he more unlike one another workers are, the less likely there is to be organizational unity, and the more likely it is that separate clique structures will form” (J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977, pp. 1231–1232). They classify different kinds of stakeholders within social movements, including “beneficiary constituents” – activists who would directly benefit from the attainment of movement goals (for example, Palestinian citizens of Israel working for civil society organizations [CSOs] that advocate funding Palestinian localities); and “conscience constituents” – activists who would not directly benefit from the attainment of movement goals (for example, Jewish citizens of Israel working for the same CSO (pp. 1221–1222)). They argue that SMOs with both beneficiary and conscience constituents are more likely to experience internal tension and, potentially, fragmentation (1231–1232). Dora C. Lau and J. Keith Murnighan also

emphasize socio-demographic differences, arguing that inter-organizational conflict tends to arise along social “faultlines”, which are internal organizational social cleavages (for example, along lines of gender, ethnicity, and faith; Lau & Murnighan, 1998). Identically, in a comparative analysis of majority involvement in minority movements, Gary T. Marx and Michael Useem argue that conflict within such movements tends to arise along social faultlines, between members of dominant and minority groups (between “beneficiary” and “conscience” constituents, to use McCarthy & Zald’s formulation; Marx & Useem, 1971). Other studies reach similar conclusions: social and demographic homogeneity makes SMOs more resilient to break-up and schism (Curtis & Zurcher, 1973).

b. Environmental variables: opportunities and threats

Scholars offer a variety of environmental explanations for organizational cohesion and fragmentation. Within social movement studies, most can be associated with the resource mobilization and political opportunity approaches. Several dimensions of political opportunity have been offered as explanatory variables for movement cohesion and/or fragmentation, but authors’ findings are mixed or even contradictory. Most adopt a bounded rationality approach, offering a mixture of strategic and structural explanations, viewing movement organizations and activists as rational, unitary actors who operate under structural constraints (government repression, economic constraints, inter-institutional competition, etc.). Some researchers that offered environmental variables incorporated internal intermediate variables in their explanations, offering external explanations for internal processes which, in turn, cause movements to fragment or cohere. This research project identified a similar causal mechanism –

that leaders' perceptions of changing political opportunities triggered strategic recalibrations and, ultimately, organizational realignment.

Surprisingly few scholars link *favorable* environmental conditions with movement cohesion in a definitive and linear manner. Linda Brewster Stearns and Paul D. Almeida argue that coalitions between movement organizations were more likely to form under open opportunity structures – specifically, when individuals within those organizations had preexisting ties with influential political elites (2004). Similarly, Nancy Douglas Joyner argues that favorable environmental conditions – including abundant financial and human resources – are “critical” to coalition building, since coordination between different movement organizations is inherently costly (Joyner, 1982). Regarding unfavorable environmental conditions, including political threats, the scholarship is bifurcated. As McLauchlin & Pearlman argue, the literature has two, competing “conventional wisdoms”, representing two, subsequent “generations” of scholarship (regarding the impact of repression on movement cohesion, specifically): “On one hand, [a first generation of scholars, most active in the ‘50s, argues] that conflict with an out-group is the surest path to unity in an in-group. On the other hand, [the second generation, most active in the ‘60s and ‘70s, argues that] repression exaggerates the gap between radicals and moderates in a movement [causing fragmentation]” (2012, p. 41). Seeking to complicate this dichotomous view and to develop a third generation of scholarship, McLauchlin & Pearlman argue for an “institutional equilibrium approach” to the effect of repression on movement cohesion (2012, p. 43). “According to this view”, they argue, “state repression can increase either cooperation or conflict in a movement, depending on members’ satisfaction with the movement's preexisting

institutional arrangement. ... The effect of repression on movement unity is contingent on the preexisting consensus on a movement's institutional equilibrium” (p. 43).

Investigating an environmental organization in the Czech Republic, Thomas E. Shriver and Chris Messer found that its eventual splintering could “be linked to shifting political opportunities and growing threats from external forces, including state-induced economic problems and state harassment and public vilification” (2009, p. 168). Specifically, they argue that shrinking political opportunity structures can lead activists to develop competing response strategies, amplifying existing variations in tactical preferences within the movement. Their findings provide a specific pathway toward movement failure under increasingly unfavorable environmental conditions – namely, through the exacerbation of internal tactical and ideological cleavages, resulting in organizational fragmentation and, ultimately, ineffectiveness. As shown in the remainder of this sub-section, several authors – even those that reach the opposite conclusion – identify an identical pathway toward cohesion and fragmentation, utilizing internal divergences in tactical preferences as an intermediate variable; shifts in environmental conditions – favorable or unfavorable – impact movement cohesion by compelling activists to reconsider their goals and strategies, and this has been shown to lead to increased cohesion or fragmentation.

On the other side of the spectrum, a number of authors argue that closed and shrinking opportunity structures can foster movement cohesion. Some of them operationalize cohesion through coalition building, taking coalition formation and breakup as the dependent variable. In a study of coalition formation between different suffrage and temperance organizations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Holly McCammon and Karen Campbell reach the opposite conclusion to Shriver and Messer, arguing that “circumstances that threatened the goals of these

organizations led to coalitions, while political opportunities did not produce coalition work” (2002, p. 231). They further argue that favorable political environments validate movement actors’ strategic choices, making them less likely to seek new strategies, including coalition building (McCammon & Campbell, 2002, p. 232). Conversely, they argue that “threats to movement goals” facilitate coalition building by compelling movement actors to seek new strategies. This serves as an example of the recurring causal chain mentioned above: both McCammon & Campbell and Shriver & Messer’s studies identify tactical reconsiderations as the most immediate effect of shrinking opportunity structures; both studies utilize the same intermediate variable, with the same values (tactical reconsiderations; positive), but their conclusions are contradictory. As discussed in this project’s concluding chapter (p. 221), my results confirm this causal pathway (although my own findings suggest a curvilinear rather than direct relationship between environmental conditions and organizational fragmentation, mediated by strategic recalibrations).

Along similar lines, David S. Meyer and Catherine Corrigan-Brown associate coalition building with closed opportunity structures, and coalition breakdown with open opportunity structures (2005). They argue that coalition building requires individual movement organizations to make ideological compromises, which are costly. Because of this associated cost, organizations are less likely to join coalitions under favorable environmental conditions, and more likely to join when they must; when facing environmental threats (Meyer & Corrigan-Brown, 2005, pp. 341–342). By the same token, Dina G. Okamoto correlates between political threats – namely, rising violence against Asian Americans in the U.S – with the formation of cross-ethnic coalitions (2010). Ellen Reese, Christine Petit, and David S. Meyer similarly

associate threats – in this case, the US’ decision to invade Iraq – with coalition formation (Reese et al., 2010). “By facing a common antagonist and an imminent threat”, they argue, “new coalitions among ostensibly distinct movements formed and preexisting alliances deepened” (2010, p. 285).

In a meta-analysis of the literature on coalition formation, Holly McCammon and Nella Van Dyke weigh the relative importance of the main variables scholars used to explain movement cohesion and fragmentation, and conclude that, “contrary to the emphasis in the broader social movement literature, political threats appear to be more important to coalition formation than are political opportunities” (Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010b, xxiii). Moreover:

“Our results show that threats ... may in some cases be a sufficient condition for coalition formation. When movement actors believe their interests are in peril, they may overlook competition for scarce resources or even differences in beliefs, or they may not need preexisting social ties with another group to come together in a coalition. Our finding that either ideological alignment or a political threat may be a sufficient condition for the mobilization of a social movement coalition conveys the greater importance of these two causal factors compared to other causal elements in the study of coalition formation. Although both often occur in tandem with other influential factors, at other times, they are the sole factor inspiring collaboration” (Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010a, p. 310).

Other authors found curvilinear and mixed relationships between political opportunities, threats, and organizational cohesion. Suzanne Staggenborg, for example, argues that SMOs are most likely to form coalitions “under conditions of exceptional opportunity *or* threat” (emphasis added; Staggenborg, 1986, p. 374). Coalitions are formed, Staggenborg argues, “(1) when

individual organizations lack the resources needed to take advantage of opportunities or fend off threats, or (2) when coalition work allows movement organizations to conserve resources for tactics other than those engaged by the coalition” (Staggenborg, 1986, p. 388). In other words, coalitions are unlikely to emerge under normal circumstances, but conditions of exceptional opportunity or threat provide incentives for movement organizations to build coalitions and increase their power by pooling resources. Similarly, James DeNardo finds a curvilinear relationship between political opportunities and movement cohesion, using tactical reconsideration as an intermediate variable (the recurring causal mechanism identified earlier in this literature review): closed political opportunity structures favor ideological purists within social movements, since compromise is unlikely to bear fruit in unfavorable political environments, and open opportunity structures favor pragmatists, since flexible demands are likely to be met under favorable conditions. An intermediate degree of political opportunity causes maximum friction between purists and pragmatists, leading to organizational fragmentation (DeNardo, 1985). The results of this project point to the exact opposite mechanism: under conditions of exceptional *opportunity*, actors appear likely to fragment along *ideological* lines, while an exceptional *lack of opportunity* causes fragmentation by amplifying internal *strategic* differences; moderately challenging environments are best associated with cohesion.

Along a similar vein, Deborah B. Balsler found mixed effects for closed opportunity structures, utilizing tactical reconsiderations as an intermediate variable (1997). On the one hand, much like Shriver and Messer, Balsler argues that movement actors who face diminished “access to the political system” are more likely to experience internal conflict and schism, since this

forces them to reevaluate their strategies (1997, p. 213). “As a system changes in degree of accessibility,” Balsler argues, “particularly as it becomes more closed to challenger demands, conflict within a SMO is more likely. Tactics are reevaluated and differing opinions are likely to emerge...” (1997, pp. 213–214). Similarly, movement actors are likely to reevaluate their strategies when political opportunities diminish through the breakup of alliances with influential actors, leading to internal schism. On the other hand, Balsler also argues that the incorporation of social movements’ agendas into legislation, as well as unstable electoral alignments – both considered as openings in political opportunity structures (Tarrow, 1998, pp. 76–80) – also lead to tactical reconsiderations and, likely, increased internal animosity (McLauchlin & Pearlman, 2012).

2.5. The Palestinian minority in Israel

The histories of different Palestinian groups – with and without Israeli citizenship; within Israel, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and in the diaspora – are deeply intertwined. Accounts of Palestinian mobilization within Israel should start with this acknowledgment. Although a comprehensive overview of the literature on the Palestinian people, Palestinian nationalism, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict falls beyond the scope of this introduction, the project can nevertheless benefit from some historical context – especially up to 1948, when the history of Israel’s Palestinian citizens diverged from that of Palestinians elsewhere; a period of time which is not covered in this project’s three constitutive articles.

a. Before 1948

The Palestinian national movement and the Zionist movement shaped each other, and their histories are therefore interlinked. The first wave of Zionist colonization (also known as the First Aliya; lit. “ascension”) had reached the shores of Palestine – at the time, a predominately Arab region of the Ottoman Empire – in 1882 (Shafir, 2017). Although Jewish communities had existed in Palestine well before the first Zionists’ arrival – especially pious communities in and around the Four Holy Cities of Judaism; Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberius – they made no national claims to the land (Segev, 2001). The first Zionists, on the other hand, were secular nationalists and settlers, and they looked upon the preexisting Jewish community – the “old yishuv” or “old settlement” – with derision, viewing it as a regressive relic and an obstacle toward the establishment of a modern nation-state (Segev, 2001, pp. 15–19). Over the next three decades, Zionism acquired manifestly settler-colonial characteristics: unlike “unqualified” colonies (such as the British Raj or the Dutch East Indies), which were established with the aim of transferring wealth from colonial peripheries to metropolitan cores (a task that was historically accomplished by exploiting indigenous labor and by extracting natural resources), the goal of settler-colonial projects is the land itself; the establishment of a sovereign settler polity, distinct from the settlers’ polities of origin, and apart from the indigenous population (Veracini, 2010). In the Zionist movement’s case, these exclusivist settler-colonial features began to crystallize during the Second Aliyah, between 1904–1914 (Wolfe, 2012, pp. 140–141).

Like many (but not all) settler-colonies, the Zionist settlement project in Palestine – the “Yishuv” (lit. “settlement”) – relied on indigenous exclusion (rather than assimilation) to achieve this goal, establishing separate towns, businesses, markets, political and economic institutions for

the settler population (Degani, 2017; Shafir, 2017). The land was “redeemed” (in later stages, “liberated” from the British) and subsequently “Judaized” (Seidler, 2012; Yiftachel, 2006, p. 57). Soon after Britain’s 1918 takeover of Palestine from the Ottoman Empire, in 1921, Zionist leaders expressed a desire to purchase five million dunams (roughly 1.2 million acres) – a little over 5% of Mandatory Palestine’s total land area – within five years (Segev, 2001, pp. 273–274; Stein, 1984, p. 4). By 1926, the Jewish population grew to about 147,000, or 18% of Mandatory Palestine’s total of 762,000 people, owning about 4% of its total land area (W. Khalidi, 1987, p. 842). Although the Yishuv’s subsequent territorial growth was much slower than its leaders had initially hoped – encompassing a mere 5%–7% of Palestine’s total land area by 1947 – its holdings were of great strategic value, located in the central coastal area, the Galilee (northern Israel/Palestine) and the plains, including 25% of Palestine’s cultivable lands (W. Khalidi, 1987, p. 844; Segev, 2001, pp. 273–274). Arab tenant farmers residing on those lands were usually removed (the exact number of farmers displaced as a direct result of Zionist land purchases is hard to estimate; thousands, conservatively; Segev, 2001, p. 113–116, 274) and new Jewish settlements were established in their place. This context is not only valuable as historical context, but also because the pattern of Palestinian removal and Jewish settlement persists today, albeit through different means, in the Galilee, in the Negev (its southern desert region) and, most visibly, in the OPT (Shakir, 2021; Yiftachel & Ghanem, 2004). As Gershon Shafir argues, as a settler-colonial polity, “Israel is not different from Canada, Argentina, Brazil, the United States or South Africa. What makes Israel unique is that it is a belated settler colony which was launched in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and, even more so, that it continues

the colonization through which it was formed into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries” (Shafir, 2017, p. 339).

One of the earliest manifestations of the exclusive, settler-colonial theory of nation building that came to characterize Zionism can be found in its “conquest of labor” campaign. As Shafir (2017) shows, starting with the Second Aliyah, Zionist settlers demanded land collectivization and exclusive Jewish labor, to thwart decolonization through the sale of lands that were privately-owned by Jews. These principles were institutionalized in the charter of the Jewish National Fund (JNF); an organization that was first conceived of in the First Congress of the Zionist Organization in 1897 (but formally established later, in 1901) for the purpose of purchasing land in Palestine. “Not only did the JNF abolish private ownership of land and replace it by hereditary land leasing”, Shafir argues, “but it also simultaneously excluded non-Jews from control of land once acquired by the JNF. Land purchased by the JNF could not be resold, as it was held in trusteeship for the whole nation” (Shafir, 2017, p. 343). The struggle for Jewish labor – against the employment of Arab laborers – was championed by several early Zionist organizations in Palestine, including Hapoel Hatzair (“the young worker”), Poalei Tzion (“workers of Zion”), the Labor Battalion and others (Segev, 2019, pp. 154–178; Wolfe, 2012). This effort culminated in the establishment of the Histadrut (Hahistadrut Haklalit Shel Haovdim B’eretz Yisrael; lit. the General Organization of Workers in the Land of Israel), a powerful trade union representing Palestine’s Jewish laborers, in 1920, and Mapai (Mifleget Poalei Eretz Yisrael; lit. “the Land of Israel’s Workers’ Party”), in 1930 (Shafir, 2017; Shalev, 1992, pp. 22–44; Wolfe, 2012). The socialist Mapai was the Yishuv’s (and until 1977, Israel’s) most powerful party. Thus, contrary to Zionist mythology, which stresses the settlers’ universal socialist

aspirations, the exclusivist nature of the Yishuv's early collective and economic institutions make clear that such aspirations were always secondary to the need to serve the ethnic national interest (Sternhel, 1998).

Still, the Yishuv was not monolithic; it included fierce political rivalries – primarily (but not exclusively) between its socialist core, which came to be led by Israel's first PM, David Ben Gurion, and a sizable right-wing, economically liberal, "Revisionist" opposition, led by Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Espousing a nationalist, territorially maximalist and economically liberal vision, Jabotinsky's philosophy is perhaps best encapsulated in his 1923 essay "The Iron Wall". In it, he argues that, since "every native population in the world resists colonists", the Zionist settlers must rely on military might rather than negotiated solutions to their conflict with Palestine's indigenous Arabs, until the Arabs' final surrender (1923, p. 3). Only then, when the natives "no longer [have] any hope of getting rid of us", can a final political settlement be reached (Jabotinsky, 1923, p. 7). Though Jabotinsky's Revisionists differed from Labor in many respects, they both came to be guided by this basic, settler-colonial nation-building principle. Jabotinsky's rival, Ben Gurion, once said the following:

"Everybody sees the problem in relations between the Jews and the Arabs. But not everybody sees that there's no solution to it. There is no solution! ... The conflict between the interests of the Jews and the interests of the Arabs in Palestine cannot be resolved by sophisms. I don't know of any Arabs who would agree to Palestine being ours — even if we learn Arabic ... and I have no need to learn the Arabic language. Woe to us if we have to conduct our lives in Arabic. On the other hand, I don't see why

‘Mustafa’ should learn Hebrew. ... There’s a national question here. We want the country to be ours. The Arabs want the country to be theirs” (Segev, 2001, p. 116).

Of course, political reality is complex; while history’s broad brushstrokes – the Zionist movement’s exclusivist and settler-colonial practices – should be emphasized, it is also worth stressing the existence of alternative visions, as well as instances of inter-communal collaboration, in the pre-state period. A notable, self-proclaimed Zionist group which did not make exclusive territorial claims – advocating a binational commonwealth, instead – was Brit Shalom (“covenant of peace” Maor, 2013; Segev, 2001, pp. 408–414). Though its size and impact was always marginal, it did attract a number of high-profile supporters, including philosopher Martin Buber, sociologist Arthur Ruppin, and historian Hans Kohn. Another joint, Arab-Jewish political framework of the pre-state era was the Palestine Communist Party, which was founded in the early 1920s by Jewish settlers but grew to include a significant number of Arabs (Budeiri, 1979; Sorek, 2020). Still, it was also a marginal force, never growing into a mass-membership organization. Arab-Jewish cooperation had also extended into the civic and economic spheres: for example, in *The Lost Orchard*, Mustafa Kabha and Nahum Karlinsky offer a relational, mutually-formative approach to Arab-Jewish interactions in the pre-state era, revealing that Palestine’s famous citrus industry was organized as a binational enterprise, from the bottom-up, beginning at the outbreak of the Second World War (2021). This, in contrast to the prevailing, conflictual narrative, which stresses grassroots antagonisms between the two groups. This is just one, notable example: other, recent studies have similarly shed light on Arab-Jewish cooperation in civil society, in grassroots (and especially workers’) movements, and in

local municipal institutions (Bernstein, 2000; Jacobson & Naor, 2016; Klein, 2014; Lockman, 1996; Wallach, 2023, 2024).

Arab nationalism had first developed decades prior to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, accelerating with its decline, in response to a variety of endogenous and external processes. These included (1) the mid-19th century Arab cultural revival or Nahda (lit. “Awakening”) in Egypt and the Levant, which saw growing public and intellectual interest in the Arabic language, as well as Arab culture and history, (2) political reforms in the Ottoman Empire (most notably, the Tanzimat in the mid-19th century and the Young Turks’ reforms in 1908), which simultaneously alienated local Arab notables and facilitated the establishment of popular Arab societies and newspapers, (3) the rise of Turkish nationalism, coupled with Ottoman leaders’ efforts to reassert their control over the Empire’s Arab regions – processes which produced a backlash, reinforcing and elevating collective Arab identity, (4) the influence of European ideas and institutions, as Europe grew increasingly dominant in the Middle East and North Africa, (5) the establishment of modern schools and universities in the region (both indigenous- and foreign-run), contributing to (6) growing literacy rates and the emergence of a new Arab intelligentsia, which was aware of – and influenced by – the rising tide of nationalism around the world (Ayyad, 1999, pp. 8–32; Choueiri, 2005; Cleveland & Bunton, 2009; Hourani, 1991, pp. 299–310; R. Khalidi, 1997, pp. 35–88; Muslih, 1988, pp. 47–68). Political Islam developed in parallel, in response to these processes and to Arab nationalism; a dialectic interaction between secular nationalism and religious politics that is ongoing in the modern Middle East (Akbarzadeh, 2021; Arjomand, 1986; Choueiri, 2005).

The Palestinian Arab national movement developed in the context of these and other contradictory processes, including rapid economic and infrastructure modernization, the socio-economic devastation of the First World War, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the advent of Britain (R. Khalidi, 2020, pp. 1–54; J. McCarthy, 1990, pp. 25–27). Still, Palestinian Arab society developed rapidly after the war: cities grew, public infrastructure was expanded, newspapers proliferated, and political organizations were established (Budeiri, 1979; R. Khalidi, 1997; Porath, 1974). Although a distinct Palestinian political identity has roots prior to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the spread of Palestinian nationalism accelerated under British rule. Membership-based civic associations like al-Muntada al-Adabi (“the Literary Club”), al-Nadi al-Arabi (“the Arab Club”), the Young Men’s Muslim Association, and a coalition of local, Muslim-Christian Associations were established in Palestine’s cities following the War (Muslih, 1988, pp. 155–190; Porath, 1974, pp. 31–39, pp. 74–79). The Muslim-Christian Associations are notable for their relatively wide membership base, and for planning a series of seven Palestine Arab Congresses between 1919-1928, which articulated the Associations’ anti-Zionist demands. The Arab Executive, which lobbied British officials on behalf of Palestinian Arab nationalism, was established during the Third of these Congresses (R. Khalidi, 2020, p. 31; Porath, 1974). Although these and other Palestinian Arab associations advocated different political visions for Palestine, including its incorporation into a broader Syrian polity (an idea which declined in popularity after the ‘20s), most shared a consistent set of core demands, including opposition to Zionism and to Jewish immigration (R. Khalidi, 1997, pp. 89–176; Muslih, 1988, pp. 155–210; Porath, 1974). The number of national, Arabic-language newspapers grew; some of the most widely-circulated newspapers, including *al-Difa’*, *al-Karmil*, and *Filastin*, adopted manifestly

Arab-nationalist, anti-Zionist editorial positions (Kabha, 2007, pp. xiii–22; R. Khalidi, 1997, pp. 119–144). And while these developments – the budding of a Palestinian national movement – were influenced by Zionism and the Yishuv, they should also be contextualized regionally, as mirroring other Arab national movements, which formed under (and fought against) British and French rule (Ayyad, 1999, pp. 1–66; Chalcraft, 2016; R. Khalidi, 1997, pp. 35–62).

In Palestine, these widespread sentiments did not coalesce into a mass, encompassing, nation-wide movement with a cohesive leadership structure, as they did in neighboring Egypt around the same time (under the Wafd Party’s leadership; Sha’rawi, 1987). The Arab Executive Committee was the most important political institution among Palestine’s Arabs, but did not gain popular legitimacy or official British recognition (Porath, 1974, pp. 241–257). Some of the organizations that were established in the ‘20s had membership bases, but they never accrued the critical mass of supporters necessary to transcend into a nation-wide social movement. Furthermore, they were elite-run, reflecting Palestinian Arab society’s familial rivalries, which have their roots in Ottoman patron-client relationships (R. Khalidi, 2007, pp. 65–104; Muslih, 1988, pp. 11–68). Though the importance of familial rivalries and of notables more broadly had gradually diminished in the late Ottoman period, familial factionalism greatly intensified under British rule. Indeed, the British administrative and military authorities were quick to apply to Palestine the same divide-and-rule tactics they used in other colonies, co-opting notables from particular families, cultivating alliances and pitting elites and religious denominations against each other (Ayyad, 1999, pp. 67–117; R. Khalidi, 2007, pp. 31–64; Segev, 2001). The most prominent rift was between the al-Husseini and a-Nashasibi families, both hailing from Jerusalem. Supporters of Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who held the (British-created) post of Grand

Mufti, were known as al-majlisiyun, after the Supreme Muslim Council he helmed (*al-Majlis al-Islami al-A‘la*; also a British creation); supporters of the a-Nashasibi faction were known as al-mu‘aridun (“the opposition”; R. Khalidi, 2007, pp. 65–66; Kupferschmidt, 1987, p. 28). The latter were considered more conciliatory, especially in and after the ‘30s, accommodating Zionist and British demands and cooperating in their suppression of the increasingly combative al-Husseini faction (R. Khalidi, 2007, pp. 65–104; Porath, 1974, pp. 184–240). It is worth stressing that this particular rivalry was the most prominent of many; Palestine had other, familial and non-familial inter-elite rivalries which were also exploited by the British authorities and by Zionist leaders (Muslih, 1988, pp. 24–32). And while these familial rivalries were consequential, shaping much of the Palestinian Arab political landscape under the British Mandate, their role can be over-emphasized. As historian Rashid Khalidi concludes: “While the notables had great importance as a group, and are certainly worthy of attention, a persuasive argument can be made that there has been an overemphasis on them in the literature, to the detriment of the examination of other social groups and other problematics” (R. Khalidi, 2007, p. 67).

Other, salient social cleavages among Palestine’s Arabs included religious-sectarian divides, especially between Muslims and Christians, and an (at times overlapping) urban-rural divide. Although Palestinian Arab nationalism had from the beginning been characterized by Muslim-Christian cooperation, religious tensions often led to frictions under British rule (Kupferschmidt, 1987, pp. 221–254; Porath, 1974, pp. 293–309). The British Mandate authorities exploited this cleavage, co-opting religious figures (by creating religious offices, for example) and fomenting sectarian rivalries (R. Khalidi, 2007, pp. 48–67). In addition to this religious cleavage, recent scholarship emphasizes the division between Palestine’s rural majority

and its urban core (Chalcraft, 2016, pp. 240–256; R. Khalidi, 1997, pp. 89–118; Miller, 1985; Porath, 1974, pp. 208–240). As this scholarship shows, the largely uneducated, rural, peasant population – disproportionately impacted by Zionist land purchases – was underrepresented in the Palestinian Arab movement’s elite-led, urban-based organizations. Indeed, even by the end of the Mandate, following a period of rapid urbanization, “only 32.7 percent of the country’s Arab population lived in cities and large towns, by contrast with the Jewish population, which was 76.2 percent urban” (R. Khalidi, 2007, p. 17). The late 1920s saw the establishment of many new civic associations, women’s organizations, unions, and sports clubs, mostly in Palestine’s urban cores (Ben Ze’ev, 2013; Chalcraft, 2016, pp. 240–244; Fleischmann, 2000; Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003, pp. 86–101). Formal political parties – like the Palestinian Istiqlal Party – were first established in the early 1930s. This new generation of organizations did more to shake up the Yishuv leadership and British Mandate authorities – more so than preceding, notable-run initiatives – but they lacked mobilizing power, partly because they faced opposition from the notable elite, but also because they did not reach Palestine’s largely-rural Arab masses (Chalcraft, 2016, pp. 240–256).

In spite of these fault lines, Arab nationalist and anti-Zionist sentiments were widespread, serving as low common denominators among ordinary Palestinian Arabs, who read newspapers, debated politics in cafes, and joined voluntary associations (R. Khalidi, 2007, pp. 90–104; Muslih, 1988, pp. 155–210; Segev, 2001, pp. 102–109). These popular sentiments intensified in the ‘20s, boiling over in sporadic (yet increasingly violent) episodes of mass Palestinian mobilization, including the 1920, 1921 and 1929 Nebi Musa, Jaffa and Hebron Riots. The details and severity of these events varied; generally, all were instigated by emotional triggers, followed

by large demonstrations, rioting, intercommunal violence, and British Mandate police suppression. They resulted in hundreds of Jewish and Arab civilian deaths (Segev, 2001). British inquiry commissions were set up after each of these major riots, resulting in gradual, but mostly symbolic concessions to the Palestinian Arab movement. Later, in the early '30s, the countryside saw sporadic attacks against Zionist settlers, while the cities saw “larger and more militant” demonstrations (R. Khalidi, 2020, p. 44). This, in spite of Palestine’s Arab elites, who “generally eschewed giving speeches, leading demonstrations, and other manifestations of mass politics” (R. Khalidi, 2007, p. 80). The movement passed important organizational thresholds with the Great Arab Revolt of 1936-39, which saw disparate Palestinian classes, including the urban notables, educated middle class, and the rural peasantry form a remarkably unified front against British control and Zionist expansion (Ben Ze’ev, 2020; Chalcraft, 2016, pp. 240–256). The revolt started with the killing of Izz a-Din al-Qassam – an Islamist preacher and Arab nationalist, who encouraged and led attacks against British forces and the Yishuv – by British security forces. This emotional trigger united the rural and urban populations, sparking a spontaneous, six-month general strike (“one of the longest in colonial history”; R. Khalidi, 2020, p. 45). His funeral was attended by thousands (Chalcraft, 2016, p. 245). The following year, when both the traditional Palestinian leadership and the British authorities failed to meet popular Arab demands, an armed revolt broke out, engulfing all of Palestine. It was harshly repressed at great cost to the British authorities (Anderson, 2021; Chalcraft, 2016; Hughes, 2019; R. Khalidi, 2007, pp. 105–124; Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003, pp. 110–131).

In contrast to the Palestinian movement, the Yishuv enjoyed consistent support from the British Mandatory authorities since the 1917 Balfour Declaration (Huneidi, 2001; Segev, 2001;

Shlaim, 2009, pp. 3–25). Although the Great Arab Revolt marked a turning point, leading Britain to renege on some promises made to the Zionists and make some substantive concessions to the Arab leadership (most notably, by agreeing to limit Jewish immigration; Segev, 2001, pp. 435–443), the Yishuv continued to enjoy the support of its great power patron well into the 40s. This favorable, protective and permissive political environment allowed the Zionist movement to establish the necessary political, economic and, eventually, military infrastructure of a future state; as Oded Haklai argues in *Palestinian Ethnonationalism in Israel*, the Zionist movement was much better organized than the Palestinian Arab population, exploiting the “minimalist”, non-interventionist character of the British Mandatory state to build an exclusive institutional infrastructure that formed the foundation of the state to come (2011, pp. 46–47). As Haklai argues: “[The Mandatory state] intervened very little in a limited number of areas, allowing considerable autonomy to each of the communities under its rule. In effect, the institutional boundaries established by the British granted plenty of societal space for the leaders of the Jewish national movement to create a distinct public domain...” (2011, p. 47). While the Palestinian Arab leadership mobilized considerable resources in its struggle against the Zionist movement, few resources were mobilized to create the institutional framework of a future state.

1948 serves as a historic turning point, marking the end of British control over Palestine, the establishment of the state of Israel, and the ethnic cleansing of large swaths of Palestine of its Arab inhabitants (the Palestinian “Nakba”, meaning “catastrophe” in Arabic). By 1947, at least 600,000 Jews and 1.3 million Arabs lived in Mandatory Palestine (Ghanim, 2011, p. 21; W. Khalidi, 1987, p. 844; Yiftachel, 2006, p. 58). During the war, around 750,000 Palestinian Arabs were expelled or fled – and prevented from returning – and more than 420 Arab towns and

villages were destroyed, fundamentally disrupting the social fabric of Palestinian society and reversing the demographic balance between Jews and Arabs (R. Khalidi, 2020, pp. 55–95; Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003, pp. 170–172; Yiftachel, 2006, pp. 58–60). “Palestinian space was erased”, argue Nadim Rouhana and Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, “both physically and symbolically. Hundreds of towns that had been inhabited by Palestinians who left their homes with the ethnic cleansing that took place during the 1948 war were completely demolished, and the physical evidence of their existence obliterated” (2015, p. 208). Palestine’s major metropolitan centers – its cultural and political hubs – were particularly devastated by the expulsion and, as a result, the Palestinian cultural, political and intellectual elite found itself in exile. Those that remained or were internally displaced – roughly 160,000 Arabs – found themselves within the borders of the newly-established state, forming the Palestinian minority in Israel – the focus of this research project (Pappé, 2011, p. 18). This largely rural, agrarian population was suddenly separated and isolated from Palestine’s former intellectual and political leaderships.

It is important to stress that, even after 1948, this community continued to interact with the broader Palestinian and Arab worlds in a variety of important ways. For example, Palestinian poets and activists within Israel inspired those based in the Arab world, and vice versa (Sorek, 2020, pp. 1–85). And although Palestinian and Arab nationalism were not tolerated in Israeli political life, they had nevertheless persisted and grown, if only covertly, in response to developments abroad (Dallasheh, 2018). The story of Israel’s Palestinian community cannot be isolated from broader Palestinian history. Still, the community did develop in relative political and cultural isolation, under substantially different circumstances compared to Palestinians in the Arab world and the diaspora. With isolation, however, came unparalleled access: the Palestinian

community within Israel is the only Palestinian subgroup with physical access to large swaths of historic Palestine, and the only one with access to Israel's political institutions, including its parliament – the Knesset. Shaped by this unique reality, the community developed a different modus operandi of political resistance as compared to Palestinians elsewhere, at once non-violent and counter-hegemonic, as I will show in the next subsection and in this dissertation's constituent articles.

b. Phases of Palestinian politics within Israel

Scholars have divided the history of Israel's Palestinian citizens into distinct phases (Haklai & Abu Rass, 2022; Rekhess, 2007). After 1948, Israeli policymakers preserved the Yishuv's settler-colonial and ethnic-hierarchical policies, cementing the state's ethnic character – the Jewish majority's preferential status – in a variety of ways (Degani, 2017; Peleg, 2007). Soon after the state's establishment, the Israeli government extended citizenship to the Palestinian Arabs under its rule (in no small part, due to international pressures; Robinson, 2013, pp. 37–38). At the same time, it enacted a system of military rule over them, crowding Arabs into urban ghettos and rural enclaves, and restricting their freedoms of movement, speech and assembly (Bäumli, 2011). Although exact numbers are unclear, some tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees tried to return in the late '40s and early '50s; hundreds were killed, detained, tortured and expelled (Morris, 1993, pp. 28–29; Segev, 2019, pp. 506–508). Absentee property was seized by the state and either destroyed or transferred to Jewish citizens (Fischbach, 2003; Forman & Kedar, 2004). The state confiscated privately owned Palestinian land *en masse*, which it then “Judaized” by building Jewish settlements upon it (Yiftachel, 2006). As Shira Robinson argues, Palestinians who remained within the new state's borders became “citizen strangers”: nominally equal

citizens in a procedurally democratic state, but also subjects, under direct and harsh military rule; simultaneously “citizens of a formally liberal state and subjects of a colonial regime” (Robinson, 2013, p. 3).

The first phase of Palestinian politics within Israel corresponds with the period of military rule. It is characterized by harsh repression, and by limited Palestinian mobilization. Electorally, Palestinians had no independent parties in the Knesset; instead, they predominately voted for the ruling Mapai party’s affiliated, Arab client parties (Cohen, 2010; Robinson, 2013). Unlike Palestinians in the Arab world and the diaspora, those who stayed in Israel did not mount armed resistance campaigns. Instances of contentious mobilization were rather limited; parliamentary representatives accommodated Zionism. For this reason, scholars characterize the community’s politics during this first phase as “quiescent” (Ghanem, 2001; Haklai, 2011, pp. 71–111; Lustick, 1980, p. 25). Ian Lustick (1980) explains Palestinian quiescence during this and the subsequent phase as a product of a system of *control* that was imposed on the minority by the state, comprised of three dimensions: segmentation (preventing the formation of inter- and intra-ethnic alliances; pp. 82–149), dependence (maintaining the Arabs’ economic, social, and political reliance on the Jewish majority and the state; pp. 150–197), and cooptation (using “the promise of personal gain ... to persuade potential organizers and leaders of independent Arab political groups to work ... for the benefit of the regime in general and the Labor Party in particular”; p. 231). In addition to its direct impact, the policy of cooptation served to reinforce the other two dimensions; the community’s segmentation and dependence. Recent scholarship emphasizes Palestinian agency under these harsh circumstances, highlighting the complex factors that shaped the community’s modus operandi within Israel, including Israel’s control regime, but also

Palestinian resilience, steadfastness, and ingenuity (Cohen, 2010; Robinson, 2013; Sorek, 2020). As Hillel Cohen argues in his 2010 book, *Good Arabs*, “Israel’s Arab citizens were not merely passive and subservient. They were active agents with significant influence over their fate” (p. 6).

Lacking political or organizational resources, many Palestinians’ first priority was the struggle for equal citizenship, using the limited means at their disposal (Pappé, 2011; Robinson, 2013). The main tools in the Palestinian repertoire of contention were boycotts, strikes, and demonstrations, although these initiatives were largely localized until the ‘70s (Cohen, 2010; Haklai, 2011). In addition to these actions, Palestinians resisted state policy in other, subtler ways, by abetting the return of Palestinian refugees, by constructing homes without permits on large scales, by preserving Palestinian culture and by promoting Palestinian political narratives (Cohen, 2010). State-minority relations reached a turning point with the 1956 Kafr Qasim Massacre, when Israeli Border Police shot and killed 19 men, 6 women and 23 Palestinian children on their way back from working the fields (Raz, 2018). After the Massacre, Robinson argues, “record numbers of citizens would begin to speak out against the conditions of their subordination and to demand the realization of their equality as promised in the Declaration of Independence” (Robinson, 2013, p. 167). Israeli public opinion also began to shift against military rule; restrictions gradually eased, and the system was ultimately disbanded in 1966. The Massacre also marks an intensification in collective Palestinian action against the state, organized and coordinated by the Israeli Communist Party (ICP). Although other organizations were established, Palestinian mobilization was only tolerated under the ICP framework. Some of the organizations that sprung during military rule – most notably the al-Ard (“The Land”)

movement and Abnaa' al-Balad (“Sons of the Land”) – were deemed illegal (Rouhana & Sabbagh-Khoury, 2015, p. 211). Additionally, parties that denied the Jewish nature of the state were not tolerated – an attitude first formalized in the case of the al-Ard movement, which attempted to run for office as part of the “Socialist List” in 1965 and was officially outlawed, and later in 1985, when all parties that negated “the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state” were outlawed (Masri, 2018). Thus, while the evaluation of the community as quiescent or active depends on subjective standards for collective mobilization, it is argued that, facing state repression and still healing from the traumatic events of 1948, the Palestinian minority in Israel organized surprisingly effective confrontational campaigns, under inauspicious circumstances, especially toward the end of the first phase, when restrictions started to ease.

The second phase began when military rule ended, and lasted until the mid-'80s. It was marked by independent, audacious and cohesive Palestinian mobilization, led by the New Communist List (NCL); a new party which was formed when the ICP split over disagreements regarding the party's attitudes toward Zionism, the NCL representing the larger, non-Zionist, pro-Arab nationalist faction (Haklai, 2011, pp. 71–111; Kabha, 2018). Under the leadership of charismatic NCL members like Tawfiq Zayyad, who rose to prominence during this phase, Palestinian contentious and electoral politics reached new heights (Sorek, 2020). As the only legal vehicle for surging national sentiments, the NCL-led Palestinian ethnopolitical movement enjoyed a period of unprecedented cohesion. The party had highly centralized (and opaque) decision-making apparatuses, but it also reached out to potential allies to expand its appeal. Electorally, the NCL formed an alliance with non-communists in Nazareth, forming the Nazareth Democratic Front, which Zayyad led to municipal victory in 1975 (Sorek, 2020, pp. 86–105). It

also reached across the ethnic divide, forming a nation-wide electoral alliance with the Israeli Black Panthers, who championed the rights of Israel's Mizrahi community (Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origins). As the mayor of Nazareth, Zayyad played a key role in mobilizing Palestinian masses against the government's land expropriation policy. Most notably, Zayyad went against the minority's largely accommodationist local (municipal) leadership, declaring a day of strike and protest against a decision to expropriate around 20 square kilometers of land from three Palestinian towns in the Galilee (Nakhleh, 2011). The Israeli authorities repressed these demonstrations harshly, mobilizing a large number of military and police forces. As a result, six protesters were killed in these "Yawm al-Ard" or "Land Day" demonstrations; an event that is still commemorated by Palestinians within and outside of Israel annually. Scholars characterize this as a period of national awakening, influenced by "renewed contact with the Palestinians in the occupied territories [comprising the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which were captured by Israel in 1967] and by the rise of the Palestinian national movement" in the diaspora (Rekhess, 2007, p. 2).

The third phase, beginning in the early '90s, was marked by organizational fragmentation along ideological lines. Liberal reforms within Israel allowed for the formal expression of nascent ideological streams, including a nationalist stream, which demanded recognition for the Palestinians as an indigenous national minority with special collective rights, and an Islamist stream, which emphasized religious issues and pushed for greater religious autonomy for Palestinian Muslims (Ghanem, 2001; Haklai, 2011). Additionally, Palestinians founded many non-governmental organizations to advocate the community's needs, and to provide services in areas such as education, culture and religion (Jamal, 2020, pp. 137–154). Mirroring the newly-

fragmented political landscape, these CSOs had (and continue to have) unofficial party affiliations, working with, and providing support for an associated party or set of parties. As the political landscape fragmented, Palestinian politics also adopted a markedly more nationalist character (Jamal, 2011; Rekhess, 2007). One of the most visible manifestations of this nationalist turn can be seen in the publication of several “Vision Documents”, drafted by a wide array of Palestinian elites, which outlined the community’s future vision and political demands, including its recognition as an indigenous national minority deserving of special collective rights (Jamal, 2011, pp. 161–187). Meanwhile, the communist stream, now led by the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE) had shed its strict Marxist-Leninist commitments, adopting a more nationalist orientation while maintaining core socialist values (Haklai, 2011, pp. 131–135). Thus, the community’s third phase was characterized by high fragmentation in both the electoral and civic spheres, accompanied by intensified Palestinian nationalism across the political spectrum.

c. Explaining Palestinian mobilization since 2015

Interest in this Palestinian community has grown considerably over the past decade. In 2015, the four parties representing Israel’s Palestinian citizens – the socialist DFPE, the National Democratic Assembly (NDA; representing the nationalist stream), the United Arab List (UAL; representing the Islamist stream), and the Arab Movement for Renewal (AMR; ideologically ambiguous) – united, forming a single electoral list, the Joint List (JL). Though this union was born of necessity (unity was necessitated by an increase in the electoral threshold, which threatened to leave individual parties out of parliament had they ran alone), the move proved exceptionally popular. This was accompanied by growing electoral pressure on the Palestinian leadership to help create an alternative to PM Benjamin Netanyahu’s right-wing government, by

supporting the Israeli center-left opposition (Navot, Swaid, et al., 2023, pp. 245–250). These developments have generated considerable academic interest. In 2017, Navot, Rubin, and Ghanem argued that the leadership’s unification under a single electoral list, and the Palestinian public’s desire for access to executive power – their willingness to work *within* Israel’s institutions – signaled the emergence of a new kind of politics among this community, characterized by “faith” in Israeli politics (Navot et al., 2017). Elaborating this argument, Muhammed Khalaily and As’ad Ghanem argue that the Palestinian community’s faith in political change was enabled by rising levels of self-confidence, which were, in turn, enabled by increased higher education levels and the rise of the Palestinian middle class (2023). Oded Haklai and I, on the other hand, argued that the community’s organizational and ideological transformations – the JL’s formation, and the move toward the political center – reflected a new, fourth phase of Palestinian politics, characterized by “centripetalism” (Haklai & Abu Rass, 2022). According to Navot, Swaid and Khalaily (2023), since 2015, the Palestinian leadership has championed a new “non-Zionist Israeli identity”, which simultaneously desires integration into the Israeli social fabric while rejecting Zionism. This, they argue, marks a break from the “politics of identity” that characterized the third phase (Navot, Swaid, et al., 2023, p. 239).

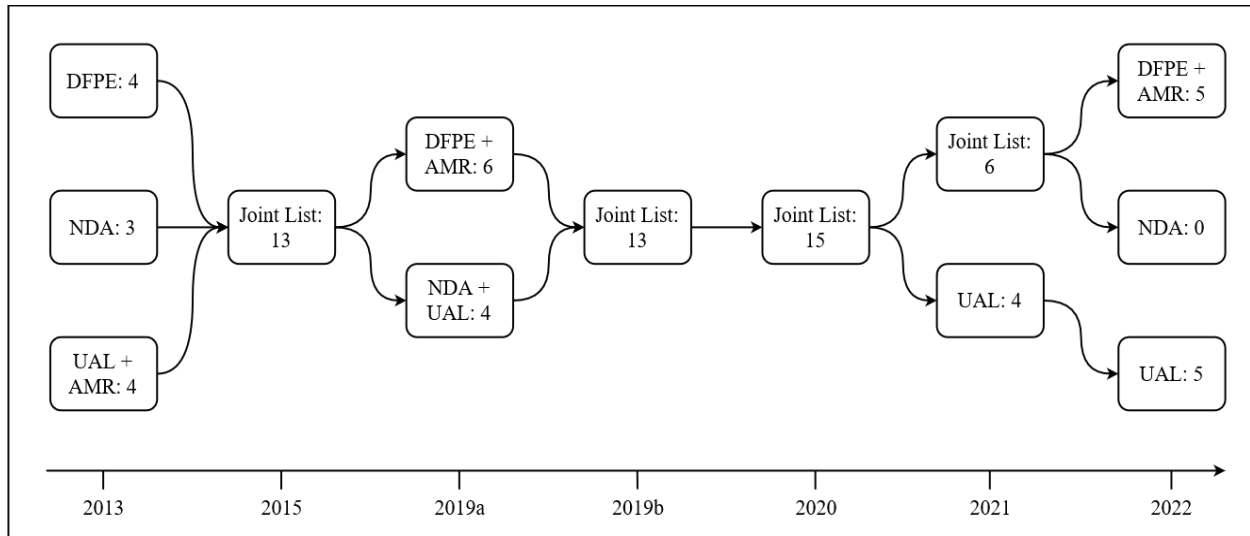


Figure 2.2: Cohesion and fragmentation among Palestinian parties in the Knesset.¹

The List’s successive breakups and unifications – part of Israel’s 2019-2022 political crisis, which included five successive rounds of elections – generated further academic interest. Notably, after an initial, brief breakup in 2019, the JL broke up again in 2021, when the Islamist, UAL party split from it (Figure 2). UAL leaders distanced themselves from the rest of the Palestinian leadership by dropping the demand to establish a Palestinian state, by omitting all reference to Palestinian national identity from their discourse, and by focusing solely on the community’s internal, material and civic issues (Haklai & Abu Rass, 2022). What explains these organizational oscillations? And what explains the UAL’s ideological drift further away from Palestinian nationalism? Navot, Swaid, and Khalaily argue these changes reflect two political-discursive transformations among Palestinian leaders. The third phase, they argue, was characterized by a “moralizing” political discourse; by discourse that drew on claims to morality as the basis for political legitimacy. In contrast, they argue that Palestinian politics since 2015 has been characterized by “realism”; by a discourse that acknowledges “the crucial role of power

¹ Numbers denote seats won by each party or list (“Israel Election Final Results,” 2022; Navot, Swaid, et al., 2023, p. 239).

in political affairs”, as well as moralism’s ineffectiveness (Navot, Hindi, et al., 2023, p. 1974). They further characterize the discourse associated with the Joint List and its charismatic leader Ayman Odeh as *radical* realism, moving away from moralism while maintaining firm ideological commitments and “utopianism”, and the discourse of the UAL and its leader Mansour Abbas as *realistic* realism, which “encourages moderation and restricts the outlook to possibilities afforded by the state” (p. 1975). Other studies explain the minority’s political-organizational transformations by reference to (1) its internal political and socio-demographic diversity, and its leaders’ intersectional commitments (Akirav, 2024), (2) the interplay between individual agency and structural inequalities (Akirav, 2024; Ben David, 2019), (3) the community’s exclusion, marginalization and dehumanization within the Israeli political context (Gani & Jamal, 2022; Tatour, 2021), and (4) the growing electoral strength of the Palestinian middle class, which demands access to power and material improvements (Haidar & Bar-Haim, 2022; Jamal, 2022). In the next section – this project’s first article – I delve into this debate, offering an alternative explanation based on changes in leaders’ perceptions of opportunity and threat.

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Chapter 3 The Two-Pronged Palestinian Response to Exclusion Within Israel

The Palestinian leadership within Israel has undergone a series of political–organizational transformations since 2015, oscillating between cohesive and fragmented mobilization. Why did the leadership fragment, despite both structural and electoral pressures to maintain unity? What explains the rapid nature of these transformations? Relying on 35 interviews with activists and politicians, I argue that declining political opportunities and mounting threats led the Palestinian leadership to pursue unity as a strategic choice in 2015. Crossing a threshold, however, the perception of further diminishing opportunities for change elicited divergent strategic responses between a group that I label “hegemonic-accommodationist,” spearheaded by Mansour Abbas’ United Arab List, and a group that I label “hegemonic-rejectionist,” representing the rest of the Palestinian political leadership. Overall, this study suggests that unity and disunity within ethno-political movements are linked to leaders’ perception of opportunity (and the lack thereof).

Keywords: Palestinian citizens of Israel, ‘48 Palestinians, fragmentation, cohesion, social movements, ethnic outbidding.

3.1. Introduction

Since 2015, the Palestinian political leadership within Israel has undergone a series of organizational transformations, oscillating between periods of unity and fragmentation. This short timespan has also seen exceptionally high and record low levels of Palestinian participation in general elections, shifting voting patterns, and growing demands among Palestinian citizens for access to executive power. It saw a Palestinian party partner with the Israeli Right in government, on one hand, and high levels of mass, extra-parliamentary, grassroots mobilization against the state and its policies, on the other. How can these seemingly contradictory processes be reconciled? What explains the political and organizational transformations affecting the Palestinian community in Israel since 2015? Why was the Joint List (JL) – a popular big-tent union of Palestinian parties within Israel – established, disbanded, reestablished, and ultimately abandoned? In this article, I answer these questions using hegemonic and discourse analysis, relying on secondary, media, and survey data, as well as 35 interviews with Palestinian and Jewish elites. I argue that, facing declining political opportunities on multiple dimensions – legal, institutional, and ideological – the Palestinian leadership strategically reoriented toward unity, pooling its electoral and institutional resources. Crossing a threshold, the perception of continually diminishing opportunities elicited divergent strategic responses within the leadership in 2021, between a group that I label “hegemonic-accommodationist”, spearheaded by Mansour Abbas’s United Arab List (UAL), and a group that I label “hegemonic-rejectionist”, representing the rest of the Palestinian political leadership.

This article is organized in six sections. In the next section, I review insights from the relevant literatures, focusing on the intersection of social movement theory (SMT) and ethnic

politics. In the following (third) section, I establish values for the dependent variable, describing organizational changes among the Palestinian political leadership in Israel since 2015. These changes will be measured by tracing the leadership's unifications and breakups over the last decade. In the fourth, I establish values for the independent variable – political opportunity structures – by describing legal, institutional, and ideological changes in the Israeli political environment over the last two decades. In the fifth section, I link the independent and dependent variables using an intermediary variable: the perceptions of opportunity (and lack thereof). The third and fourth sections rely extensively on archival, secondary, and survey data, using discourse, media, and hegemonic analysis. The fifth section relies on 35 de-identified, semi-structured interviews with 36 Palestinian and Jewish elites, which lasted 42 minutes on the average. Interview participants – 25 men and 11 women – were recruited using internet searches and snowball sampling. They included five serving members of the Knesset (MKs) representing the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE) and the National Democratic Assembly (NDA); 24 civic activists (employees and directors in civil society organizations [CSOs]); six grassroots activists (regular voluntary participants in local and national political initiatives); and one mayor. The first 11 interviews were conducted in person, in Israel, between July and August of 2017, as part of my MA research. Eleven additional interviews were conducted remotely (due to the impact of COVID-19 on travel) between October 2021 and November 2022. The remaining 13 were conducted in person, in situ, in January 2023. I transcribed and coded interviews using Obsidian, a markdown editor capable of cataloging, tagging, and linking between related interviews, as well as constructing network diagrams of individuals,

organizations, and concepts using metadata. A de-identified list of interviews is available from the author and can be provided by request.

3.2. Theoretical background

Why do leaders from structurally disadvantaged ethnic groups face difficulties working together, when collaboration is in their collective best interest? How does the severity of repression, exclusion, and delegitimization shape minority movements' internal organizational patterns? While social movement scholars have made considerable progress uncovering the effects of unity and disunity over the last two decades, the causes of these phenomena are not well understood (Kretschmer, 2013). Similarly, while scholars of ethnic politics have made considerable progress disaggregating ethnic groups into discrete actors, we do not fully understand how and when these actors overcome internal differences to form cohesive movements (Bloom, 2004; Chandra, 2005; Coakley, 2008; Zuber, 2013). Over the last two decades, an interdisciplinary research program has emerged between these two fields to uncover the causes of organizational cohesion and fragmentation, applying insights from a variety of social movement theories (SMT) to the study of ethnic and national mobilization. Aggregating ethnic elites and organizations into ethnopolitical movements, these scholars have identified several possible determinants for both intra- and inter-organizational fragmentation, including (1) competitive internal leadership structures (Asal et al., 2012; Peters, 2018, pp. 204–234), (2) movements' use of violent tactics (Asal et al., 2012; Seymour et al., 2016), (3) sociodemographic differences within movement organizations (Marx & Useem, 1971; Warren & Troy, 2015), (4) repression (McLauchlin & Pearlman, 2012; Seymour et al., 2016), (5) a weak sense of common identity (Peters, 2018, pp. 204–234), and (6) cooptation (Peters, 2018, pp. 204–234). While this

research program is growing, it lacks consensus, with scholars offering multiple, contradictory explanations.

This study expands upon this program, applying insights from SMT and contentious politics to ascertain the causes of cohesion and fragmentation among the Palestinian leadership within Israel. While early scholarship excluded routine electoral politics from its frames of analysis, new scholarship conceives of movements more inclusively. This strand of the literature emphasizes the “diversity of organizational roles” (Tarrow, 1998, p. 123), conceiving of movements as networks of socially interlinked actors who mount mutual challenges to power holders based on shared identities (Diani, 2003). Bakke et al., for example, define movements “in terms of appeals to a shared identity and the sense of common fate this engenders. [This allows] . . . for substantial disagreement over interests, rather than presuming that movements necessarily possess ‘common purposes and solidarity’” (Bakke et al., 2012, p. 266). Recent scholarship also emphasizes the dynamic, relational, and mutually constitutive nature of interactions between challengers and power holders (McAdam et al., 2001). This study follows these norms, conceiving of the Palestinian community’s civic and political leadership as an ethnopolitical movement, defined as a loose but durable network of actors who are organized around a shared identity and around mutual goals that are based on that identity. Thus, this study incorporates actors from within both the political and civic spheres – politicians and activists – into its frame of analysis; since Palestinian politicians in Israel act together with (and often depend on the work of) civic actors in a joint, often contentious struggle, this study conceives of them as part of a comprehensive movement (Jamal, 2020). Relying on these relational approaches to movements and mobilization, this study illustrates that group identities,

movements' methods, their framing of grievances, the organizations movements create and appropriate, and their leaders' perception of opportunity are not static variables, but dynamic, mutually constitutive processes (McAdam et al., 2001). I operationalize the dependent variable – organizational cohesion/fragmentation – using insights from Bakke et al., whose study offers a three-dimensional definition including the number of movement organizations, power concentration, and institutionalized cooperation within movements (cohesive movements have fewer organizations cooperating in a regular, institutionalized manner, with power concentrated among one or a privileged cluster of organizations; Bakke et al., 2012).

While scholars debate which label befits the Israeli regime and its hegemonic ideology, I follow Ilan Peleg's characterization of it as a "hegemonic ethnic state" employing a system of control to maintain an ethnic-hierarchical order (Peleg, 2007, pp. 1–19). This is in line with recent scholarship, which emphasizes Israel's enduring settler-colonial and ethnic-exclusivist characteristics (Degani, 2017; Khalidi, 2020). While Zionism is not monolithic, these basic, exclusivist, ethnic-hierarchical and historically settler-colonial features are well understood (Ram, 2011; Yiftachel, 2006). Zionism is easily distinguishable as Israel's dominant, hegemonic ideology, since it is widely accepted by Jewish Israelis and professed by virtually all predominantly Jewish political parties (Masri, 2018). As discussed in this article's fourth section, Zionism's hegemonic boundaries are not fixed, but have shifted over time – in recent years, in a manifestly ethnonational, security-oriented, defensive direction (Del Sarto, 2017). Following the above-mentioned emerging norms within SMT, the network of individuals and organizations investigated in this article is defined relationally, by reference to their counterhegemonic commitments, as they all have explicitly and openly challenged the ethnic hegemonic order

(UAL-affiliated participants have only recently acquiesced to it). For this reason, while the focus is on Palestinian mobilization, both Jewish and Palestinian organizations were examined. Recent scholarship on Israel's Palestinian citizens adopts a similar approach: Navot, Swaid, and Khalaily, for example, break from the tradition of defining the leadership in primarily ethnic-identitarian terms. Instead, they distinguish the leadership by reference to its counterhegemonic commitments, by focusing on the “non-Zionist Israeli identity” they promote – a concept denoting “a deliberate process in which the political Arab subject becomes more Israeli, but remains a vigorous opponent of Zionism and especially of the country's Jewish identity” (2023, p. 239). This study follows this precedent.

3.3. Palestinian politics since 2015: rapid organizational changes

Three parties represented the Palestinian community in Israel's 19th Knesset (2013–15). The DFPE, a socialist party that includes Jewish members, had four (out of 120) seats. The NDA, a secular-nationalist party, had three. A party list that included the UAL, an Islamic party, and the ideologically ambiguous Arab Movement for Renewal (AMR), received four seats. Ahead of the 2015 elections, the electoral threshold was raised from 2% to 3.25%, placing these parties at risk of being left out of the Knesset (Haklai & Abu Rass, 2022). In response, a union of all predominantly Palestinian parties – the Joint List (JL) – was established (Figure 2). The JL website confirms the impact of the “the rise of the election threshold” on its formation (*About the List*, n.d.). Interview participants – including Mks – confirmed that the List was born of technical necessity rather than joint strategic initiative: “the only reason – not even the main reason, but the only reason for the JL's establishment”, said one MK, formerly of the JL, “was the increase

in the election threshold ... everyone was afraid that they would not pass it alone” (Member of Knesset, personal communication, January 10, 2023).

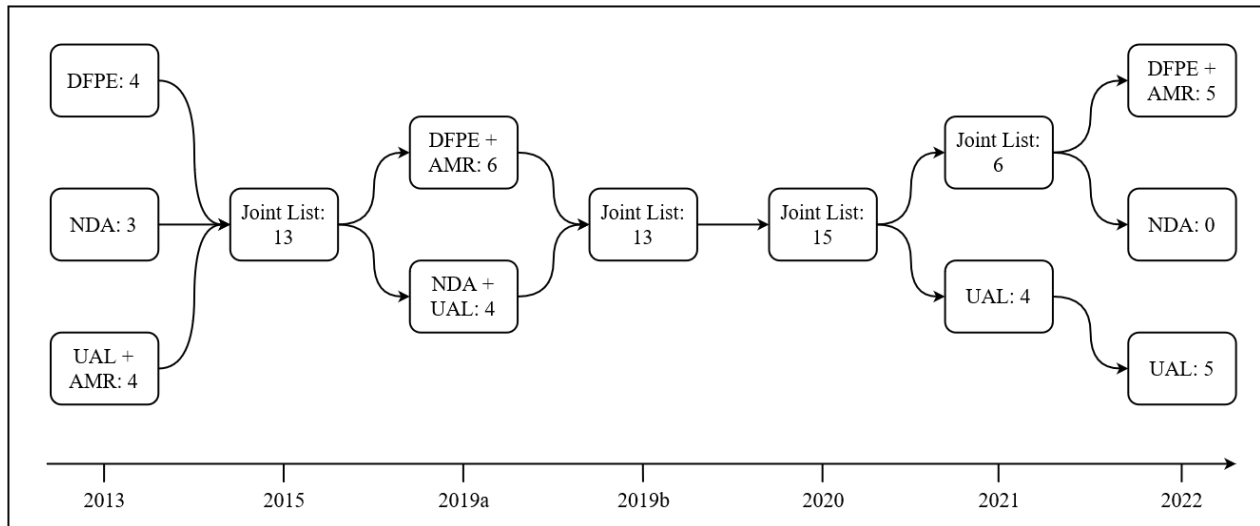


Figure 3.1: Cohesion and fragmentation among Palestinian parties in the Knesset.¹

The union was exceptionally electorally successful. The JL won 13 seats that year, becoming the third largest party and breaking the record for the number of seats won by Palestinian parties (collectively) to that point. Palestinian voter turnout rose from 56.5% in 2013 to 63.5% in 2015, the highest to that date in the 21st century (Rudnitzky, 2015). The JL also increased its share of votes within the Palestinian electorate: 82.4% of Palestinian voters cast a ballot for the JL in 2015, compared with 77.2% who voted for either of the Palestinian parties in 2013 (Rudnitzky, 2015). The List’s establishment generated enthusiasm among voters, raising Palestinian turnout and attracting voters who would have otherwise cast a ballot for the Zionist Left (Navot et al., 2017).

¹ Numbers denote seats won by each party or list (“Israel Election Final Results,” 2022; Navot, Swaid, et al., 2023, p. 239).

Despite its success, the JL was plagued by internal bickering regarding the number and placement of candidates from each constituent party (Khoury, 2017). Ahead of the April 2019 elections, it split into two lists: The AMR ran together with the DFPE, and the NDA with the UAL. The electorate responded negatively. Voter turnout fell to the lowest level to that point, 49.2% (Sha'lan, 2019). Palestinian representation fell to 10 seats, and the share of Palestinians who voted for predominantly Jewish parties increased from 16.8% to 28.4% (Rudnitzky, 2019b). At this point, the Israeli political crisis of 2019-22 surrounding the indictment of PM Benjamin Netanyahu took shape, dividing the Israeli electorate into clear pro- and anti-Netanyahu camps. The successive elections called during this crisis – a total of five rounds between 2019 and 2022 – provided the Palestinian leadership with several opportunities to recalibrate organizationally in response to a variety of pressures, including voters' calls for unity. Furthermore, the newly introduced pro- and anti-Netanyahu axes, which superseded traditional left-right divides, empowered JL leaders by positioning them as potential tiebreakers (Baram, 2022). Indeed, it soon became clear that the establishment of an alternative coalition government would require defection from Netanyahu's camp, the support of the JL, or both. The JL was included in unofficial coalitional negotiations during the crisis (Zaken & Schneider, 2020).

Four additional elections were held after April 2019 (henceforth, 2019a) – in September 2019 (2019b), 2020, 2021, and 2022. The JL was reestablished ahead of 2019b and maintained through the following election in 2020. Offering a vision of unity and Arab-Jewish partnership, the List's reestablishment was electorally successful. Palestinian voters responded overwhelmingly positively: Turnout rose from 49.2% in 2019a to 59.2% in 2019b, and again to 64.8% in 2020. The share of Palestinians who voted for non-Zionist parties increased from

71.6% in 2019a to 80.6% in 2019b and 87.6% in 2020 (Rudnitzky, 2019b). Though the exact number of Jewish citizens who voted for the List is hard to ascertain, some estimate that it received twice as many Jewish votes in 2020 as it did in 2019b (Peylan, 2020). And so the JL won 15 seats in 2020, the largest total number of seats won collectively by Palestinian parties to date. These results indicate a strong preference for unity among Palestinian voters. Survey data conducted during the crisis clearly indicated the importance of unity to the Palestinian voter, and her disdain for fragmentation (Khoury, 2022).

JL politicians repeatedly expressed their desire to form an alternative coalition with Israel's center-left during the 2019–22 crisis. They made gestures toward the center by moderating their stances, deprioritizing – but not completely abandoning – their counterhegemonic commitments (Odeh, 2019). Following the 2020 elections, JL MKs unanimously recommended Benny Gantz, who led the anti-Netanyahu camp, to form a government.² Despite JL leaders' support, their open willingness to compromise, and the high electoral cost associated with yet another round of elections, the anti-Netanyahu camp could not reach an agreement to form a JL-backed coalition (Hecht, 2020). Political leaders from within the anti-Netanyahu camp cited the ideological gap between them and the JL as a primary reason for this failure (Drucker, 2022). Ahead of the 2021 elections, the UAL split from the JL. As an independent party, it reneged on the JL's demand for an independent Palestinian state and omitted any reference to national Palestinian identity from its campaign (Navot, Hindi, et al., 2023). Its leaders repeatedly stated that the state's Jewish nature could not be changed, and reasoned that by accepting the hegemonic, ethnic-hierarchical status quo – indeed, by breaking

² In Israel, the mandate to form a government is not given automatically to the leader of the largest party; rather, the president grants it to the leader whose party received the greatest number of recommendations from MKs.

from ideological common denominators, such as those endorsed by the Palestinian leadership in the 2006-7 “Vision Documents” – they would be better positioned to (1) satisfy voters’ desire for access to executive power and (2) secure material gains for their constituents (“Abbas Confronts ‘Kul al-Arab’”, 2021; Makover-Blikov, 2020).

Despite its shortcomings, the JL greatly facilitated civic activists’ work. According to interview participants, while some coordinative mechanisms existed before the JL’s establishment (such as the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel, and informal channels within the Knesset), the existence of a single electoral list improved coordination between CSOs, politicians, and government officials in several ways (Academic & activist, personal communication, January 9, 2023; Member of Knesset, personal communication, January 10, 2023; Prominent journalist and activist, personal communication, January 2, 2023). First, the existence of a “single address” made it easier for civic activists to make inquiries, advance projects, and voice concerns within the Knesset, since it obviated the need to coordinate with multiple parties, or choose between ideological rivals beforehand (Director of an SMO, personal communication, April 20, 2022; Prominent activist, personal communication, January 25, 2022, personal communication, April 26, 2022). Additionally, the existence of a single address facilitated civic activists’ work with governmental officials (Co-executive director of an SMO, personal communication, July 30, 2017, personal communication, January 10, 2023; Prominent activist, personal communication, February 15, 2022). As a result of the JL’s establishment, joint initiatives between MKs and CSO were viewed by these officials as representing the entire Palestinian community rather than a mere subset of it. This shift had a noticeable impact, since Palestinian CSOs, which usually had unofficial partisan affiliations,

would otherwise have primarily worked with a single party (Jamal, 2020, pp. 177–181). A civic activist noted that:

“The Joint List’s formation opened up helpful horizons for everyone. As part of my work, I no longer had to be sensitive about siding with the DFPE or UAL. This was a comfortable arrangement; suddenly, it became easy to collaborate without excluding anyone. This also had a big impact on our work with governmental offices and clerks. Suddenly, there was one, single legitimate representative for Arabs – the JL ... Our relationship with the JL was, firstly, comfortable for us, because there was consensus around it – in parliament, at least – and secondly, because governmental clerks understood its role. These were good working conditions” (Prominent activist, personal communication, January 25, 2022).

The List’s breakup brought higher levels of fragmentation, as power distribution became more dispersed, and institutionalized cooperation decreased. This is evident in interview data (Co-executive director of an SMO, personal communication, December 1, 2021; Prominent activist, personal communication, February 15, 2022, personal communication, January 11, 2023). The UAL’s decision to split and, ultimately, its inclusion in a governing coalition created a corresponding schism within civil society, and distrust between practitioners, activists, and politicians who might have otherwise collaborated. CSOs once again had to consider partnerships carefully, and their capacity to coordinate and cooperate with others diminished. While the UAL allied with politicians who had been hostile toward Palestinian representatives, it was also better positioned to advance CSOs’ agenda as a member of government – indeed, it played a central role in implementing government resolution “550”, which provided funding for

development in the Arab sector (Kashti, 2022). This resulted in a tactical split within the Palestinian leadership, as civic activists had to revert to weighing the benefits and drawbacks of working with the UAL – now a powerful coalition partner. Furthermore, participants from across the political spectrum said that the breakup resulted in an atmosphere of resentment and distrust (Prominent activist, personal communication, April 12, 2022, personal communication, April 26, 2022). The loss of the JL – a flawed, short-lived, but effective coordination mechanism – and the resulting redistribution of power along two competing poles greatly increased fragmentation within the Palestinian movement in Israel.

How can we explain these organizational transformations? Why was the JL – a popular, electorally successful initiative – disbanded? Pundits and academics have previously pointed to the internal political culture within the List to explain its 2019 disbandment (Ghanem, 2019). They accused the Palestinian leadership of prioritizing personal, career-driven interests over the popular will to present a united front. While this argument is not without merit, it cannot explain the 2021 split and the UAL’s reorientation. In the following sections, I will instead show that a contraction in political opportunity structures – both objective and perceived – played a decisive role in the JL’s ultimate disbandment.

3.4. The political environment: Israel’s rightward turn

a. Law

Recent years have seen a slew of legislative efforts to restrict political opposition to Israeli government policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), expressions of Palestinian nationalism, and the activities of counter-hegemonic MKs and activists (Elected But Restricted,

2019). In 2018, the Knesset approved the “Nation-State Law” (formally, “Basic Law: Israel – The Nation State of the Jewish People”). A “basic” (constitutional) law, it demoted the status of Arabic from an official to a “special” language, specified Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, and denied “the right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel” to all but the Jewish majority (Ben-Youssef & Samaan Tamari, 2018). Scholars widely recognize the Law as a watershed moment, cementing ethnic hierarchies in Israel (Ghanim, 2021; Kamir, 2020; Tatour, 2021a). Its impacts on ordinary Palestinians, activists, and politicians are still unfolding. So far, most rulings that relied on it pertain to education: In 2020, an Israeli court used it to block funding for transportation from two Palestinian students, residents of Karmiel (a predominately Jewish city with no Arab schools), who had to commute to another city for schooling.³ In its decision, which was the first to rely on the Nation-State Law, the court reasoned: “Establishing an Arabic-language school ... [and] funding school transportation for Arab students, for anyone who needs it anywhere, could change the demographic balance of the city and damage its character” (Noy, 2020). Relying on the Law in 2022, Israel’s Ministry of Education asked educational institutions to declare that they will not “mark Israel’s Independence Day ... as a day of mourning” – a decision that effectively bans commemorations of the 1948 Palestinian exodus (Nakba) in Arab schools (Kadari-Ovadia, 2022). Seven interview participants mentioned the Law when asked to describe their political environments.

Though the number of court rulings relying on the Nation-State Law remains small, its significance cannot be overstated. Further, its implications can only be fully understood in context, among other recent bills that targeted expressions of Palestinian nationalism, silenced

3 The Israeli school system is segregated into three different streams: secular-Jewish, religious-Jewish, and Arab (Agbaria, 2017).

counter-hegemonic CSOs, weakened democratic institutions, and eroded civic equality. Notable examples include (1) the 2011 “Nakba Law”, which empowers the Ministry of Finance to cut funding to public institutions that commemorate the Nakba, (2) the 2011 “Boycott Law”, which forbids the promotion of boycotts against Israeli companies (including those that operate exclusively in the OPT), (3) the 2016 “Transparency Law”, which requires CSOs to disclose foreign government funding, 57 (4) the 2017 “Entry Law”, which bars entry into Israel from persons who publicly advocate boycotting Israel or its settlements in the OPT, (5) the 2022 renewal of the “Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law”, which denies resident status to Palestinian noncitizens who are married to Israeli citizens, and (6) a ban on the display of Palestinian and other “enemy state” flags in publicly funded institutions, which passed first reading in 2022 (Hauser Tov et al., 2022; Laws Designed to Silence, 2021; Shpigel, 2022; Waxman & Peleg, 2020). These examples constitute a clear legislative trend toward further entrenched ethnic hierarchies, greater intolerance, and persecution of Palestinian and counter-hegemonic voices.

b. Historical-institutional trends

Scholars have shown that while the status of the Palestinian community in Israel has improved in some respects, significant gaps remain between Arabs and Jews in areas such as land policy, urban planning, education, and economic development (Agbaria, 2017; Kedar et al., 2018; Khalidi & Shihadeh, 2017). In 2021, the life expectancy of Palestinian citizens was almost four years lower than that of Jewish citizens (2021 Annual Report, 2021). The Palestinian infant mortality rate was higher, and average income lower – even when compared with that of Jewish Israelis with similar educational backgrounds. While access to and the quality of education have

improved at all levels in the 21st century, there remains a large gap in funding between Arab and Jewish schools (Haddad Haj-Yahya & Rudnitzky, 2018). In the realm of planning and housing, where Palestinians have historically faced acute institutional disadvantages, the community continues to face land expropriation and inadequate allocation by Israel's various (local and national) Planning and Building Commissions for the construction of new housing units (Khalaily & Shani, 2020). Thus, Palestinian citizens are forced to build illegally, without permits and under threat of demolition. Jewish and Palestinian citizens are segregated in a variety of formal and informal ways; geographically, within their separate education systems, and at work (Diab et al., 2022). While the Israeli government recently issued resolutions 922 and 550 to address some of the economic and infrastructural inequalities between Jews and Arabs within Israel, their full impact remains to be seen (Levi & Suchi, 2018). Several interview participants who work as civic activists saw these resolutions as superficial and economically motivated, questioning their ability to address structural inequalities between Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel.

Repression, a key dimension of the political opportunity structure, must also be accounted for. The Israeli response to the May 2021 Events, which included large-scale Palestinian mobilization on both sides of the Green Line, is notable. While the Events are remembered by some for the intercommunal rioting that occurred within Israel proper, Palestinian mobilization was largely politicized and nonviolent compared with instances of rioting (Tatour, 2021b). The state's response was disproportionate: the protests began on 6 May; by 10 June, at least 2150 individuals had been arrested, of whom 91% were Palestinians (Abdu, 2022; Amnesty International, 2021). The open aim of the police's mass arrest campaign was to

reimpose “deterrence”; many of the Palestinian detainees were protesters, uninvolved in rioting (Abu Sneineh, 2021). According to an August 2022 analysis, “Israel’s state attorney’s office has filed 397 indictments against 616 defendants” in relation to the May 2021 events, “545 of whom are Arabs, including 161 children” (Abdu, 2022). An Amnesty International report concluded that while the mass arrest campaign against Palestinian activists was “sweeping”, the police “failed to protect Palestinian citizens of Israel from premeditated attacks by groups of armed Jewish supremacists, even when plans were publicized in advance and police knew or should have known of them” (Amnesty International, 2021). The events, the state’s reaction, and the lenient treatment of Jewish rioters shocked Palestinian activists and leaders, leaving many fearful, hopeless, and disillusioned: a common theme among interview participants, regardless of their ideological affiliation. This article, which was revised in November 2023, soon after Hamas’ 7 October massacre in Israel and edited in May 2024, amid an ongoing Israeli massacre in Gaza, cannot fully account for these events’ effect on Palestinian mobilization within Israel. Nevertheless, the wave of arrests and persecution among Palestinian citizens must be mentioned in this context (Diaz & Frayer, 2023). Differences in the Palestinian response within Israel should also be noted: Unlike the May 2021 Events, the persecution of Palestinians in the aftermath of 7 October was accompanied by neither intercommunal violence nor mass mobilization.

c. Hegemonic analysis

These legal and institutional shifts were accompanied by ideological and discursive changes, which had direct and indirect consequences for the Palestinian leadership within Israel. They should, in turn, be viewed as part of a deeper, hegemonic transformation that scholars have

linked to the Second Intifada, accelerating with Netanyahu's reelection in 2009 (Del Sarto, 2017; Jamal, 2017; Ram, 2011; Rouhana & Sultany, 2003). In the 1990s, Israeli politics was characterized by a hegemonic struggle between liberal reformers and ethnonational hardliners (Ram, 2011). There existed a large, vocal Peace Camp, which sought to bolster the state's democratic institutions, pass liberal laws, and bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a negotiated end based on two states. PM Yitzhak Rabin's administration, representing both the Peace Camp and Zionism's historic, Labor-led, hegemonic core, signed the Oslo Accords and passed two "basic" laws that protected certain human rights – legislation that is remembered as Israel's "Constitutional Revolution" (Michelman, 2018). His administration was the first to legitimize Jewish–Palestinian political partnership within Israel; Palestinian parties supported his minority government after the Haredi Shas party left in 1993. Under Rabin, calls for greater equality, for an end to the Occupation, and for the establishment of a Palestinian state were hotly debated and fiercely opposed, but they fell within the bounds of tolerable hegemonic discourse.

However, as scholars have shown, these bounds shifted after the Second Intifada, with the emergence of a new "neo-Revisionist" or "neo-Zionist" consensus, which emphasized Israel's ethnic–hierarchical character and drove its politics rightward (Del Sarto, 2017; Jamal, 2017; Ram, 2011; Rouhana & Sultany, 2003). This process, which accelerated following Benjamin Netanyahu's reelection in 2009, rendered some previously acceptable political positions intolerable. Politicians avoided the "left-wing" label, and a process of ethnic outbidding – whereby ethnic elites attempt to secure their constituencies' support by appealing to increasingly hardline positions – unfolded (Waxman, 2016; Zuber, 2013). Illustrative examples include (1) Likud's 2006 "Smolmert" campaign, which labeled then-PM Ehud Olmert as a leftist ("Smol"

means left in Hebrew; Moalem, 2006), (2) the emergence and high visibility of several far-right CSOs associated with religious Zionism and the settler movement,⁴ (3) government officials' collaboration with these CSOs (Pinson, 2022), (4) mainstream politicians' attacks on left-wing CSOs (Pinson, 2022; Shmuli, 2015; Somfalvi & Rimerman, 2015), (4) a growing "insistence on loyalty" and emphasis on Israel's Jewish character within the educational system (Waxman, 2016), (5) the revocation of national awards from left-wing recipients (Morag, 2022), (6) the lack of media coverage of state-sanctioned and settler violence in the OPT (Del Sarto, 2017, pp. 78–81), (7) the exclusion of ethnic and political minorities from mainstream media (Granot, 2021) and (8) the delegitimization of Palestinian activists and MKs and their routine portrayal as "fifth columns" in mainstream media discourse (Del Sarto, 2017, pp. 121–133).

4 Notable examples include "Hunenu" (est. 2001), "Regavim" (2006), "Im Tirtzu" (2006), The Israel Land Fund (2008), My Israel (2010), "Derech Chaim" (2010), "Btsalmo" (2012), "Ad Kan" (2015), My Truth (2015) and "Torat Lechima" (2017; (Jamal, 2018).

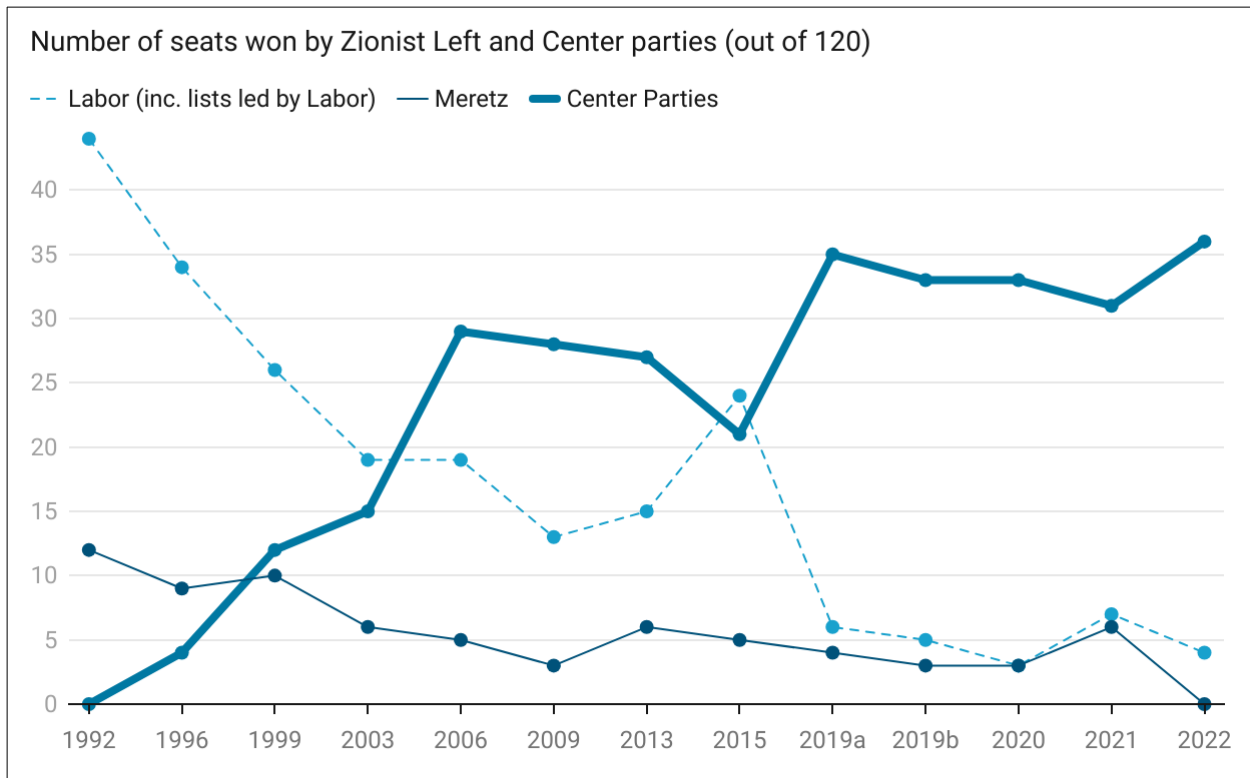


Figure 3.2: *The Zionist Left’s decline and the rise of the Center, 1992–2022 (Historical Data, n.d.).*⁵

A primary source of evidence of this rightward hegemonic shift is the electoral decline of the Liberal Zionist Left. This stream consists of parties such as Labor, Meretz, Yesh Atid, and Blue and White, ranging from the center to the left of the political spectrum, which are simultaneously committed to liberalism, secularism, and Zionism. In the 1990s, the pursuit of a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – including territorial concessions – stood at the forefront of this stream’s demands, and its commitment to liberalism was pronounced (Mandelbaum, 2012). Electorally, the most liberal, left-leaning parties within this stream – Meretz and Labor – have since declined steadily. In 1992, Labor received 44 seats in the Knesset, and Meretz 12 (Figure 3). By 2022, Labor declined to just 4 seats, while Meretz

5 The decision to classify a party as centrist is a matter of subjective judgement, to an extent. I included parties that were widely considered as such by Israeli media sources: The Third Way, The Center Party, Shinui, Kadima, Hatnua, Yesh Atid, Kulanu, Blue and White, and New Hope.

failed to pass the electoral threshold. In their stead, centrist parties have emerged and grown, which maintain some of the Left's core liberal and secular commitments, but are also markedly militaristic and ethnonationalist; they deprioritize or completely omit the demand to end the Occupation, and reject the idea of forming governments backed by Palestinian parties (Yiftachel, 2013).

The triumph of neo-Zionism or neo-Revisionism in Israel is also characterized by the legitimization of the far right, which had previously been rejected across the aisle. Political positions that were once prevalent, but not tolerated in public political discourse have become acceptable, and in some cases, mainstream. Most notable in this regard is the increased visibility of Kahanism, a far-right movement and ideology based on the views of Meir Kahane, who founded the Jewish Defense League in the United States and the "Kach" party in Israel. An "ultra-nationalist" ideology, Kahanism is characterized by four basic principles: "hostility toward non-Jews, nationalism whose main expression is the desire for territorial expansion, hostility to democracy and the justification for the use of violence" (Pedahzur & Canetti-Nisim, 2006). When Meir Kahane became an MK in 1984, his party was boycotted by all (Brinkley, 1988). After the Kahanist Baruch Goldstein killed 29 Palestinian Muslim worshipers and wounded more than 100 at Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque, both the Israeli and US governments labeled Kach and Kahane Chai illegal terrorist organizations (Haberman, 1994; Murphy, 2001).

Yet Kahanism regained its legitimacy. The last two decades have seen the rise of several interrelated far-right parties and lists, such as National Union, The Jewish Home, Yamina ("Rightwards"), and Otzma Yehudit ("Jewish Power"), that included high-profile Kahanist members. While he is not a committed Kahanist, the rise of Avigdor Lieberman – a hawkish, far-

right, secular politician – and his Yisrael Beiteinu (“Israel is Our Home”) party is also indicative of Kahanist ideas seeping into the mainstream: His 2009 election campaign targeted Palestinian citizens, using the slogan “no citizenship without loyalty”, and called for a transfer of Palestinians from Israel into the OPT (Del Sarto, 2017, p. 130). Yisrael Beiteinu secured 15 seats that year and was included in a governing coalition. Bezalel Smotrich, an MK since 2015, publicly espoused several Kahanist positions after being elected to the Knesset: In a 2016 interview, for example, he refused to label Baruch Goldstein a terrorist, and said that it is “true” that Israeli Jews cannot possibly be considered terrorists (Weiss, 2016). He also championed segregation between Arabs and Jews, labeled himself a “proud homophobe”, called Reform Judaism “fake”, and supported a shoot-to-kill policy on Palestinian rock-throwers in the OPT (Graham-Harrison, 2017; “Jewish Home MK: Reform Judaism Is a ‘Fake Religion,’” 2016; Lis, 2016; Pileggi, 2015). Perhaps the most notable Kahanist in the Knesset, Itamar Ben-Gvir, was elected in 2021, and has served as the Minister of National Security since late 2022. A picture of Baruch Goldstein hung in his living room until 2020 (Attali & Alon, 2020). Before running for the Knesset, he worked as a defense lawyer, representing several Jewish Israelis suspected of terrorism and hate crimes, including the convicted perpetrator of the 2017 Duma Arson Attack (who killed three Palestinians: a married couple and their 18-month-old child; Libman, 2020).

Deteriorating majority–minority relations also had a direct impact on Palestinian leaders. In April 2021, Bezalel Smotrich made the following statement before the press: “Arabs are citizens of Israel – for now, at least. They have representatives, MKs – for now, at least” (“Far-Right Party Leader: Arabs Are Citizens of Israel ‘for Now at Least,’” 2021). Speaking to the Knesset in October 2021, he told Arab MKs that they were “here by mistake, because Ben

Gurion did not finish the job and throw you out in 1948” (Shpigel, 2021). Similar remarks, threatening ethnic cleansing, have even become routine among members of larger parties. Speaking to the Knesset in 2022, after Arab students raised Palestinian flags at Nakba commemoration events in several Israeli universities, Israel Katz, a senior member of the Likud party who had previously held several ministerial positions, made the following remark: “Remember 1948, remember our War of Independence – and your Nakba. Ask the elders among you, the grandfathers and grandmothers, and they will explain to you that eventually the Jews wake up and know how to protect themselves and the idea of a Jewish state” (Rapoport & Fakhoury, 2022). “Unless you calm down”, he added, “we will teach you a lesson you will not forget, by any means necessary. You will lose everything. Stop following extremists and respect the Jewish majority and the Jewish state, before it is too late” (Bender, 2022). Journalists Meron Rapoport and Ameer Fakhoury analyzed political discourse over the last two decades, and showed that while threats of a second ethnic cleansing of Palestinians are not entirely new among politicians, they have only recently become mainstream (Rapoport & Fakhoury, 2022).

3.5. The two-pronged Palestinian response

These environmental challenges provoked a new strategic response that bifurcated the Palestinian political community into two camps. The first camp, which I label “hegemonic-accommodationist”, sought to address these challenges by gaining legitimacy – and with it, access to executive power. Exemplified by the UAL, this response appeals to the Zionist mainstream by accepting the Palestinian minority’s subordinate status, agreeing to limit its demands to Israel’s narrowing hegemonic boundaries. Arab representation within Zionist parties, support for them, and participation in grassroots and civil society organizations that have a

manifestly Zionist character can also be considered representative of this response (Orr, 2011). I refer to others within the leadership – those that aintained their ideological opposition to Zionism – as “hegemonic-rejectionists”. Within this camp, I identify two responses. The first is characterized by those who lost faith in Israel’s political institutions: who turned toward other, nonformal, extra-parliamentary or contentious forms of politics. This “disaffected” response is reflected in emergent forms of Palestinian contention within Israel, such as the 2020 protests against organized criminal violence and the May 2021 protests (Haj Yahia, 2020; Tatour, 2021b). It is also reflected in the conditional electoral support given by a large segment of the Palestinian electorate to their parliamentary representatives, as evidenced by the rapidly fluctuating turnout rates (Figure 4). Some disaffected individuals have simply lost faith in the ability to produce political change through Israeli institutions, while a smaller number of others boycott Israeli elections based on anti-Zionist principles (Navot, Swaid, et al., 2023, pp. 245–250). On the other hand, I label those who prefer to preserve the leadership’s established modus operandi over the past 25 years – a counterhegemonic struggle from within, using routine politics in both the civic and political spheres – as “Israeli-institutionalists”. In the electoral political realm, this response can naturally be associated with the AMR, DFPE, NDA, and their associated CSOs and active supporters.

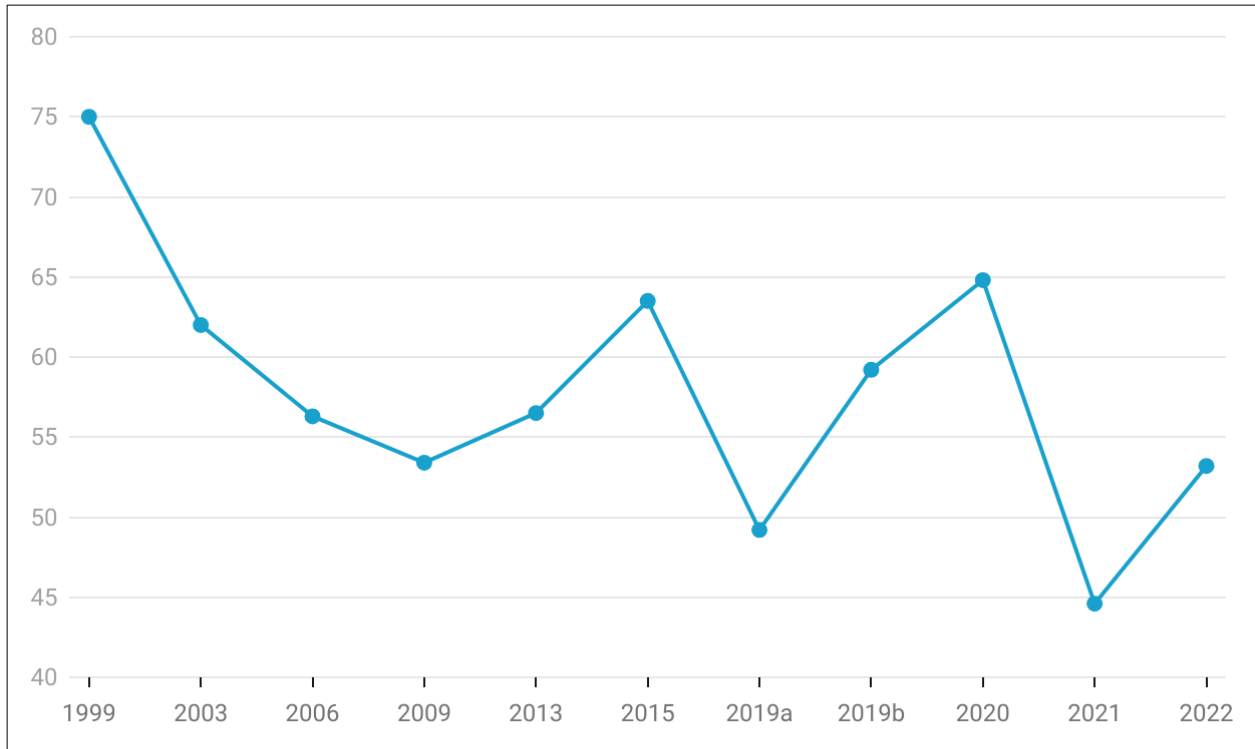


Figure 3.3: Palestinian voter turnout, 1999–2022 (Rudnitzky, 2022).

a. The popular demand for unity

Electoral and survey data strengthen the above-suggested inferences. Palestinian voting patterns, outlined in this article’s third section, indicate a popular demand for unity among the electorate. Palestinian voters responded to the JL’s formation (ahead of the 2015 elections) and reformation (ahead of the September 2019 elections) with considerably higher voter turnout rates (Figure 4), a large share of the vote going to the JL, and a correspondingly small share of the vote for Zionist parties. These trends were reversed each time the JL fragmented. Taken together, these trends indicate a demand for unity as a political strategy within the Palestinian community. At the same time, the low turnout rates that followed the JL’s disbandment and the willingness of a considerable share of the electorate to vote for Jewish alternatives indicate the existence of a

disaffected constituency that has little faith in formal Israeli politics. Recent surveys confirm this interpretation. On one hand, respondents – Palestinian citizens of Israel – have consistently expressed a desire to be included in government over the last decade. In a survey taken ahead of the 2015 general elections, 61% of respondents said their representatives should join a ruling coalition (Khoury, 2015). Ahead of the 2019a elections, 87% of Palestinians stated that “an Arab party in the Israeli government” would be either “very acceptable” or “fairly acceptable” (Scheindlin, 2019). Support for Palestinian MKs formally joining or extending their support for a ruling coalition was similarly high in a survey conducted ahead of the 2019b elections, at 77.8% (Rudnitzky, 2019a). On the other hand, this survey reveals a constituency that lost faith in the prospect of change through Israeli political institutions: 26.4% said they did not intend to vote in the upcoming election, and 42% were undecided (Rudnitzky, 2019a). Respondents who did not intend to vote provided the following reasons for their abstention: 34% pointed to “the harmful attitude and treatment of Israeli Arabs by Israeli Jewish politicians”, 20.6% answered “no party represents me”, and 17.8% objected to voting in principle.

b. The hegemonic-accommodationist response

The hegemonic-accommodationist response can be seen as an attempt to satisfy Palestinians’ demands for greater influence by conceding the bounds of acceptable hegemonic discourse. While the JL never accepted the ethnic hegemonic order, we can nevertheless identify a nascent accommodationist drive within it throughout Israel’s 2019-22 political crisis, as Ayman Odeh sought to build a broad “democratic camp” with the Zionist center-left. Instead of the UAL’s strategy being viewed as new, it is better understood as part of an accommodationist drive that began under Odeh’s leadership. Several interview participants interpreted it as such (Academic

& activist, personal communication, January 9, 2023; Director of an SMO, personal communication, April 20, 2022; Prominent journalist and activist, personal communication, January 2, 2023). Participants had also linked Odeh's nascent and Abbas' outright accommodationism, on one hand, with the impossible quagmire within which the community's leaders found themselves, on the other; while many were critical of accommodationism, they also understood it as a natural reaction to the myriad contradictory pressures exerted on the leadership, including the raised electoral threshold, voters' demand for unity and access, potential coalitional partners' demands, increased persecution, and mounting legal barriers. Indeed, 14 out of the 24 participants interviewed after the JL's disbandment expressed frustration with the political environment: They listed racism, hostility, and exclusion as professional barriers that prevented them from working effectively.

Following its split from the JL, the UAL furthered the logic of accommodation by completely omitting the demand to restructure ethnic hierarchies in Israel. Its approach was openly opportunistic: Its leader, Mansour Abbas, argued that the Arab leadership should aim to be included in any future government, including one led by the Right (Makover-Blikov, 2020). Shortly after the elections, he defined himself as a "proud Arab and Muslim, citizen of Israel," without referencing Palestinian identity, and he declared that his party was open to collaboration across the Israeli political spectrum (Bender & Vaserman, 2021). Following the formation of a coalition government, Abbas stated that he would have preferred to join a "fully right-wing government", since that would have resulted in greater "recognition from across the Israeli political and social spectrum" ("Mansur Abbas on Joining the Coalition", 2021). These statements show a clear strategic reorientation toward accommodating a rigid, unyielding ethnic

hegemonic order, taking steps not to challenge it by limiting the scope of the minority's demands (instead focusing on limited areas such as material improvements for Arab localities, combating organized crime, and improving infrastructure; Younis, 2021).

UAL-affiliated individuals openly confirmed that the party's decision to drop its counter-hegemonic commitments was strategic in nature, a way to gain legitimacy and, with it, access to power. In media interviews, UAL leaders stressed that the Palestinian minority must reject the call to restructure ethnic relations within Israel, accept Israel's Jewish character, and focus on improvements in other areas ("Abbas Confronts 'Kul al-Arab'", 2021). The party's ability to pass the election threshold reveals a substantial constituency that shares these priorities. Indeed, UAL-affiliated participants who were interviewed while the party was a coalition partner expressed pride in this achievement. For example, a UAL-affiliated mayor said:

"Everybody knows that I belong to the UAL. People treat me differently now. They consider me a member of government ... Once, for example, an official within the Israel Land Administration acted in a way I did not like. So, I called Dr. Mansour Abbas, and he called [this official's boss] in Jerusalem. The official then called Mansour and said, 'We can sit down and work it out, why did you have to call the Jerusalem office?' This is a simple example. Dr. Mansour Abbas' presence [in government] provides us heads of Arab local councils with strong support, regardless of whether we belong to the UAL or the JL" (Head of an Arab Locality, personal communication, April 5, 2022).

c. The hegemonic-rejectionist response and the spread of disaffection

Unlike the accommodationists, rejectionists maintained their counter-hegemonic commitments. Politicians from this camp blamed the UAL for the schism, conveying resentment and a sense of betrayal. An MK said the following:

MK: “To those who still expect us to run together [with the UAL], I say: so long as the UAL is willing to cooperate with Kahanists in government; so long as it does not raise the occupation as a top priority, and so long as they continue to vote in favor of horrible, terrible proposals ... What can we do with them? We have no reason to cooperate with them. They are the ones who disbanded the whole affair – unilaterally. Yes, they tried to blame us, but they are wrong. They adopted a defeatist political position, and ... are you familiar with Malcolm X?”

Abu Rass: “Yes.”

MK: “You know, they decided to be the house slave” (Member of Knesset, personal communication, January 10, 2023).

In a similar vein, Ayman Odeh, chairman of the DFPE, called Mansour Abbas a “pet Arab” in a 2023 interview for an Israeli talk show (Tocatly, 2023).

As stated above, while many rejectionists disapproved of the UAL’s actions, they also interpreted them as an opportunistic response to a closed, rigid political environment. Both interview and survey data suggest a growing disaffected constituency within this camp, rejecting or finding little value in engaging with Israeli politics. This rejection can be ideological (deeming Zionist institutions illegitimate) or circumstantial (believing participation cannot bring about

meaningful changes). This sentiment is reflected in declining voter turnout rates and the turn toward other, nonformal or contentious political means. While Palestinian voter turnout has consistently been lower than Jewish turnout in general elections, the record low levels following the JL's disbandment before 2019a and 2021 indicate that this constituency is growing. While the survey data presented above suggest that a segment of the disaffected consistency has always been ideologically opposed to participating in Israel's general elections, it also indicates the constituency's growth. Furthermore, interview data reveal a class of young professionals who have recently become disaffected: They lamented the breakup of the JL, were critical of the turns taken by the Palestinian leadership, and wished for the formation of a new representative party or organization (Director of an SMO, personal communication, January 8, 2023; Prominent activist, personal communication, January 25, 2022, personal communication, January 9, 2023, personal communication, January 11, 2023; Prominent journalist and activist, personal communication, January 2, 2023). They saw the JL as a professionally convenient forum, since it integrated Palestinian organizations within the civic sphere (Jamal, 2020, pp. 119–170). Conversely, the List's breakup was professionally burdensome for them, as was the UAL's inclusion in a coalition alongside right-wing parties (Prominent activist, personal communication, January 25, 2022). Some participants cited the May 2021 Events as a turning point, prompting reevaluation of career decisions (Director of an SMO, personal communication, April 20, 2022; Prominent activist, personal communication, May 18, 2022, personal communication, January 11, 2023; Prominent journalist and activist, personal communication, January 2, 2023). Indeed, the Events – also known as the “Unity Intifada” – can, in themselves, be considered as a symptom of disaffection and an expression of the Palestinian demand for unity, which is not unique to the

Green Line (Tatour, 2021b). These grassroots protests were unguided by traditional political elites; the traditional leadership dragged its feet during the Events, while on-line and grassroots activists took the initiative, published manifestos, and organized protests.

3.6. Conclusions

This article has shown that the Palestinian leadership's organizational recalibrations reflect divergent strategic responses to Israel's increasingly entrenched ethnic hegemonic order and its closed opportunity structure. In line with recent literature, its focus is on leaders' perceptions: while objective shifts in political opportunities matter, they alone cannot fully explain elite behavior. Instead, we should focus on leaders' attribution of opportunity and threat. Faced with a new structural barrier – the increased electoral threshold – Palestinian leaders responded with unity, sparking genuine enthusiasm among the electorate. But when unity alone failed to satisfy their constituents' demands for political access, facing Israel's rigid hegemonic boundaries, sections of the Palestinian leadership reoriented strategically toward accommodation. Interview, election, and survey data indicate that this process was accelerated by the repeated failures to form a Palestinian-backed alternative to the Netanyahu government during Israel's 2019–22 crisis. The hegemonic-rejectionist camp, on the other hand, maintained its opposition to the hegemonic ethnic order as a primary political principle. All the while, a disaffected constituency has grown within this camp, which lost faith in the possibility of change from within, preferring to establish alternative, communitarian institutions and in some instances turning toward nonformal, contentious political action. In contrast to past scholarship, which emphasizes the community's internal ideological divisions (Ghanem, 2001), this article points toward this emergent axis, defined by actors' strategic approach to Israel's hegemonic ethnic order. While the

community's internal ideological divisions doubtlessly remain electorally and organizationally relevant, the emergence of the hegemonic-accommodationist response to the community's continued social and political exclusion – embodied in the UAL's inclusion in a government alongside the Israeli Right – cemented this axis as the primary organizing principle of Palestinian Israeli politics in the twenty-first century.

Scholars have long noted that, in societies with deep ethnic divisions, co-ethnic elites are incentivized to use extreme rhetoric and tactics when competing with one another, a process known as ethnic outbidding. In recent years, new scholarship has identified additional dynamics of intra-ethnic competition, including ethnic underbidding, when actors moderate their stance vis-à-vis the titular ethnic majority while maintaining communitarian support bases (Coakley, 2008; Zuber, 2013). This case serves as an example of this process, clarifying institutional and strategic–interactive, mutually constitutive dynamics that can give rise to majority accommodation and underbidding. Additionally, this study contributes to the growing literature on the causes of organizational fragmentation within social and ethnopolitical movements. My analysis suggests an n-shaped, curvilinear relationship between organizational cohesion and political opportunity: political actors are incentivized to reconsider their strategic approaches in extraordinarily challenging, closed political environments (causing fragmentation), set aside internal strategic and ideological differences in moderately challenging environments (leading to increased unity), and differentiate along ideological lines in exceptionally open political environments (causing fragmentation). This pattern follows Palestinian elites' perceptions of opportunity and its lack since 2015. Interestingly, Palestinian politics in Israel may have generally followed this pattern since 1948: during the state's earliest years, when Israel imposed

military rule on its Palestinian citizens, the leadership was fragmented (Cohen, 2010, pp. 11–64; Pappé, 2011, pp. 46–93). In the early 1970s, when political opportunity structures opened for Palestinian political participation within Israel, the leadership cohered. In the 1990s, which were characterized by further institutional openings and widespread hope for positive change, the leadership differentiated along ideological lines in the Knesset and within the civic sphere (Ghanem, 2001, pp. 175–200; Pappé, 2011, pp. 201–228). I hope future researchers test this theoretical possibility and continue to explore the causes of outbidding and fragmentation using evidence from this and other cases.

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Chapter 4 Ethnic and Lateral Underbidding: Evidence from Israel and Turkey

Recent scholarship has moved past the outbidding model of inter-ethnic competition, revealing a variety of alternative strategies. This article explores these alternatives among the Palestinian and Kurdish leaderships within Israel and Turkey. While elites chose underbidding rather than outbidding in both cases, only Kurdish elites successfully bid laterally, attracting support from among members of the Turkish majority. This difference can be explained by examining changes in the ethnic hegemonic order, or the way in which ethnic hierarchies are institutionalized, and the extent to which they are understood to be normal.

Keywords: Ethnic outbidding; conflict; ethnic party competition; Palestinian citizens of Israel, Kurdish citizens of Turkey.

4.1. Introduction

Recent scholarship has begun to unpack the strategies ethnic actors use in intra- and inter-ethnic competitions. Moving beyond the classical, “outbidding” model, which predicted that ethnic factions will adopt increasingly more radical positions and strategies to secure the support of co-ethnic constituencies (Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972), new research emphasizes the variety of strategies at their disposal (Coakley, 2008; Zuber, 2013). Still, these new studies only begin to explain why and when ethnic actors choose certain strategic alternatives over others. What factors shape ethnic leaders’ strategic choices? What causes ethnic elites to extend their appeal across ethnic boundaries? To answer these questions, I examine ethnic party strategies among the Kurdish and Palestinian leaderships within Turkey and Israel. Tracing broad historical developments and focusing on recent electoral challenges – Turkey’s 2023 election and Israel’s 2019-2022 political crisis – I identify differences between these two, otherwise quite similar cases. Both the Kurdish and Palestinian leaderships adopted more moderate positions in their bids to join broad alliances bent on unseating long-serving incumbents (Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu and Turkey’s Recep Tayyip Erdoğan). In both cases, these broad alliances had ultimately failed. A notable difference, however, pertains to these leaderships’ appeal: while both the Kurdish, Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) and the Palestinian, Joint List (JL) attempted to position themselves simultaneously as ethnic parties and as broad-tent, left-wing parties, only the HDP had consistently succeeded in its lateral bid for ethnic Turkish support. Failing to breach the bounds of legitimacy in Israel, the JL splintered into separate parties, pursuing different strategies, including ethnic underbidding (adopting more moderate positions while focusing

exclusively on the co-ethnic community), static bidding (maintaining the exclusive focus on the co-ethnic community without changing political positions) and ethnic outbidding.

I argue that the permeability of ethnic hegemonic boundaries – in other words, the extent and manner in which ethnic hierarchies are institutionalized – explains these differences. Turkey’s historically more permeable ethnic hegemonic boundaries explains the Kurdish HDP’s ability to simultaneously act as an ethnic and as a broad-tent, socialist party; Israel’s closed boundaries explains the JL’s failure in that regard. Ethnic majorities in polities that rely on enforced assimilation to maintain an ethnic hegemonic order, as in Turkey, are more likely to have historically fostered cross-cutting identities to facilitate minority assimilation. These identities can be mobilized by ethnic elites (representing majorities and minorities alike), facilitating lateral bidding strategies (enabling minority parties to reach across ethnic divides). In comparison, polities that rely on discriminatory exclusion to maintain their ethnic hegemonic orders, like Israel, are not likely to have salient cross-cutting identities for elites to draw upon. As a result, these polities have highly ethnically segmented electoral markets, with virtually no cross-ethnic voting (Horowitz, 1985, p. 342) – an unfavorable environment for lateral bidders. This explains the JL’s failure to establish a broad, inter-ethnic coalition with elements of the Israeli Left, and the absence of lateral bidding strategies among Palestinian parties in the latest Israeli election (2022). Additionally, the Palestinian case shows that moderation can prevail in exclusive and repressive environments, and under institutional constraints that are usually associated with outbidding. I conclude by urging scholars to analyze majority-minority interactions as dynamic phenomena, to incorporate structured inequalities into their analyses, and to view strategy formation as a relational, mutually-constitutive, context-dependent process.

In the next section (2), I overview the theoretical literature on within-group competition, outlining the variety of strategies ethnic parties can adopt. I then trace strategic developments in the Kurdish (section 3) and Palestinian (section 4) cases, establishing values for the dependent variable, ethnic party strategies. I also trace the ways in which Kurdish and Palestinian elites' strategic choices were influenced by changes in the permeability of ethnic hegemonic boundaries – the extent and manner in which exclusion is institutionalized by ethnic majorities in ethnic states – throughout these sections, thus establishing values for the independent variable. This is followed by an in depth discussion of this variable and its role (section 5).

4.2. Ethnic party strategies

Originally formulated by Rabushka & Shepsle (1972) and later elaborated by Horowitz (1985), the ethnic outbidding model of intra-ethnic competition predicts that factions will turn toward increasingly extreme positions to secure the support of their ethnic communities. Outbidding is more likely in competitive political environments (for example, in majoritarian, multi-party democracies), and when ethnic cleavages are salient. In an influential study, Horowitz (1985) argued that since ethnic parties generally cannot “defray competitive losses by diversifying [their] clientele” (since parties can mostly appeal to their own communities when ethnic cleavages are politically salient; p. 344), within-group competition becomes a matter of political survival which, in turn, incentivizes outbidding as a means of preserving the ethnic support base. In addition to driving leaders to adopt more extreme ideological positions in the formal, electoral arena, outbidding may also drive the adoption of more radical, violent strategies (Horowitz, 1985, pp. 358–359; Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972, p. 83). In other words, in deeply divided polities, where “electoral markets” are both competitive and “segmented” (where ethnicity is politically

salient, and people mostly vote for members of their own ethnic community), competition tends to occur within and not across ethnic party lines (Horowitz, 1985, p. 342). In these settings, parties – including non-ethnic, broad-tent parties – are incentivized to articulate and choose ever more radical positions along the ethnic dimension of political competition; to be perceived as the best protectors of the ethnic group’s claims, aspirations and interests (Horowitz, 1985, pp. 337–338). Scholars still use ethnic outbidding to explain intra-ethnic fragmentation processes, and as a model of conflict escalation (see, for example: Haklai, 2011, pp. 146–172; Vogt et al., 2021). Other scholars investigate outbidding’s impact on a variety of variables, including conflict dynamics, goal accomplishment and the formation of tactical preferences (Cunningham et al., 2012; Pearlman, 2011; Toft, 2007).

As part of the scholarly drive to disaggregate ethnic groups into organizations (Pearlman & Cunningham, 2012), new theories of intra-ethnic competition have shown that ethnic outbidding is not inevitable, but rather one of several possible competitive dynamics. In an early, influential piece, Chandra (2005) highlights the importance of institutional context in determining the prevalent dynamic of competition within and among ethnic groups; contrary to the classical outbidding model’s predictions, Chandra shows that inter-ethnic coalitions can be fostered by appropriate institutional incentives, even when ethnicity is salient and the political system is competitive. Building upon this foundation, scholars began to clarify which specific institutional and strategic configurations are most conducive to outbidding (Coakley, 2008; Mitchell et al., 2009; Sanjaume-Calvet & Riera-Gil, 2022; Stewart & McGauvran, 2020; Toft, 2007; Zuber, 2013; Zuber & Szöcsik, 2015). While there is some disagreement between them, these studies generally agree that: (1) ethnic outbidding is not inevitable; (2) the likelihood of

outbidding increases with the number of parties or organizations within an ethnic movement; (3) competitive, majoritarian electoral systems are amenable to fragmentation and outbidding; and (4) the existence of salient, cross-cutting sociopolitical cleavages, producing non- and multi-ethnic competitors, disadvantages outbidders.

In addition to specifying the institutional and strategic conditions that are conducive to outbidding, scholars have begun to unpack outbidding's alternatives. These scholars have shown that cross-ethnic appeals can be strategically sound, even under conditions that had previously been considered conducive to outbidding. Coakley (2008), for example, shows that hegemonic ethnic elites are challenged not only by outbidders, but also by "nonethnic counterbidders who seek to impose an alternative, nonethnic cleavage to replace the existing one", and by "ethnic underbidders who define themselves as centrist and abjure all ethnic loyalties" (p. 766). Developing Coakley's typology further, Zuber (2013) constructed a matrix of six possible strategies ethnic elites can pursue when competing for the support of the co-ethnic constituency (Table 1). These strategies logically emerge from the intersection of two criteria: the positional criterion (how moderate or radical are the group's claims compared to preceding, co-ethnic actors?), and the appeal criterion (does the group appeal exclusively to the ethnic community, or not?). Thus, ethnic outbidders appeal exclusively to their co-ethnic constituency, while adopting more radical demands on the ethnic dimension of political contestation, as compared to existing competitors. *Ethnic underbidders* make more moderate demands on that dimension, while maintaining an exclusive appeal to the co-ethnic community. Alongside these exclusive, ethnic bidding dynamics, Zuber identifies *lateral* bidding strategies as theoretical possibilities, whereby political actors appeal to new constituencies across the ethnic divide. *Lateral underbidders* do so

while adopting more moderate stances than their competitors. While *lateral outbidding* is theoretically possible, combining a lateral appeal with “more radical demands on the ethnic dimension”, Zuber acknowledges that, in practice, “it would be hard to sell a party to a new, cross-cutting, electorate while toughening the stance regarding the interests of one of the groups” (Zuber, 2013, p. 761). Taken together, these lateral bidding strategies mirror and elaborate upon Coakley’s concept of “nonethnic counterbidding”.

| <i>Appeal criterion</i> | <i>Positional criterion</i> | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| | More moderate | No shift | More radical |
| Exclusive | Ethnic underbidding | Static bidding | Ethnic outbidding |
| Non-exclusive | Lateral underbidding | Lateral bidding | Lateral outbidding |

Table 4.1: Conceptualizing ethnic party strategies (Zuber, 2013, p. 761).

While these studies provide a solid theoretical foundation, they only begin to explain why and when these strategic alternatives arise. What leads ethnic actors to choose one strategy over another? While Coakley offers an invaluable foundation, specifying both ethnic underbidding and lateral bids as theoretical possibilities, his study’s conclusion is broad; it is not so much about the conditions that produce outbidding’s alternatives as it is about those that enhance the prospects for *all* challengers in an ethnically bifurcated electoral system – outbidders, underbidders and lateral bidders alike (2008, pp. 788–789). Zuber (2012, 2013) argues that ethnic actors’ strategic choices are mutually constitutive, within and across ethnic lines: ethnic parties respond to the political landscape and to each other, adapting their strategies based on

environmental and interactive cues. She also argues that we should pay attention to ethnic actors' goals: those who prioritize policy change face different incentives compared to those seeking access to power, impacting their choices (Zuber, 2013). Other notable studies include Sanjaume-Calvet & Riera-Gil (2022), who trace the declining importance of ethnicity among secessionist parties during a period of heightened territorial conflict in Catalonia, and Stewart & McGauvran (2020), who advocate incorporating ideology as an independent variable in any examination of ethnic party strategies. What is the impact of environmental, institutional and strategic-interactive factors on strategy formation among ethnic parties? What leads ethnic elites to underbid one another, and to bid laterally, across ethnic divides? While the reviewed literature provides a strong foundation, it remains unripe, with a small number of studies offering consistent but broad conclusions. This study aims to expand it. In the following sections, I trace the ways in which ethnic minority elites' strategic choices were influenced by the permeability of ethnic hegemonic boundaries, using evidence from Israel and Turkey.

4.3. Kurdish mobilization in Turkey

The Kurdish people has traditionally inhabited a region that spans the borders of modern-day Syria, Iran, Iraq and Turkey. The latter hosts 15 million Kurds – the largest of these communities, comprising around 20% of Turkey's population (the exact figure is contested, since official Turkish census data no longer include ethnolinguistic indicators; Gourlay, 2020, p. 5). Organized Kurdish nationalism emerged following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The young national movement adopted a strategy of cooperation on the basis of cross-cutting identities: the community's leaders – traditional elites who had enjoyed a large degree of political and cultural autonomy under

Ottoman rule – did not petition for statehood, at the time. Instead, they emphasized Kurdish-Turkish fraternity, mobilizing constituents in support of Turkey’s founding father, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his Turkish national movement on the basis of a shared, Muslim identity (Bozarslan, 2008, pp. 337–342). Following the state’s establishment, however, the new Kemalist¹ regime pursued assimilationist policies, with the aim of “Turkifying” minority populations. Use of the Kurdish language was prohibited, and Kurdish cultural expressions – like traditional names and dress – were banned (Gourlay, 2020, pp. 19–32). These policies triggered Kurdish revolts – 27 in the state’s first two decades – which were militarily repressed at great cost to the central government (Bozarslan, 2008, pp. 338–342; Kurt, 2021, pp. 508–513). Following these episodes of mobilization and repression, Kurdish politics entered a “period of silence” which lasted until the early ‘60s, when a new generation of educated youth arose to lead a reinvigorated, if fragmented, movement (Bozarslan, 2008, p. 343). This revival is linked to the development of a broader, radical left-wing movement within Turkey, in the wake of the 1960 military coup, which was sympathetic to the Kurdish struggle. Thus, the movement reoriented, reaching across ethnic divides on the basis of a shared, secular, leftist ideology rather than a religious Muslim identity.

Kurdish politics radicalized further in the ‘70s, as new organizations were formed – most notably, the militant, Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in 1978. After Turkey’s 1980 coup, the new regime reinforced the ban on Kurdish culture, arrested and tortured thousands of Kurdish activists and militants, and dismissed legally elected mayors (Bozarslan, 2008, pp. 349–350). Indeed, the years following the coup were marked by increased Kurdish exclusion and

¹ Following common usage, this article uses “Kemalism” in reference to Turkey’s official, secular, statist and ethnonational founding ideology (Casier & Jongerden, 2011).

repression. The PKK consolidated organizationally, incorporating several smaller organizations into its structure, and growing into a mass movement with a wide grassroots support base (Gunes, 2012, pp. 101–123). Within the PKK, power became increasingly concentrated around its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, who had initiated an armed campaign in 1984 with the aim of establishing an independent Kurdistan (Saeed, 2017, pp. 98–99). The campaign, which started with targeted raids on police and military outposts in rural areas, expanded to include more frequent, large-scale confrontations with the Turkish military, reaching a peak in the early 1990s (Gunes, 2012, pp. 101–123). It continued, with some interruptions, until Öcalan's capture in 1999. While the PKK mostly targeted the military and police, the organization had also targeted civilians (Gunes, 2012, p. 108). As a result of the state's counterinsurgency campaign, tens of thousands of Kurds were killed, and millions displaced from the countryside into cities across Anatolia (the exact figures are contested: see Gunes, 2012, p. 131; Kirişçi, 2008, p. 184). One consequence of this dispersal was the geographic spread of support for the PKK.

Turkey's first pro-Kurdish parliamentary party – the People's Labor Party (HEP) – was established in 1990, at the height of the Kurdish insurgency, by a group of MPs who were expelled from the Kemalist, Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) for expressing support for the Kurdish cause. This short-lived party was banned by Turkey's constitutional court in 1993, as were each of the subsequent nine Kurdish parties (save for the latest one, the Peoples' Democratic Party / HDP; O'Connor, 2017, pp. 9–11). Neither the HEP nor its successors had officially been affiliated with the PKK; the HEP's members were not all Kurdish. Thus, since the HEP's establishment in 1993, the Kurdish movement within Turkey has been reorganized into two loosely-interacting wings – legal-electoral and illegal-insurgent. While the two wings are

intertwined, the connection is only informal: since the PKK benefits from the existence of sympathetic political parties with wide support bases in parliament, it does not antagonize them, but it also does not officially endorse them. At the same time, Turkey's pro-Kurdish parties benefit from the ambiguous nature of this relationship, allowing them to maintain credibility in the eyes of radical Kurdish voters while maintaining a level of support from the broader Turkish public (O'Connor, 2017, p. 14). Indeed, while Turkey's successive Kurdish parties are undoubtedly ethnic parties, speaking in the name of the Kurdish community, they had consistently appealed for the support of the broader Turkish Left, extending in the electoral arena the lateral bidding strategies that were pursued by the movement's illegal wing in the wake of the 1960 coup. Turkey's Kurdish forming parties had consistently chosen a socialist-leftist orientation, and formed formal alliances with other, left-wing parties (at the cost of alienating conservative Kurds; Alptekin, 2018, pp. 216–218). The exact level of support that Kurdish parties were able to attract from among the ethnic Turkish community is not clear, but has likely hovered around 1%-2% of the total ethnic Turkish vote nationally, increasing substantially over the last decade to as much as 9% in 2015 (Kutlu, 2018; Livny, 2016).

The PKK moderated its stance in 1993, when it declared the first of several unilateral ceasefires. Over the following decade, its ideology and demands shifted gradually from Marxism-Leninism and the demand for Kurdish independence toward libertarian socialism and the demand for autonomy within Turkey. Inspired by Murray Bookchin's concept of social ecology, Öcalan formulated these ideas, from prison, into a cohesive political philosophy dubbed "Democratic Confederalism", which was officially adopted by the PKK in 2000 (O'Connor, 2017, p. 16). Within this left-libertarian framework, "the term democratic autonomy began to be

used to refer to the Turkey-wise, the term democratic confederalism to the region-wise and the term democratic modernity to the global-wise application of Öcalan's new programme" (Yeğen, 2021, p. 327). The broader Kurdish movement quickly fell in line, adopting this philosophy, which continues to guide both its legal-electoral and illegal-insurgent wings (Gunes, 2012, pp. 135–174). Thus, the illegal-insurgent wing of the Kurdish movement moved toward moderation on the positional criterion, while the movement's legal-electoral wing continued to bid laterally, reaching out for support from among the broader Turkish left.

The conflict gradually subsided in the early 2000s, culminating in a formal peace process between the PKK and the Turkish government, initiated in 2013, which raised hopes for a permanent political resolution. This period saw the electoral growth of the movement's legal wing, which had its legitimacy enhanced and ideology reinvigorated by Öcalan's autonomist vision (Yeğen, 2021, p. 328). Kurdish civil society and grassroots organizations openly held panels and conferences, the Kurdish cause featuring prominently in public and media discourse. This culminated with the pro-Kurdish HDP's historic electoral achievement in the June 2015 general elections, surpassing the 10% electoral threshold with 6 million votes (13.12%), securing 80 (out of 550) seats in parliament and denying incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) a parliamentary majority for the first time since his ascension in 2002 (Gurses & Romano, 2021, p. 291). With its broader appeal and more moderate stance, the HDP succeeded in mobilizing new voters, including ethnic Turks, and Kurds living in Turkish-majority urban centers (Alptekin, 2018; Yeğen, 2021, p. 329). Using Zuber's typology, the movement's legal-electoral wing doubled down on its inclusive, lateral bidding strategy, appealing across the ethnic divide.

On July 20 that year, an Islamic State (IS) bomber attacked a pro-Kurdish event near the Syrian border, killing at least 33 participants. Two days later, two Turkish police officers were killed. The Turkish government held the PKK responsible, initiating a major military offensive that ended the peace process. The government's campaign targeted both wings of the Kurdish movement: in what amounted to "one of the most brutal phases in the three-decade-long conflict", nearly all Kurdish mayors were removed, and thousands of HDP members were arrested, including former presidential candidate Selahattin Demirtaş (Gurses & Romano, 2021, pp. 291–299). Scholars and commentators linked the government's political turn, its abandonment of the peace process and the subsequent campaign against the Kurdish movement to myriad processes including (1) the rise of IS in Iraq and Syria, (2) diminishing prospects for Turkish ascension into the European Union, (3) the 2016 Turkish coup attempt and its repercussions, including the declaration of a state of emergency and crackdowns on state employees and civil society organizations (CSOs), (5) Erdoğan's push to aggrandize the executive and (6) his embrace of the ethnonationalist far-right (Günay & Yörük, 2019; Gurses & Romano, 2021; Hoffman, 2023). Some have argued that Erdoğan's pivot to ethnonationalism was driven by competitive electoral processes – above all, the need to counter the HDP's electoral gains (Günay & Yörük, 2019). Kurdish-Turkish relations had not meaningfully improved since. Indeed, the conflict's international dimension – involving Kurdish groups in northern Syria and Iraq – had escalated. While the PKK responded with violence, the movement's electoral wing maintained its lateral bid to the broader Turkish left.

Before analyzing the movement's electoral wing's reaction to these developments, it is worth noting the existence of parallel, conservative, Islamist stream within the Kurdish

community. Both Kurdish and Turkish leaders have historically competed for this stream's support (Akdağ, 2015). Religious Turkish leaders, who are unsympathetic to the Kurdish movement but are also critical of Turkey's official, secular Kemalist national ideology – have mobilized Islam to earn the Kurds' support as early as the '50s. In these early years, “repressive state policies stayed in place, but the state strategically used religion to align Kurdish representatives. This strategy was followed by other political parties both from left and right wings in the next decades” (Kurt, 2021, p. 516). The '80s saw the emergence of several Islamist Kurdish organizations. While some, like the Kurdistan Islamic Party (PIK), were committed to Kurdish nationalism, others – most notably, Kurdish Hizbullah (unrelated to the Lebanese organization) – rejected the PKK's secular nationalism and prioritized a pan-Islamist vision for Turkey (Kurt, 2021, pp. 520–524). Kurdish Hizbullah fought openly against the PKK in the 90's, receiving unofficial government support until Öcalan's capture in 1999. With the adoption of Democratic Confederalism, the PKK broke from its strictly anti-religious, Marxist-Leninist commitments, giving rise to a “Kurdish-Islamic synthesis”, accepting and incorporating religiosity into its ideology to a greater extent, effectively underbidding the community's Islamist organizations (appealing to new members of the co-ethnic community while adopting more moderate stances; Kurt, 2021, p. 524). Kurdish Islamists responded to the PKK's reorientation by radicalizing their stances (vis-a-vis the ethnic dimension of politics, which Zuber's typology aims to capture), shifting toward overt nationalism, calling for autonomy, as well as constitutional recognition of the Kurdish language and culture. Thus, in response to the PKK's underbidding, the Islamists adopted more radical stances on the positional criterion, attempting to outbid their rivals. This is best illustrated by the emergence of the Free Cause Party

(HÜDA PAR), an electoral offshoot of Kurdish Hizbullah – in 2012. Though it is still active, its impact has been minor; it never surpassed 100,000 votes in general elections (Kurt, 2021, p. 527).

The turn of the millennium saw strong Kurdish support for mainstream Islamists, however. Most notably, Erdoğan's AKP fielded impressive 29%, 53% and 59% of the vote in Kurdish-majority provinces in the 2002, 2007 and 2011 general elections, respectively (Girasun, 2023b). These figures fell to 28% and 35% in 2015 and 2018 – a remarkable decline which has been attributed to the collapse of the peace process, the counterinsurgency campaign and Erdoğan's turn toward exclusionary right-wing ethnonationalism (Günay & Yörük, 2019). Still, in Istanbul – “the world's largest Kurdish city” – only a quarter of the Kurdish population voted for the HDP in the historic, 2015 elections (Hoffman, 2023). Strategic or otherwise, the decision to vote for mainstream candidates indicates that, while the PKK-led national movement is popular, it is not hegemonic. Overall, this complicated history illustrates the electoral significance of the Kurdish vote to all actors on the Turkish political stage, and Kurdish actors' ability to shift strategies, including both ethnic outbidding and ethnic underbidding to secure the support of the co-ethnic constituency.

Still, the HDP maintained its broad appeal, betting on lateral underbidding, despite the conflict's reignition. It adopted more moderate positions compared to those that characterized the preceding two decades, forming new, formal and informal alliances with the Turkish Center (Gourlay, 2020, pp. 211–215). The 2018 general elections – the first after Turkey's 2017 switch from a parliamentary to a presidential system – demonstrated these trends quite clearly. Ahead of the elections, the HDP pressed to be formally included in the newly-established Nation Alliance

– a broad coalition of opposition parties led by the Kemalist, Republican People’s Party (CHP) – but was rejected. HDP chairman Selahattin Demirtaş ran for president from prison, receiving 8.4% of the vote, and his party 11.7% of the parliamentary vote (Fishman, 2019, p. 358). In the 2019 local elections, the HDP refrained from running its own candidates in Turkey’s Western, Turkish-majority provinces, opting to support centrists who had better chances of winning, including CHP candidates (Gourlay, 2020, pp. 213–214). Despite the 2022 lowering of the electoral threshold from 10% to 7%, which would have allowed it to pass with relative ease, the HDP formed an electoral alliance – the Labor and Freedom Alliance – with several non-ethnic left-wing parties ahead of the 2023 general elections (Huck, 2023; “Turkey Lowers National Threshold to 7%,” 2022). Continuing the pattern that began with the 2019 local elections, the HDP and the Labor and Freedom Alliance refrained from running their own presidential candidate, instead opting to support the CHP’s candidate, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, over concerns of splitting the center-left vote (Hacaoglu & Kozok, 2023).

Helming a wide electoral alliance that encompassed Turkish nationalists, conservatives, Islamists and Kemalists – supported by the leftist Labor and Freedom Alliance – Kılıçdaroğlu performed well in polls ahead of the 2023 general elections (Girasun, 2023a). While the Kurdish vote was considered pivotal to the success of either one of the main presidential candidates, it seemed clear that Kılıçdaroğlu would secure it. This, despite “long years of ignoring Kurdish voters and significant historical baggage”, as Girasun argues (2023a). Erdoğan leveraged this to his advantage by accusing Kılıçdaroğlu of aligning with “terrorists” (Hayatsever, 2023). Kılıçdaroğlu secured a majority of the Kurdish vote in the first round, but since no candidate secured the requisite majority (Erdoğan received 49.52%, Kılıçdaroğlu 44.88%, ultranationalist

Sinan Oğan 5.17%, and Kemalist Muharrem İnce 0.43% of the votes), a runoff was declared between the top two candidates. Kılıçdaroğlu's rhetoric shifted noticeably, taking an ethnonationalist and anti-migrant tone, alienating his Kurdish and left-wing support base. He vowed to expel Syrian refugees, and struck a deal for the endorsement of Ümit Özdağ, the leader of the right-wing, anti-immigrant Victory Party (ZP; Gavin & Poyrazlar, 2023). Kurdish turnout fell in the second round, though support for Kılıçdaroğlu was still highest in Kurdish-majority provinces compared to the national average. Erdoğan won the presidency with 52.18% of the vote.

The HDP has bid laterally over the last two general election cycles, appealing to the broader Turkish public while taking increasingly more moderate stances; the Kurdish movement's legal-electoral wing engaged in lateral underbidding as opportunities arose for cooperation with the Kemalist center-left. As this section shows, the movement's lateral bidding is not a recent innovation, but has rather been a consistent choice for both wings of the Kurdish movement since the '80s. Still, the turn toward Democratic Confederalism in 2000 and the HDP's actions since 2015 stand out as turning points, in which Kurdish leaders moderated their stances while extending their appeal further across ethnic boundaries. Meanwhile, Erdoğan, who has traditionally relied on the religious-conservative Kurdish vote, representing an Islamist alternative to Kemalism, turned to ethnic outbidding in response to the increased power of the Kemalist-Kurdish, CHP-HDP alliance. Facing ethnic outbidding from Erdoğan over the last two election cycles, the Kılıçdaroğlu-led CHP relented, following suit; thus, the top two mainstream candidates outbid each other ahead of the presidential runoff, competing for the support of the Turkish ethnonationalist right at the expense of the Kurds. Though this trend is most evident in

the 2023 presidential elections, it can be traced back to Erdoğan's turn away from his Kurdish support base and toward the ethnonationalist right in 2015.

4.4. Palestinian mobilization in Israel

About two million, or 21% of Israel's citizens are Palestinian Arabs ("Israeli Population Rises to 9.795 Million on Rosh Hashanah Eve," 2023). Scholars divide this community's political history into four distinct phases, based on its leadership's demands and organizational patterns (Haklai & Abu Rass, 2022). The first phase, which began with the state's establishment in 1948 and lasted until the late '60s, was characterized by "quiescence": Palestinian mobilization was limited, and the community had no independent representatives in the Knesset (Israel's parliament; Ghanem, 2001; Lustick, 1980). Instead, Palestinians had predominately voted for the ruling Mapai party's affiliated, Arab client parties. Scholars attribute this to the collective trauma the community had experienced during the 1948 war, which included mass displacement, the depopulation of Arab urban centers and the subsequent loss of much of historic Palestine's political and intellectual leadership (Cohen, 2010; Ghanim, 2011). During the state's early years, policymakers followed the same, settler-colonial (Khalidi, 2020), mono-ethnic (Aktürk, 2012), ethnically exclusive state-building pattern that was set by the Zionist establishment (the Yishuv) in the pre-state era; unlike the Turkish elites, which chose to forcibly assimilate the Kurdish minority, Israeli policymakers maintained the Jewish majority's preferential status through selective exclusion (Degani, 2017; Peleg, 2007; Shafir, 2017). Palestinian citizens were crowded into enclaves and placed under military rule, which lasted until 1966 and included harsh restrictions on freedom of movement, speech and assembly (Bäumel, 2011).

The second phase began when military rule ended, lasting until the mid-‘80s. It was marked by independent, audacious Palestinian mobilization (Haklai, 2011, pp. 71–111). Palestinians mounted contentious demonstrations, organized strikes, and participated in general elections with relatively high turnout rates. These activities were mostly organized through the binational Israeli Communist Party (ICP) and its successor, the New Communist List (NCL): while other political organizations with different ideological orientations had existed beneath the surface, the ICP/NCL acted as the sole legal (and therefore most visible) vehicle for Palestinian national mobilization during this phase. The ICP started as a binational party, aspiring to mobilize the broader Israeli Left, but it was also the sole legal platform for Palestinians to mobilize on the basis of their national identity. From the perspective of Palestinian elites, the ICP offered a vehicle for outbidding, as it represented a more radical alternative to Mapai’s Arab client parties, although its strategy could more accurately be conceived as lateral outbidding, as it was non-exclusive on the appeal criterion (appealing to both the Jewish and Palestinian electorates) while opting for radicalism on the positional criterion. This is noteworthy, as Zuber did not originally suppose lateral outbidding was likely or viable (Zuber, 2013, p. 761). Scholars characterize this as a period of national awakening, influenced by “renewed contact with the Palestinians in the occupied territories [the Occupied Palestinian Territories or the OPT, comprising the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which were captured by Israel in 1967] and by the rise of the Palestinian national movement” in the diaspora (Rekhess, 2007, p. 2).

The third phase, beginning in the early ‘90s, was marked by organizational fragmentation along ideological lines, accompanied by strategic diversification, including ethnic outbidding. Liberal reforms within Israel allowed new Palestinian parties to form, providing formal

expression to nascent ideological streams: a national stream, which demanded recognition for the Palestinians as an indigenous national minority with special, collective rights, and an Islamist stream, which emphasized religious issues and pushed for greater religious autonomy for Palestinian Muslims (Ghanem, 2001; Haklai, 2011). Dozens of Palestinian CSOs were established in a variety of areas including advocacy, education, religion and social service provision (Jamal, 2020, pp. 137–154). Mirroring the newly-fragmented political landscape, these CSOs had (and continue to have) unofficial party affiliations, working with, and providing support for an associated party. Alongside the three ideological streams that were newly expressed during this phase, a small but considerable number of Palestinians continued to support Zionist parties (22.8% of voters in 2013), especially center-left parties (Haklai & Abu Rass, 2022, p. 46). Meanwhile, the communist stream had shed its strict Marxist-Leninist commitments, adopting a more nationalist orientation while maintaining core socialist values. Confronted with new, co-ethnic competitors, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE; the NCL's successor) was forced to articulate its demands more clearly along the newly introduced ethnic dimension of political competition (Haklai, 2011, pp. 131–135). Indeed, this phase saw the emergence of a “classic” outbidding dynamic between the Palestinian parties, who all adopted indigenous minority nationalism as an ideological centerpiece (Jamal, 2011; Rekhess, 2007). One of the most visible manifestations of this national turn can be seen in the publication of several “Vision Documents”, drafted by a wide array of Palestinian elites, which outlined the community's future vision and political demands, including its recognition as an indigenous national minority deserving of special collective rights (Jamal, 2011, pp. 161–187).

These processes – fragmentation and outbidding – which are emblematic of the third phase, cannot be isolated from the broader political context of deteriorating inter-ethnic relations. Indeed, the Second Palestinian Intifada (or uprising) of 2000-2005 in OPT, and the violent repression of Palestinian mobilization within Israel at its outset, exacerbated the community's mistrust in the state and its institutions (Jamal, 2011, pp. 202–203). Deteriorating state-minority relations fueled inter-ethnic competition, and crystallized indigenous minority politics among Palestinian citizens. This trend is reflected by declining Palestinian voter turnout rates (Rudnitzky, 2019).

In 2015, in response to the raising of Israel's electoral threshold from 2% to 3.25%, the four main Palestinian parties – the DFPE, representing the communist stream; the National Democratic Assembly (NDA), representing the nationalist stream; the United Arab List (UAL), representing the Islamic stream; and the Arab Movement for Renewal (AMR), an ideologically ambiguous party that is largely driven by its leader's popularity – formed a single electoral list, the Joint List (JL; About the List, n.d.). Though unity had initially been forced upon Palestinian leaders by the threshold's increase, it proved extraordinarily popular: the JL received 13 of the Knesset's 120 seats, breaking the record for the total number of seats won by Arab parties. Palestinian voter turnout increased, and the number of Palestinians voting for predominately-Jewish parties decreased compared to the previous (2013) election (Rudnitzky, 2015). The next election, in April 2019, was the first of five rounds held between 2019-2022 as part of a political crisis surrounding the indictment of PM Benjamin Netanyahu, which divided the political landscape into roughly even pro- and anti-Netanyahu axes. Internal disagreements over the placement of candidates within the list resulted in the JL's disbandment before the first of these

rounds, to which the electorate responded negatively, punishing the List with historically low turnout rates. Judiciously, Palestinian leaders re-established the JL ahead of the second round (September 2019), which the electorate rewarded with high turnout rates, setting a new record of 15 Palestinian parliamentary seats after the third (2020) round.

Many Palestinian voters adopted a pragmatic outlook, demanding their representatives moderate their stances in order to join a governing coalition with the Israeli Center-Left (Navot, Swaid, et al., 2023, pp. 245–250). The successive elections held between 2019-2022 – part of an Israeli political-electoral crisis – allowed the leadership to adapt to these demands, moderating their stances and making public statements about their willingness to join a center-left coalition. Since Israel’s political crisis revolved almost entirely around the question of Netanyahu’s fitness for office, other issues became less pronounced, including those which had traditionally defined Israel’s left-right divide, such as Israeli-Palestinian relations (Baram, 2022). This empowered the JL, whose support was necessary for the anti-Netanyahu axis to form a government. Capitalizing on this opportunity, chairman Ayman Odeh made public overtures toward the Center-Left ahead of the second round, de-emphasizing inter-ethnic relations and indicating the JL’s willingness to make significant compromises to be included in an alternative to Netanyahu’s coalition (Barnea, 2019). Thus, although Palestinian inter-ethnic electoral competition ceased after the establishment of the JL, we can nevertheless identify a move toward moderation on the positional criterion of ethnic party strategies, in response to external opportunities as well as pressures. Furthermore, while the support base of the JL (and its constituent parties) had always been overwhelmingly Palestinian, it campaigned extensively in Jewish cities in the run up to the third (2020) round, bidding laterally, but it only managed to make limited gains among Jewish

citizens (receiving around 20,000 Jewish votes, out of a grand total of around 4.5 million total votes; Peylan, 2020). Following this round, the JL unanimously recommended Benny Gantz – Netanyahu’s main rival, and a former IDF chief of staff who had boasted about sending parts of Gaza “to the Stone Age” in his election campaign (Woolf, 2019) – be tasked with government formation (Eichner & Sha’lan, 2020).² Despite this, and despite the considerable electoral repercussions associated with triggering yet another elections cycle, negotiations between the anti-Netanyahu camp and the JL failed. Gideon Saar, a key figure in the anti-Netanyahu camp, said the ideological gap was too wide to bridge (Kodner, n.d.).

Amid political deadlock and limited prospects for Palestinian inclusion in government, the Islamist UAL party split from the JL ahead of the fourth round (2021). Its leaders distanced themselves from the rest of the Palestinian leadership by dropping traditional demands, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, by omitting all reference to Palestinian national identity from their campaign, and by focusing solely on the community’s internal, material and civic issues (Navot, Hindi, et al., 2023). Instead, UAL leaders emphasized the party’s Muslim and conservative commitments, focusing on “immediate local problems” while “glossing over the Palestine issue” (Navot, Hindi, et al., 2023, p. 1982). Thus, the UAL competed with the JL using an ethnic underbidding strategy, moving toward moderation on the positional criterion (de-emphasizing their ethnic political commitments), and toward exclusivity on the appeal criterion (reaching solely to the co-ethnic community for electoral support). UAL leader Mansour Abbas openly reasoned that by accepting Israel’s ethnic-hierarchical order, and by breaking from the rest of the Arab leadership’s traditional identification with the Left, the

² In Israel, the mandate to form government is given to the leader who receives the greatest number of recommendations from Mks. Palestinian parties traditionally refrain from making a recommendation.

UAL could more effectively satisfy voters' demands for (1) access to executive power and (2) socioeconomic improvements (Makover-Blikov, 2020). Abbas leveraged Israel's political stalemate by declaring his willingness to support any governing coalition, right or left, including one led by PM Netanyahu. While the UAL had successfully passed the electoral threshold, receiving four seats, Arab turnout had decreased to 44.6% – a historic nadir (Rudnitzky, 2022).

The UAL negotiated with both the pro- and anti-Netanyahu axes. During coalitional negotiations, in May 2021, violent clashes broke out between Israeli forces and Palestinian worshipers in Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque compound, leading to a major escalation that included mass Palestinian mobilization in Israel and the OPT, violent clashes between demonstrators and armed Israeli forces, rocket fire from Gaza and Israeli bombardment (Amnesty International, 2021; Navot, Hindi, et al., 2023). The May 2021 Events are remembered as one of the worst instances of intercommunal violence between Palestinians and Jewish citizens within Israel proper (as distinguished from the OPT). Among Palestinians, the “Dignity” or “Unity Intifada” is also remembered for its spontaneous demonstrations, in which protesters demanded unity and rejected their traditional leadership (Habib Allah, 2022; Tatur, 2021). In response, Israeli authorities arrested Palestinians in a “sweeping” manner in order to instill “deterrence”, while failing “to protect Palestinian citizens of Israel from premeditated attacks by groups of armed Jewish supremacists” (Amnesty International, 2021). Commentators characterized this as a low point in Conflict, broadly, and in majority-minority relations within Israel, specifically (Beaumont et al., 2021).

Against this backdrop – less than a month after hostilities ended – the UAL became the first Palestinian party to formally join an Israeli coalition as part of the broad anti-Netanyahu

bloc. Alongside center-left parties, this coalition included Yamina (“rightward”), a far-right party associated with the settler movement, and Yisrael Beiteinu (“Israel is our home”), led by the hawkish Avigdor Liberman. Its leaders were careful not to rock the coalitional boat, refraining from challenging the ethnic-hierarchical status quo. Most notable in this regard was the low profile they kept facing several, volatile incidents with the potential to reignite inter-ethnic tensions and lead to the coalition’s breakdown – contrary to commentators’ expectations, and despite harsh criticisms from former partners in the JL (Khoury, 2022). Examples include the killing of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, Israeli forces violent attack on her funeral procession, heightened tensions at the al-Aqsa Mosque, and the annual ultranationalist procession through Old Jerusalem’s Muslim Quarter known as the “Flag March”, which had grown to unprecedented scales in recent years (Shakieb, 2022). Despite the UAL’s remarkable ability to withstand these pressures, the fragile coalition succumbed to centrifugal forces; it was finally disbanded when Knesset members from the right-wing Yamina party defected (Azoulay, 2022).

Netanyahu’s bloc secured a 64-seat majority in the fifth and final round, including the Jewish-supremacist, Otzama Yehudit (“Jewish Power”) party, bringing the political crisis to an end in late 2022. The remainder of the JL disbanded ahead this round, due to a mixture of ideological and interpersonal disagreements; the nationalist NDA ran alone, but did not pass the electoral threshold, while the socialist DFPE and ideologically-ambiguous AMR ran together in a mutual electoral list, securing five seats. The UAL secured five seats as well (“Israel Election Final Results,” 2022; Halabi, 2022). The year 2023 was marked by a surge in violent crime within the Palestinian community, costing the lives of 241 persons – more than twice as many as

the previous year (Breiner & Haj Yahia, 2023). 2023 was also marked by escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (before Hamas' October 7th attack and the ensuing Gaza War) – an escalation which cost the lives of at least 200 Palestinians and nearly 30 Israelis by August 21; the highest annual number of conflict-related casualties since 2005 (Lederer, 2023). This article was revised in August 2024, 10 months following Hamas' October 7th attack, which cost the lives of at least 1,139 Israelis, and 10 months into Israel's attack on Gaza, which cost the lives of at least 39,000 Palestinians. These events' full ramifications on inter-ethnic relations within Israel remain to be seen.

Returning to Zuber's system of classification: since 2015, the Palestinian leadership diversified strategically, beyond outbidding. Both the JL and UAL adopted markedly more moderate stances on the positional criterion, de-emphasizing national identity for the sake of inclusion and legitimacy. Despite JL leaders' attempt to appeal to members of the Jewish community, and despite increasing their power and moderating their stances, they remained marginalized, unable to breach the bounds of Israel's increasingly ethnonationalist politics. The UAL, however, succeeded where the JL failed by (1) completely abandoning prior commitments to Palestinian nationalism (underbidding the JL), (2) declaring its willingness to partner with anyone, and by (3) focusing narrowly on the Muslim majority within the Palestinian minority. Thus, the UAL moved toward greater exclusivity on the appeal criterion and toward greater moderation on the positional criterion, deploying ethnic underbidding as an electoral strategy. Overall, Palestinian politics since 2015 has seen the emergence of lateral bidders (the JL which appealed to the Jewish Israeli majority between 2015-2022, and especially in 2020), ethnic underbidders (the UAL, 2021-present), static bidders (the DFPE and AMR, 2022-present) and

ethnic outbidders (the NDA, which reemphasized Palestinian nationalism after the JL's disbandment in 2022).

4.5. Hegemonic transformations

While there are important differences between the Kurdish and Palestinian cases, they also share many background characteristics. The ratios between majorities in minorities are similar (roughly 80%-20%). Both cases are part of broader confrontations between states and stateless peoples including diasporas in neighbouring countries. In both cases, ethnic rather than civic forms of nationalism are salient among ethnic majorities. Both cases have recently seen diminished prospects for inter-ethnic reconciliation, rising authoritarianism and crackdowns on minority mobilization. The 2023 Turkish election shares many characteristics with Israel's 2019-2022 crisis, including the increased visibility and strength of the ethnonationalist right among ethnic majorities, the growth of minority parties, the creation of broad, ideologically diverse alliances among opposition parties with the sole purpose of unseating long-standing incumbents, and these alliances' failure to join forces with ethnic minority parties despite their increased strength. In both cases, incumbents representing ethnic majorities resorted to outbidding, adopting more extreme stances and narrowing their appeal to their co-ethnic constituents, while allying with ultranationalist hardliners – Erdoğan with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP; Gourlay, 2020, p. 213), and Netanyahu with Otzma Yehudit. Ethnic minorities have recently suffered repression shocks in each case – the Kurds in 2015, and the Palestinians in May 2021.

Despite these similarities, the Palestinian and Kurdish leaderships differ in their organizational and strategic-interactive characteristics. Since the Kurdish movement's

institutionalization into interrelated legal and nonlegal wings in the early '90s, the leadership has been more cohesive, and its organizational structure more stable, than the Palestinian leadership in Israel. From the outset, the Kurdish movement had strong connections with elements of the broader Turkish Left, and when the electoral wing emerged in the '90s, it bid laterally for the support of ethnic Turks while carefully maintaining its Kurdish support base. Around the same time, the Palestinian leadership in Israel entered its outbidding phase. Over the last decade, the Kurdish leadership has moderated its stances while doubling down on its lateral bid, reaching across the ethnic divide. This, while facing electoral challenges from Islamists – both Turkish and Kurdish – who competed with the movement's leadership for the religious-conservative Kurdish vote. While the Palestinian leadership followed a similar trajectory since the establishment of the JL in 2015 – bidding laterally while moderating its stances – it was unable to maintain unity in spite of grassroots and electoral pressures, leading to its re-fragmentation into separate parties with different strategies including ethnic underbidding, static bidding, and ethnic outbidding. Why? How has the HDP been able to simultaneously maintain unity, secure the support of ethnic Kurdish constituents, appeal to the broader Turkish public, and significantly expand its ethnic Turkish support base? And why did the JL fail in this regard? My analysis suggests that changes in the *ethnic hegemonic order* – the manners in which ethnic hierarchies are institutionalized, and the extent to which they are understood to be normal in each case – play a significant role.

a. Ethnic hegemonic boundaries

The literature on nationalism and its varieties is vast. It offers a wide array of regime classification systems based on the ways ethnic and national hierarchies are institutionalized

(Aktürk, 2012; Brubaker, 1996; Koning, 2011; Kuzio, 2002; Kymlicka, 1996; Peleg, 2007; Stepan et al., 2011; Yiftachel, 2006). While a comprehensive overview of this literature is beyond the scope of this article, we could nevertheless benefit from comparing and contrasting between two complementary methods of defining, and measuring change in, ethnic hegemonic boundaries; this article's independent variable.

Şener Aktürk offers one relevant, authoritative typology of three different “ethnicity regimes”, based on the rules and institutions that govern (1) national membership criteria (can any individual adopt the dominant national identity?), and (2) the expression of ethnic identities (are public expressions of ethnic diversity tolerated?). Based on the intersection of these criteria, he identifies three different regime types: (1) “monoethnic” regimes, in which the state “seeks to restrict membership in the nation to one ethnic category” through discriminatory policies (Japan, Israel), (2) “antiethnic” regimes, in which the state “accepts people from ethnically diverse backgrounds as citizens ... but discourages or even prohibits the legal, institutional, and public expression of ethnic diversity” (France), and (3) “multiethnic” regimes, in which the state “accepts people from ethnically diverse backgrounds as its citizens, and allows, encourages, or even participates in the legal and institutional expression of ethnic diversity” (Canada; 2012, pp. 6–7). Aktürk categorizes the pre-2004 Turkish regime (prior to Erdoğan's rise) as “antiethnic”, as it allowed for Kurdish inclusion within the Turkish national community so long as they did not express their Kurdish identity, and as a multiethnic regime since 2004, as Erdoğan's early years were categorized by unprecedented accommodation of Kurdish national expression under the framework of Islamism (Aktürk's book was published before Erdoğan's ethnonational turn).

Ilan Peleg offers a different typology, which incorporates cultural-ideological characteristics. The most relevant category – a “hegemonic ethnic state” – refers to polities that “energetically promote the interests of a single ethnopolitical group” (Peleg, 2007, p. 3). Peleg places both Israel and Turkey under the same category of a hegemonic ethnic state. Like Aktürk, he notes the different ways ethnic hierarchies are regulated in each state: while Turkish elites have historically aimed to forcibly assimilate or “Turkify” the Kurdish minority, Israeli elites sought to exclude Palestinian citizens while “Judaizing” the land (Peleg, 2007, pp. 36, 176). Unlike Aktürk’s systems of classification, which emphasizes the legal and institutional bases of ethnic hierarchical orders, Peleg emphasizes their cultural and ideological dimensions. He argues that the way hegemonic ethnic polities defend their “ethnic constitutional orders” (their ethnic-hierarchical nature) is “through an acceptable, unchallenged social reality” (Peleg, 2007, p. 3). “Hegemony” is invoked in a Gramscian sense: hierarchy in ethnic hegemonic states is perpetuated not only through laws and institutions, but also with ideas; by generating consensus. In other words, ethnic hierarchies attain hegemonic status when a critical mass of people believe them to be the natural, common-sensical way of things. And in his own words:

“The term [ethnic constitutional order] has several characteristics that make it useful for analyzing hegemonic regimes and their transformations. First, the term broadens the meaning of hegemony beyond a political arrangement designed to benefit one ethnic group and beyond a foundational legal structure or a constitutional document and tradition. It reflects a multidimensional reality that includes, in addition to all these, a cultural dimension (e.g., the prevalence of the dominant group’s language, culture, and traditions) and, very importantly, a deep psychological dimension that amounts to the

thorough internalization of control thinking, domination, and a sense of the majority's exclusivity" (Peleg, 2007, p. 193).

This Gramscian interpretation of ethnic hegemony is echoed by Ian Lustick: "...whatever particular interpretation of reality is contained in the set of conceptions enshrined as hegemonic will decisively advantage certain groups by privileging their particular preferences and attitudes as unassailable assumptions of community life", he argues. "By linking particular conceptions and preferences to commonsensically established myths, symbols, and categories, hegemonic ideas camouflage particular distributions of power" (Lustick, 1993, p. 122).

The emphasis on the cultural and ideological ways in which ethnic hierarchies are maintained has important consequences. Using Aktürk's typology, we might re-classify Turkey as monoethnic if cultural-ideological dimensions are more thoroughly taken into consideration. Indeed, scholars like Peleg emphasize the myriad ways in which the *ethnic* Turkish community is, and has been, privileged: the Turkish republic "was 'engineered' from above in a hegemonic fashion by determined, cohesive political and military elite", Peleg argues. "To many, Turkish identity was ethnic, even though the republic has denied it" (Peleg, 2007, p. 169). Other scholars echo this by emphasizing the exclusivist, ethnic-hierarchical features of Turkish nationalism (Grigoriadis & Ansari, 2005; Kirişci, 2000; Uzer, 2011). Grigoriadis & Ansari, for example, argue that while "official", state-sponsored Turkish nationalism has been civic and inclusive, Turkish national identity is widely understood as ethnic, and that historically, Turkish nation-building practices privileged the ethnic Turkish community over others (2005). Thus, both Israel and Turkey can be seen as ethnic hegemonic states; both have ethnic hegemonic orders, though these are maintained in different ways.

Hegemonic ethnic orders (and hegemonic ideologies, more broadly) are slow to change (Lustick, 1993, p. 121). Scholars have identified ways in which they do, in response to a variety of stimuli. Aktürk offers a detailed theory of change in ethnicity regimes, proposing three “separately necessary and together sufficient” drivers: (1) the existence of elites that champion the rights of aggrieved ethnic minorities, (2) the emergence of alternative political visions in place of established ethnic orders, and (3) these visions attaining hegemonic status (through consent or control; Aktürk, 2012, pp. 23–44). Peleg notes that both Israel and Turkey have seen “mild”, “cosmetic” transformations in the years preceding his work’s publication: “Although these hegemonic states did not really change their overall constitutional order, which continues to be dominated by one ethnonational group”, he argues, “they have introduced modest changes and have done so in the overall direction of more equality and inclusion” (Peleg, 2007, pp. 168–169). He lists several reasons for these transformations, including internal demographic and cultural pressures, but ultimately stresses the impact of international normative pressure under the emergent liberal global order. 17 years later, the global normative trend toward liberalism has reversed: right-wing ethnonationalism has spread globally, the rules-based international order has weakened, and the gradual domestic liberalization processes Peleg identified have correspondingly reversed in each case (Del Sarto, 2017; Kurt, 2021).

b. Impact on the appeal criterion

Changes in the ethnic hegemonic order have an impact on the legitimacy of lateral bidding strategies. When ethnic hegemonic boundaries are rigid (when hegemonic conceptions of the ethnic constitutional order are exclusive and hierarchical), lateral bidding strategies are widely perceived as illegitimate, and electoral markets are segmented as a result (there is little cross-

ethnic voting; Horowitz, 1985, p. 342). When ethnic hegemonic boundaries become more inclusive, as they did in the '90s in both Turkey and Israel, elites face incentives to reach across ethnic divides, drawing upon existing cross-cutting identities, and even on the basis of new identities. Thus, the appeal criterion of intra-ethnic competition is at least partly determined by changes in states' ethnic hegemonic boundaries. Importantly, while inclusive ethnic constitutional orders incentivize lateral bidding, they do not *disincentivize* ethnic outbidding.

Turkey's ethnic constitutional order has historically been more inclusive than Israel's, relying on enforced assimilation rather than selective exclusion. This allowed for limited mobilization on the basis of non-ethnic, cross-cutting identities and ideologies, including ones based on secular internationalism and, later, Islam (Aktürk, 2012, pp. 137–194; Peleg, 2007, pp. 168–178). As shown in this article's third section, Kurdish and Turkish leaders have historically exploited these identities when the ethnic hegemonic order became more inclusive, mobilizing constituents across the ethnic divide. Importantly, the dependent and independent variables – ethnic party strategies and changes in the ethnic hegemonic order – are mutually constitutive. The Kurdish movement's adoption of Democratic Confederalism, for example, cemented the movement's pivot away from strict ethnonationalism, paving the way for the movement's legal wing's lateral bids. When Turkey liberalized in the '90s and 2000, its ethnic hegemonic boundaries moved further toward inclusion, enabling the formation of Kurdish parties, while internal processes – chiefly, the rise of political Islam – allowed self-interested politicians like Erdoğan to draw support from among conservative Kurds, receiving a considerable share of the Kurdish vote. In other words, changes in Turkey's historically mutable hegemonic ethnic order has allowed ethnic elites, representing both the Kurdish minority and the Turkish majority, to bid

laterally. While cross-cutting identities had always existed for elites to draw upon in Turkey's case, these lateral bids succeeded only at particular institutional, strategic and cultural turning points, when the ethnic hegemonic order shifted; in response to legal and institutional reforms, to electoral pressures, and to the spread of ideologies including Marxism and of political Islam.

Israel's ethnic hegemonic boundaries, on the other hand, have historically been more rigid. As a mono-ethnic, historically settler-colonial regime that relied on selective exclusion to maintain its hegemonic ethnic order, there have been few opportunities for legitimate Jewish-Palestinian cooperation. Aside from the brief, "mild" (Peleg, 2007, p. 168), liberal interlude in the '90s, Palestinian exclusion has been a consistent feature of Israeli politics; a feature which can be traced back to its settler-colonial state-building patterns during the pre-state era, which was built on the basis of indigenous Palestinian exclusion (Degani, 2017; Jabotinsky, 1923; Shafir, 2017). As a result, cases of inter-ethnic coalition building in Israel are few and far between. Even during Israel's liberal interlude, in the '90s, Palestinian inclusion was limited and lateral bidding widely perceived as illegitimate: the binational DFPE never managed to attract a significant number of Jewish voters; both the ruling Israeli Center-Left and the DFPE preferred not to break the taboo, opting for an informal partnership over formal Palestinian inclusion in an Israeli governing coalition (Sorek, 2020, pp. 176–177). Indeed, the historic intolerance toward ethnically inclusive visions – partly stemming from the different varieties of nationalism in each case, but also owing to the lack of cross-cutting identities – distinguishes Israel from Turkey, rendering lateral bidding impossible in its case. Thus, despite the ICP, DFPE and JL's best efforts, they could neither attract a significant number of supporters from among the broader Jewish-Israeli public, nor build a broad-tent multiethnic coalition with predominately-Jewish

Center-Left parties. Even when the JL reached a peak of 15 seats, moderating its stances and publicly expressing its willingness to make significant compromises for the sake of unseating PM Benjamin Netanyahu, it was rejected by the Israeli-Center left, despite the high electoral costs associated with triggering new rounds of elections. Despite its best efforts, lateral bidding had never been an option for this leadership.

c. Impact on the positional criterion

The positional criterion of intra-ethnic competition, on the other hand, was not influenced by changes in states' hegemonic ethnic order. Although a move toward greater moderation was observed in both cases in the '90s, when hegemonic ethnic boundaries became more inclusive, the reverse movement was not observed: in both cases, increasingly exclusive ethnic hegemonic orders did not result in more radical minority politics. This is especially clear in the Palestinian case, which saw both the JL and UAL move toward moderation on the positional criterion despite facing increasingly exclusive ethnic hegemonic boundaries. Facing intolerance for non- and anti-Zionist voices across the aisles – both the UAL and JL continued to de-emphasize their counter-hegemonic commitments. Having repeatedly failed to build an alternative to Netanyahu's government during the 2019-2022 political crisis, a subsection of the Palestinian leadership – the UAL – pushed the logic of underbidding further, completely omitting prior ideological commitments in exchange for greater legitimacy and access to power. The loss of political cohesion – the re-fragmentation of the Palestinian political landscape into separate parties – resulted in strategic diversification, including outbidding, but underbidding was preserved. Thus, while highly exclusive ethnic hegemonic orders are likely to result in segmented electoral markets, they do not necessarily produce more radical politics.

4.6. Conclusions

This article has shown that changes in the ethnic hegemonic order play a significant role in shaping ethnic leaders' strategic choices. It has also shown that moderation is a viable strategy when elites representing minorities seek to overcome impermeable ethnic hegemonic boundaries, as it facilitates their political survival and promises legitimacy and access. This pattern can be observed in both of the Kurdish and Palestinian cases. The different strategic choices in each case boil down to the ethnic appeal criterion: while both leaderships chose to moderate in response to increasingly exclusive ethnic hegemonic orders, in order to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the hegemonic ethnic majority, and while both attempted to bid laterally, only the Palestinian leadership reverted to a fragmented state, failing to attract a significant number of supporters across the ethnic divide. As I have shown, this difference can be explained by tracing the development of policies regulating ethnic differences in each case. Majorities in polities that regulate ethnic differences through exclusion and segregation, like Israel, are less likely to accept broad, inter-ethnic coalitions as legitimate. Attempts to build such coalitions based on cross-cutting identities, such as class, or on ad-hoc mutual interests, like the alliances that were created by opposition parties to unseat incumbents in both cases, are likely to fail in these settings, since ethnic hegemonic elites can easily mobilize common-sensical exclusionary nationalism to delegitimize them. Instead, minority elites face pressure to bid exclusively among their own co-ethnic communities, resulting in segmented electoral markets and ethnic bidding strategies. On the other hand, assimilationist ethnic hegemonic regimes, such as Turkey prior to Erdoğan's ethnonational turn, have historically permitted elites to reach across the ethnic divide on the basis

of non-ethnic, cross-cutting identities. Lateral bidding can be sustained in the latter, but not the former.

Neither of these variables – ethnic party strategies and the permeability of ethnic hegemonic boundaries – are static features. Rather, they are dynamic and mutually-constitutive processes (Csérge, 2007; McAdam et al., 2001). As noted by Peleg and Aktürk, ethnic hegemonic boundaries can become more or less permeable over time, in response to a variety of domestic and international pressures, including, as Aktürk argues, the strategic interplay between minorities and majorities in competitive environments. Changes in the patterns of Kurdish voting and support shaped Erdoğan’s own politics and discourse, which shaped Kurdish politics in turn. These processes feed into each other. Indeed, Hegemonic Turkish elites are shifting toward discriminatory exclusion as a method of regulating domestic ethnic differences, partly due to the interplay between the ruling AKP and its Kurdish opponents. As Günay & Yörük argue:

“... fluctuating support for the AKP government in Turkey has been conditioned to a large extent by the way the party has dealt with the Kurdish question via different modes of ethnic politics, including changing configurations of repression and inclusion: (i) the Islamists grew in power when they presented a peaceful resolution to the Kurdish ethnic question through ethnic and class-based inclusion of Kurds within the broad Islamic solidarity project; (ii) the Islamists lost their Kurdish voters – and thus their broader hegemony – when they failed to realize the promise of equality between Kurds and Turks ... and (iii) the Islamists regained national power when they used anti-Kurdish repressive politics and growing authoritarianism to mobilize Turkish nationalist support in place of lost Kurdish votes. The AKP’s ability to shift between these different logics of ethnic

politics has laid the ground for its continuing political hegemony and growing authoritarianism” (Günay & Yörük, 2019, p. 38).

Kurdish fragmentation would not be a surprising outcome if Turkey continues down the path of selective exclusion, as self-interested elites would be incentivized to pursue other strategies, including ethnic underbidding and ethnic outbidding in the face of an immutable ethnic hegemonic order. While qualitatively different, the interactive, mutually-constitutive nature of ethnic party strategies is also evident in the Palestinian case: the leadership responded to structural pressures and voter demands by moderating its stances, to which Netanyahu responded – much like Erdoğan – by embracing the far-right and by delegitimizing the united Palestinian leadership. The UAL’s defection was a response to this; they reneged on prior counter-hegemonic commitments in exchange for legitimacy, inclusion, and the promise of influence and political change.

Evidence from these cases runs contrary to some recent findings, such as Zuber & Szöcsik’s study (2015), which found that the level of outbidding among ethnic minority parties corresponds to the level of ethnic segmentation in electoral markets. While outbidders are likely disadvantaged when cross-cutting identities are salient, as Zuber & Szöcsik assert, it is unclear whether underbidders are disadvantaged when they are not. Indeed, the Palestinian case shows that moderation can prevail in highly segmented electoral markets; the UAL’s case shows that ethnic underbidding is a viable strategy when facing impermeable ethnic hegemonic boundaries and virtually no cross-ethnic voting. Together, both cases suggest that, when faced with greater exclusion and marginalization, ethnic parties may choose underbidding in pursuit of greater acceptance, legitimacy, and ultimately, power; ethnic elites’ need to overcome exclusion can

lead to moderation on the positional criterion of ethnic party strategies. The value of the appeal criterion – whether ethnic or lateral bidding prevails – depends on the permeability of ethnic hegemonic boundaries. In a broader sense, this investigation highlights the importance of accounting for the hierarchical structure of majority-minority interactions, as well as their dynamic, relational, mutually-constitutive nature. Abstract generalizations about both intra- and inter-ethnic competitive dynamics have limited explanatory power *in abstracto* – instead, these processes should be seen as dynamic, asymmetrical and context-dependent. It is my hope that scholars continue to identify and unpack unexpected ethnic party strategies using evidence from additional cases.

4.7. Bibliography

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Chapter 5 Israel's Counter-Hegemonic Social Movement Industries

There is no scholarly consensus around a single theoretical framework to describe Palestinian non-governmental mobilization within Israel. Past studies tend to situate Palestinian organizations within the civic sphere. While some classify the Palestinian civic sphere as ethnocentric, others emphasize its emancipatory and liberal characteristics. Both approaches distinguish Palestinian organizations from others; they agree that Palestinian organizations form an ethnic civic sphere, but they disagree on its primary characteristics. Based on extensive fieldwork in Israel, including 35 remote and in-person interviews with 36 Palestinian and Jewish activists, this paper challenges these assumptions, arguing that Palestinian organizations within Israel are part of a network of a binational social movement. This approach reconciles some past scholarly differences and, more broadly, bridges theoretical gaps between the ethnic politics, social movements, and civil society literatures..

Keywords: Palestinian citizens of Israel, civil society, NGOs, social movements, ethnic conflict, settler colonialism.

5.1. Introduction

Throughout the '80s and '90s, the number of Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within Israel grew considerably, prompting several scholarly investigations (Agbaria & Mustafa, 2014; Haklai, 2009; Jamal, 2020; Payes, 2005). Two scholars – Oded Haklai and Amal Jamal – have offered competing accounts of these organizations' role and impact. According to Haklai, these organizations prioritize the minority's particularistic, communal interests over liberal values, and they should therefore be viewed as forming a separate, *ethnic civil society* within Israel (Haklai, 2009, 2011). Amal Jamal, on the other hand, classifies these organizations as *subaltern*, emphasizing the ways in which they challenge the state's "postcolonial" power structures (Jamal, 2020, p. 243). Can these differences be reconciled? How should Palestinian mobilization within Israel be conceived? How should minority mobilization be conceived in ethnic states, more broadly? In this article, these approaches are reconciled by adopting an alternative, conceptually inclusive analytical framework of Palestinian mobilization in Israel, which is based on insights from the social movements literature. It is argued that the civil society framework, on which past accounts relied, fails to account for the networked, inter-ethnic, intersectional nature of Palestinian activism within Israel. The social movement approach, on the other hand, captures the ways in which Palestinian, Jewish and joint organizations are integrated into a broader, counter-hegemonic movement that resists Israel's ethnic-hierarchical structure.

A growing number of scholars turn to the social movements literature to explain ethnic, national and racial mobilization. This paper argues that this framework more accurately reflects several aspects of mobilization in ethnic-hierarchical polities, including Israel. Rather than

drawing a line around “civil society organizations” (CSOs) or “civic associations” – categories which are at times legalistic, and often hard to define – the social movements approach is organizationally agnostic, incorporating grassroots organizations, CSOs and political parties. Organizations are grouped based on their collective commitment to shared political goals, as well as the frequency and strength of their interactions. This approach excludes irrelevant actors that bogged down prior analyses, such as service-providing organizations that make no political claims on the state. At the same time, it incorporates important actors that were left out of past analyses of Palestinian mobilization within Israel – most notably, Israel’s anti-occupation and joint, Jewish-Palestinian, coexistence organizations. These organizations were largely overlooked by past analyses, in spite of playing important roles within the network of Palestinian and Jewish organizations that comprise Israel’s counter-hegemonic movement. Furthermore, the social movements framework sheds some of the normative baggage associated with the civil society literature, including antiquated conceptions of civility, volunteerism and social capital, which are not relevant to the bureaucratized, professionalized, NGO-led civic spheres that characterize neoliberal economies. This framework more readily incorporates illiberal and conservative organizations into the frame of analysis. Lastly, its emphasis on conflict, rather than consensus, is better suited to account for mobilization in deeply divided polities.

I empirically establish these claims using secondary and original, mixed-methods research. Primary data include 35 de-identified, semi-structured interviews with 36 Palestinian and Jewish politicians and activists; 25 men and 11 women; five serving Members of Knesset (MKs), 24 employees and directors of advocacy organizations, six grassroots activists (regular voluntary participants in local and national political initiatives) and one mayor. Interviews had an

average length of 42 minutes. I transcribed and coded them using Obsidian, a markdown editor capable of cataloging, tagging and linking related interviews, and of generating diagrams of individuals, organizations and concepts using metadata, and visualized them using the open-source “Gephi” software package (Figure 5, p. 197).

5.2. Ethnic and subaltern civic minority activism in Israel

Scholars that focus on ethnic mobilization outside the formal, electoral political arena rely on two distinct literatures that generally do not cross-fertilize (della Porta & Diani, 2011). Some scholars conceptualize this type of mobilization through the prism of civil society, while others conceptualize it through that of social movement activism. Despite a great deal of conceptual and empirical overlap between the two, these literatures rarely interact (Cisar, 2013; Diani, 2013). This article was largely motivated by the desire to fill this gap.

The civil society literature is vast and multifaceted. Rooted in the liberal, Tocquevillian tradition, civil society research was reinvigorated by Antonio Gramsci in the early 20th century; it experienced another resurgence in the ‘80s and ‘90s, owing to the proliferation and growth of NGOs globally and by the emergence of new democratic polities in Eastern Europe following the collapse of the USSR (Diani, 2013; Edwards, 2004, pp. 5–10; Keck & Sikkink, 1998, pp. 10–12). While “civil society” has different normative and analytical meanings, scholars commonly define it in a negative fashion, as encompassing political mobilization *outside* of formal and electoral, state-run institutions; as “the realm of voluntary participation in a public sphere that is distinct from government per se” (Eastwood, 2013). Some influential scholars have argued that strong civic spheres are necessary for democracies to flourish (Cohen & Arato, 1992; Gellner,

1994; Putnam, 1993). More recent scholarship challenges this view by noting the ways in which civil society has coexisted with, and even promoted, illiberal, undemocratic and authoritarian politics (Encarnación, 2011; Hawthorne, 2005; Skocpol, 2011). By convention, civil society researchers tend to de-emphasize contentious mobilization – violent and non-violent alike – focusing, instead, on routine, institutionalized, consensual politics (Diani, 2013). Civil society scholars have conceptualized relevant organizations in a variety of closely related ways, including as “advocacy organizations”, “civil society organizations”, “interest groups”, “public interest groups”, and “voluntary associations”, as well as “third sector”, “community-based”, “grassroots” and “informal sector” organizations (Diani, 2013; Haque, 2011, p. 332). Though some authors emphasize the differences between some of these terms, most recognize their close proximity (Edwards, 2011; Haque, 2011).

Scholars writing specifically on Palestinian mobilization within Israel have largely relied on the civil society tradition to describe non-parliamentary activism, conceiving of the community’s network of organizations as a unique sector within Israel’s broader civil society landscape (Agbaria & Mustafa, 2014; Haklai, 2009, 2011; Jamal, 2020; Jayusi & Binhas, 2023; Payes, 2005). While some of these studies also apply some insights from the social movements framework (Jamal, 2011; Payes, 2005), they fall short of defining Palestinian non-parliamentary organizations as constituting a movement. Some of these scholars have sought to critique and expand upon the civil society literature, in two different ways: Agbaria & Mustafa and Haklai criticize it for failing to account for religious and ethnic mobilization, while Jamal and Payes criticize it for failing to account for ethnic power structures.

Pushing back against “romanticized” and “utopian” conceptions of civil society as

pluralistic and democratic, Haklai argues, using the Palestinian case, that civil society can be ethnocentric, prioritizing collective issues over liberal ideals (Haklai, 2009, p. 867). Haklai argues that Palestinian organizations “pursue particularistic interests and are interested in expanding parochialism in the ethnic community” (Haklai, 2011, p. 136). The Palestinian network of extra-parliamentary organizations should be classified as an *ethnic civil society*, as these organizations prioritize the community’s particular communal (rather than broader, Israeli) interests. Politically, activists within this distinct civic sphere hold the state’s ethnic-hierarchical nature, which structurally favors the Jewish majority, responsible for the minority’s disadvantaged status (Haklai, 2009). Thus, Haklai uses the Palestinian case to argue that ethnocentric civic spheres can arise in deeply divided societies, contrary to the expectations of the classical civil society literature which emphasizes CSOs’ inherent liberal potential. Though their overall argument is different, Agbaria & Mustafa (2014) make a similar critique of the broader civil society literature, for failing to account for religious Islamic organizations’ “aggressive individualism” (p.55) within Israel (as well as the broader Middle East), which is rather different from the policy-oriented and state-facing approach of secular civic organizations.

Amal Jamal, on the other hand, defines Palestinian political activism as *subaltern* rather than ethnic (Jamal, 2020). Like others, Jamal is critical of the dominant, liberal, Tocquevillian strand of the civil society literature for romanticizing civic activism, but he is also critical of it for failing to account for unequal power relations and the ways in which they shape minority mobilization. Jamal argues that, in “postcolonial” settings, which are characterized by a struggle between subaltern minorities and privileged majorities, civil society takes on counter-hegemonic, oppositional characteristics; that “civic activism is better understood when conceptualized in

postcolonial terms, as *essentially* counter-hegemonic” (emphasis added; Jamal, 2020, p. 21). Thus, both Haklai and Jamal agree that Palestinian non-parliamentary organizations within Israel essentially challenge “the state’s power structure” (Jamal, 2020, p. 244) / “the institutional order” (Haklai, 2009). However, while Jamal agrees with Haklai that there is a “sociocultural”, identity-based component to Palestinian civic activism, he criticizes Haklai for characterizing Palestinian civic activism as ethnocentric. This characterization, Jamal argues, is based on three misconceptions: (1) predominately-Palestinian CSOs are not exclusively Palestinian; they employ Jewish-Israeli activists; (2) Haklai unfairly dismisses these CSOs’ stated commitments to universal civic values as dishonest, overstating their parochial political commitments (3) Haklai misconstrues resistance to ethnic discrimination as ethnocentrism (Jamal, 2020, pp. 66–68). And so, for Jamal, Palestinian organizations within Israel should be defined on the basis of their ideological rather than their ethnocentric commitments. Subaltern minority organizations, he argues, seek “to reconstruct the civic sphere and transform the state” from one that is based on ethnic exclusion into an egalitarian civic sphere; “to instill universal democratic ideals instead of ethnically motivated principles” (Jamal, 2020, p. 244). Payes adopts a similar position. She critiques the classical civil society literature for failing to account for the development of NGOs under structural inter-ethnic power imbalances, “when the state regards citizens not as equal individuals, but first and foremost as members in a hierarchy of ethnic communities” (2005, p. 44).

5.3. Counter-hegemonic movements in ethnic states

These scholars’ interrelated critiques of the civil society literature are not without merit. As they

show, the normative assumptions that accompany this corpus oftentimes clashes with empirical realities. At the same time, they disagree about the way Palestinian extra-parliamentary mobilization should be categorized. Is it religious, ethnic or subaltern? This decision has important implications, and the answer is not obvious. The central role played by many religious, conservative and ethnocentric organizations – organizations that frequently prioritize ethnocentric and religious aims over liberal ones, as Haklai shows – runs contrary to Jamal’s assertion that Palestinian civic activism is egalitarian and emancipatory. On the other hand, the stated egalitarian and liberal commitments of some of the largest Palestinian NGOs, like Adalah and Mossawa, which play important roles organizing demonstrations, drafting documents, and lobbying, run contrary to Haklai’s assertion that Palestinian civic activism is ethnocentric. Both scholars have recognized and addressed these reservations, to an extent (Haklai, 2021; Jamal, 2020, pp. 197–202). Rather than delving into the merits of their qualifications, however, let us consider whether a different theoretical perspective – the social movements framework, on which an increasing number of scholars rely – can bridge the gap between the two approaches.

The number of scholars using the social movement framework in their examinations of ethnic and national mobilization has grown in recent years. These scholars aggregate ethnic elites and organizations into social or *ethnopolitical* movements (Asal et al., 2012; Cunningham, 2014; Cunningham et al., 2012; Peters, 2018; Seymour et al., 2016; Van Cott, 2005). Asal et al., for example, situate their study “at the intersection of organizational theory and behavior literature and the research on social movement organizations (SMOs) and contentious politics” (2012, p. 96). They argue that “ethnopolitical organizations ... are bonded by a shared ethnic identity and ideological consensus” (p. 96). Similarly, Van Cott uses a synthetic theoretical framework,

combining insights from each corpus, emphasizing the roles ethnic movements played bolstering political parties in Latin America (2005, pp. 22–48). Others use the social movements framework to explore ethnic protests and self-determination movements (Cunningham, 2014; Cunningham et al., 2012; Seymour et al., 2016). While some scholars examined the Middle East and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT; the West Bank and Gaza Strip) through this prism (Pearlman, 2012), only a few have used it to analyze Israel’s Palestinian citizens, specifically (Shoughry, 2012).

Despite the fact that social movements and civil society researchers rarely interact, these traditions have surprisingly much in common (Diani, 2013). Indeed, civil society and social movement scholars often “end up with quite similar questions and empirical objects of analysis” (della Porta & Diani, 2011, p. 69). For example, scholars from both fields are interested in free-rider problems, exploring the factors that promote or inhibit individual participation in popular initiatives (Kitts, 2000; Putnam, 2000). Scholars from both fields frequently examine internal organizational political dynamics, and both are concerned with the mobilization and organization of resources among allies (della Porta & Diani, 2011; Kriesi, 1996). Indeed, scholars in these fields can, and often do, ask similar questions about identical phenomena. At the same time, there are some notable differences: civil society scholars have traditionally focused on non-confrontational modes of collective action, and on consensual political issues that are capable of generating widespread agreement (Alexander, 2006, pp. 213–229; Edwards, 2004), while social movement scholarship strongly emphasizes conflict as a driver of social change, focusing on contentious, confrontational interactions between challengers and, traditionally, the state (della Porta & Diani, 2011; Diani, 2013; Tarrow, 1998).

There is no single, agreed-upon definition for social movements. Reflecting broader developments in the social sciences, scholars have emphasized movements' rational (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), networked (Diani, 2003), structurally constrained (Tarrow, 1998), and socially constructed dimensions (Benford & Snow, 2000). Over the last three decades, however, the discipline converged on some basic features, based on low common denominators. According to one authoritative formulation, movements "are collective actions through which aggrieved collectivities give voice publicly to various grievances and press relevant authorities to attend to the associated claims and/or demands" (Snow, 2013). Additionally, scholars agree that movements share the following essential characteristics: (1) all movements are change-oriented; they either promote or oppose change, (2) by extension, movements can either oppose or defend existing institutional structures or systems of authority, (3) they are collective, collaborative endeavors, and (4) they have "staying power"; they are not temporary fads (Snow, 2013). Additionally, most scholars agree that movements cannot rely exclusively on formal and institutional tactics; they must use unconventional or contentious means – demonstrations, petitions, sit ins, etc. – to some extent. At the same time, many scholars – especially (but not exclusively) those operating within the "resource mobilization" tradition – agree that that movements can make extensive use of routine and formal means. These scholars view bureaucratization, institutionalization and professionalization as means of bolstering movements' political capacities (Gamson, 1975; Zald & Ash, 1966). Bureaucratized, professional movement organizations, these scholars argue, are integrated into movements alongside other, less formal, more radical organizations, playing a variety of important roles (Staggenborg, 1988).

Social movement organizations (SMOs) form a central unit of analysis in this tradition.

According to McCarthy and Zald's classical definition, an SMO can be defined as "a complex, or formal organization which identifies its preferences with a social movement or a counter-movement and attempts to implement those goals" (1977, p. 1218). This definition, which focuses on political goals, encapsulates many different types of organizations, including civil society, advocacy, and grassroots organizations. SMOs make demands and mobilize resources in collaboration with others in order to achieve movement goals. Movements can, in turn, be aggregated into social movement *industries* (SMIs): human rights organizations, for example, can be viewed as constituting a distinct industry, in the same way that firms are aggregated into distinct industrial spheres (McCarthy, 2013a). Particular human rights organizations can simultaneously be counted as participants in different movements – anti-war movements, workers' rights movements, anti-colonial movements, etc. Nevertheless, they belong to the same social movement industry based on their professional and topical specialization (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The sum total of all SMIs in a given polity make up its social movements *sector*, a term that is somewhat analogous to (but ultimately broader than) the civic sphere (McCarthy, 2013b). Thus, in contrast with the civil society literature, which defines the civic sphere in a broad and negative way (as the sum of organizations and activities that are *not* part of the formal-political, economic or personal-familial spheres), the social movements literature defines organizations, movements and industries by reference to their identities and goals, while also paying attention to institutionalized cooperation (Bakke et al., 2012). Many scholars emphasize the role played by interorganizational networks in the formation and maintenance of movements. Indeed, as della Porta and Diani argue, social movements are characterized by "dense interorganizational networks and collective identities that transcend the boundaries of any

specific organization and encompass much broader collectivities” (della Porta & Diani, 2011, p. 69).

5.4. Methods

This research uses primarily qualitative methods, relying on data from 35 de-identified, semi-structured interviews with 36 Palestinian and Jewish politicians and activists. Interviews were mostly conducted in Arabic and Hebrew (two were conducted in English, with native speakers), with an average length of 42 minutes. Participants were asked about their working routine, about the obstacles they faced, and about the external actors with whom they collaborated most frequently (see Appendix B for a full list of questions). Interview participants – Palestinians and Jews – included 25 men and 11 women, five serving MKs, 24 employees and directors of advocacy organizations, six grassroots activists, and one mayor (see Appendix C for a full list of interviews). The initial 11 interviews were conducted in person in Israel between July and August 2017. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the subsequent 11 interviews were conducted remotely between October 2021 and November 2022. The remaining 13 interviews were conducted in person, in January 2023. I personally transcribed, de-identified and translated the interviews from Arabic or Hebrew to English. Additional, relevant data (for example, background information about other organizations that were mentioned by the participant) was gathered from organizations’ own printed and on-line publications. Interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes after reading each transcript multiple times (see Appendix D for the full list of codes used in data analysis). Data were coded, organized and analyzed using Obsidian, a data management package and markdown editor capable of

cataloging, tagging and linking related interviews, and of generating diagrams of individuals.

5.5. Israel's counter-hegemonic movement industries

I asked interview participants to name the organizations with which they collaborated most frequently. Their responses suggest that, rather than occupying distinct civic and political spheres, participants were organized into (and viewed themselves as part of) interconnected professional networks based on shared, broad political goals. Thus, moving away from the political-civic division, as well as the ethnic-subaltern distinction, I propose an approach that emphasizes these actors' embeddedness and interconnectedness across both professional and ethnic categories. I identify a broadly counter-hegemonic movement in Israel, resisting the state's hegemonic ethnic order, in which five SMIs regularly participate:

1. Human rights (HR; Jewish-Palestinian).
2. Coexistence (Jewish-Palestinian).
3. Palestinian empowerment – secular.
4. Palestinian empowerment – religious.
5. Progressive Palestinian.

Granted, some degree of subjectivity is inherent to all classification systems; one may conceivably rearrange this movement along slightly different lines. There are distinctly feminist and queer organizations within the progressive Palestinian industry, anti-occupation organizations within the HR industry, and so on. I tried to strike a balance between taking an

inclusive approach to categorization (trying to minimize the overall number of categories), while remaining faithful to the ways participants contextualized their own activities. From this perspective, these five SMIs emerge as distinct, reflecting participants’ own, interpretive self-understanding of the political environment. I define the scope of each category in the coming pages, discussing each industry in depth.

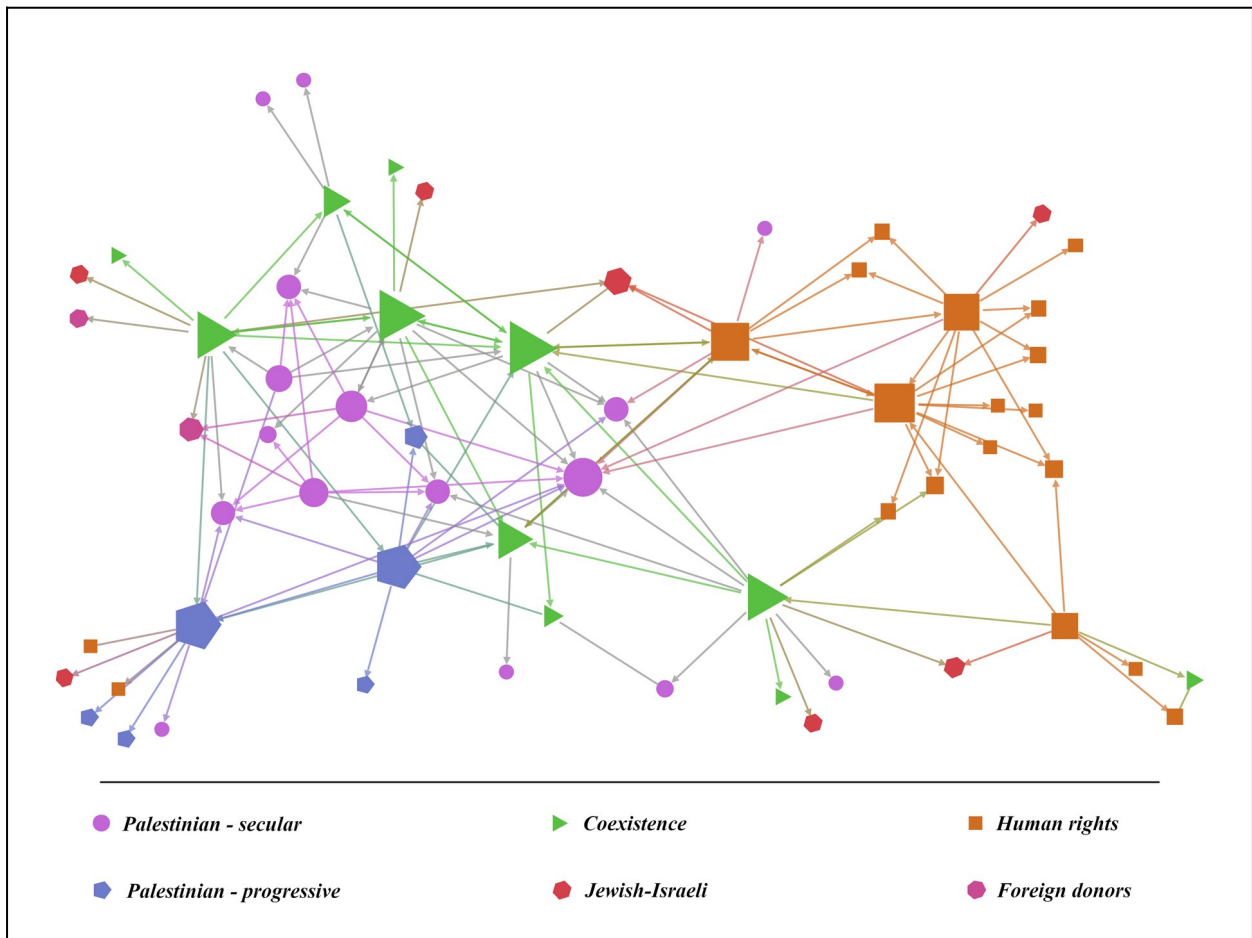


Figure 5.1: Social network diagram of SMOs based on interview data

Figure 5 includes a visual representation of the movement as a social network diagram (SND), generated using the open-source “Gephi” network analysis and visualization software package based on interview data. Participants were asked to name the organizations with which

they collaborated most frequently; this is represented by the arrows (the “edges”) of this SND. Nodes represent SMOs (political parties were excluded), their size varying based on their *degree*, or how often these organizations were named by others as partners. The diagram is mostly comprised of *directed* interactions: an arrow from node X to node Y corresponds to an interview participant from organization X naming organization Y as a frequent collaborator. This diagram provides a glimpse of the structure of Israel’s counter-hegemonic movement, including the central roles played by coexistence organizations and the peripheral roles played by HR organizations. Though it provides some invaluable insights, the diagram’s limitations should also be acknowledged: the sample size – 35 interviews with 36 individuals – is small. Additionally, this SND is based on free-flowing conversations in semi-structured interviews (rather than more strictly controlled, survey data, for example). Thus, this SND should be considered supplementary to the qualitative, process-tracing approach that follows. Still, some topographical features of Israel’s counter-hegemonic movement are already visible at this resolution – communities are easy to distinguish, and the centrality of certain nodes is also clear.

Reconceptualizing and recontextualizing Palestinian civic activism as part of an Israeli counter-hegemonic movement has several important theoretical advantages. First, it avoids the division between the civic and political spheres which, as both Jamal and Payes already acknowledge, betrays organizational realities. Of course, parliamentarians, mayors, local organizers and professional activists occupy different institutional context, playing different roles, but they also work alongside each other in an interconnected, collaborative fashion. This collaborative reality is missing from past scholarship on the Palestinian minority within Israel, which emphasizes the distinctiveness of the civil society sector. As an added benefit, this

approach excludes irrelevant organizations that bogged down prior analyses: service-providing Palestinian Islamic organizations, for example, were excluded based on the fact that they do not collaborate with other movement organizations toward counter-hegemonic goals: they have their own, distinct, inward-focused organizations which rarely intersect with the counter-hegemonic activities of the industries listed above. In their studies, Haklai, Jamal and Payes noted the explosive growth of NGOs in the '80s and '90s (Haklai, 2011, p. 135; Jamal, 2020, pp. 137–138; Payes, 2005, pp. 75–81), but also noted that the vast majority of these organizations were not concerned with advocacy, empowerment or policy change; most were service-providing, religious and cultural organizations (Jamal, 2008, p. 290). The interaction-based, social-movements approach that is proposed here obviates the need to justify Islamic organizations' inclusion or exclusion from the frame of analysis.

This approach is ethnically inclusive, reflecting the oft-observed reality of Jewish-Palestinian cooperation. Important organizations which Palestinian interview participants mentioned as frequent partners – organizations like B'Tselem, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), and Shatil – were excluded from past studies' frames of analysis, as they primarily focused on Palestinian organizations. Large organizations like Shatil and the Abraham Initiatives serve as central nodes, fulfilling a variety of important roles within the movement, including coordination, resource mobilization, and service provision (especially to smaller organizations), as well as information gathering and dissemination. Thus, from this perspective, Palestinians are certainly over-represented within this movement, but the movement itself is not Palestinian. Jamal alludes to this: in his argument against Haklai's characterization of the movement as ethnic, he says that it is not uncommon for SMOs within the secular empowerment

and progressive Palestinian industries to have mixed, Jewish-Palestinian staffs. In Haklai's response, he argues that Jewish representation, alone, is not enough to render these organizations non-ethnic (Haklai, 2021). This rebuttal is fair: the symbolic inclusion of Jewish staff members in Palestinian empowerment organizations does not render them liberal or cosmopolitan; as Haklai has shown, these organizations had previously prioritized the community's parochial interests over liberal values (Haklai, 2004, 2009). That said, from an interaction-based, inclusive, social-movement perspective, the central role of large, coexistence organizations – manifestly binational and non-parochial – is clarified; tracing interview participants' interactions reveals the importance of these organizations within the counter-hegemonic social network. Thus, from an interactive, social-movement perspective, the predominance of Palestinian empowerment organizations is secondary; a byproduct of Israel's counter-hegemonic movement's broadly egalitarian goals.

The human rights industry is well-differentiated. Organizations within it have close formal and informal ties: they collaborate on joint projects, their staffs maintain inter-organizational group chats and mailing lists, and their executive directors meet regularly (personal communication, January 8, 2023; January 11, 2023; January 12, 2023). These interactions are sometimes moderated by larger umbrella organizations. These Israeli HR organizations also work alongside other HR organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and abroad. This SMI includes organizations like B'Tselem, Breaking the Silence, Bimkom, Gisha, Doctors for Human Rights, Yesh Din, and others (Activist, personal communication, January 5, 2023a, personal communication, January 5, 2023b; Co-executive director of an SMO, personal communication, January 12, 2023; Director of an SMO, personal communication,

January 8, 2023, personal communication, January 11, 2023). Most of these organizations are predominately Jewish, with some notable exceptions, like B'Tselem, whose office staff includes roughly equal numbers of Jews and Palestinians (excluding fieldworkers, who are almost exclusively Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories). This industry is distinct: although its constituent SMOs frequently interact with organizations from other movement industries, a large share of them are quite peripheral to the broader movement, as shown in Figure 5. Several interview participants saw themselves as part of an inter-organizational community of like-minded activists. For example, in the following excerpt, the executive director of a large human rights SMO describes their organization as embedded within a human rights “sector”, drawing upon a limited pool of resources; they also describe the Israeli government as their main, formidable opponent:

“Let's set self-pity aside for a moment. We [the human rights sector] aren't actually so weak, yes? We're speaking about a sector that receives X millions of dollars annually, employing... a few hundred people? Right? There is a non-negligible basket of resources here. Had it been invested with a clear strategic vision, it could have made a bigger impact. Now, the game is not fair, because we are facing the Israeli government. But, again, self-pity aside, this is not an insignificant amount of resources, and it could be utilized better. ... It must be utilized better, because the situation is terrible, but that's not what's happening, and that's a problem” (personal communication, January 8, 2023).

The coexistence SMI is comprised of ethnically-mixed organizations like the Abraham Initiatives, the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, Shatil, and Sikkuy-Aufoq (Jayusi & Binhas, 2023). These organizations promote Arab-Jewish cooperation through advocacy,

lobbying, and community-based, grassroots initiatives. While these organizations broadly support the empowerment of the Palestinian minority within Israel, and while many of them refer to Israel's Arab citizens as Palestinians, overt Palestinian nationalism is absent from their discourse. Some large, umbrella organizations that fulfill coordination roles within the counter-hegemonic movement, such as Shatil, can be considered coexistence organizations, since a significant portion of their activities pertains to the promotion of Arab-Jewish cooperation and mutual understanding. This industry's role is central: its SMOs frequently engage with, and work alongside, SMOs from each of the other four industries comprising the movement, including Palestinian empowerment organizations – sometimes as partners, other times in capacity-building, supportive or coordinative roles (Prominent activist, personal communication, October 7, 2021, personal communication, February 15, 2022; Two activists of the same SMO, personal communication, July 27, 2017). The nodes representing these organizations in the SND (Figure 5) have large measures of centrality, visually represented by their larger size (these organizations were frequently mentioned by others, including participants from other movement industries, as collaborators). Although coexistence organizations were not entirely absent from past analyses, their central role was overlooked; both Payes (2005) and Jayusi & Binhas (2023) emphasize their ideological distinctiveness, under-emphasizing the frequent and institutionalized nature of their collaborations with Palestinian and Jewish organizations. For example, in the following excerpt, a staff member of a prominent coexistence organization describes the way in which their organization facilitated the creation of ad-hoc coalitions between different counter-hegemonic movement organizations:

“This is how it works: First, you need to know that activists all know each other's

specialties. So, for example ... there was one incident in which a woman was murdered [by her husband], and [despite the fact that] it was preceded by many complaints about her husband's behavior, officials kept dismissing the issue. Women Against Violence wanted to know how official bodies have dealt with similar issues in the past; how courts and judges deal with women's complaints, how they deal with violent men, and so on. After filing a freedom of information request, they discovered that, over a 10 year period, around 90% of complaints did not result in an arrest. So they came to us, knowing that ... they need a partner with a legal specialization. They automatically came to us. In general, when organizations want to collaborate, their executive directors, or sometimes their spokespersons, approach me about an issue and request a meeting with our most relevant people. So I return to [my organization]¹, send an email, and promote the issue; my colleagues suggest others, and we move forward. This is usually how collaborations start. What I am saying is that activists know each others' areas of specialization, so it is not hard to find relevant partners" (Prominent activist, personal communication, October 7, 2021).

In addition to indicating the central role played by coexistence SMOs, this quote illustrates the pragmatic nature of activism within Israel's counter-hegemonic movement. Several other interview participants, representing all five SMIs, have expressed similar, pragmatic attitudes to inter-organizational collaboration (Co-executive director of an SMO, personal communication, January 10, 2023, personal communication, January 12, 2023; Head of an Arab Locality, personal communication, April 5, 2022; Prominent activist, personal communication, April 12, 2022, personal communication, November 16, 2022).

¹ The name of the organization was omitted in order to protect the participant's identity.

Palestinian empowerment organizations promote the interest of the Palestinian national community within Israel. The largest of these SMOs are secular, including Adalah, the Arab Center for Alternative Planning (ACAP), the Galilee Society, Injaz, Mossawa, and others. They only rarely collaborate with religious Palestinian empowerment organizations, such as the northern and southern branches of the Islamic Movement and their affiliated organizations (Jamal, 2020, pp. 197–202). Some secular Palestinian empowerment organizations, like Mossawa, are generalists, engaging broadly in advocacy, lobbying, capacity-building and cultural initiatives. Others are specialists; the Galilee Society focuses on improving public health in the Palestinian sector, while ACAP focuses on issues pertaining to urban planning, land allocation, housing and development. These organizations work closely with Israel’s Palestinian politicians, and with each other. As stated by an interview participant working in this industry:

“We have three types of relationships, with three types of partners. First, there are donors. Both we and our donors consider each other as partners. Generally, they are located outside of the state of Israel; [they are] international organizations like the EU, state funds in Europe and the US, and individuals – left-wing liberals in several countries around the world. This is the first circle. The second circle consists of politicians. ... They can be Arab or Jewish but, in our case, they are mostly Arab. That said, we try to stay close with all politicians without involving ourselves in polemics, though sometimes this is inevitable. ... The third circle, which I think is the most important, consists of other CSOs ... That is, players which we work with on a truly daily basis. When it comes to the first two circles, we cooperate, but we do not depend on each other. But when it comes to the third circle – CSOs – we have many joint projects. We have a joint project with Adalah,

we have a joint project with Mossawa, a joint project with Sikkuy-Aufoq. We have a joint project with CSOs in the Negev. We tried to create a kind of coalition there” (Prominent activist, personal communication, April 26, 2022).

Other organizations promote the Palestinian community’s parochial interests from a religious-Islamic perspective. Although past scholarship has focused on the rift between the more radical, northern branch and the moderate southern branch of the Islamic movement within Israel, organizations from either branch are incorporated into the relational, interaction-based social movements perspective that is proposed here (Haklai, 2004). These organizations are mostly unregistered, grassroots initiatives, though some are large in scale. A notable example – the Murabitat – aims to increase the presence and visibility of Palestinian citizens at the al-Aqsa Mosque in response to settler encroachments (Ashly, 2023). Such organizations operate in between the national and religious-Islamist ideological spheres. Religious organizations that focus exclusively on internal social issues within the Palestinian community, like Iqraa – the organization that was analyzed by Agbaria & Mustafa (2014) – are excluded from this perspective. Indeed, a majority of Israel’s many registered Islamic associations are thus excluded from the frame of analysis (Jamal, 2020, p. 96).

Progressive Palestinian organizations promote progressive and liberal values among the Palestinian community through an ethnocentric, communitarian framework. Despite this industry’s communitarian focus, its constituent organizations dedicate considerable resources toward mobilizing against the state’s ethnic-hierarchical hegemonic order. Gender-based, queer and feminist SMOs like Al-Qaws, Aswat, Kayan, and Women Against Violence are prominent within this industry. They frequently collaborate with other SMOs in demonstrations and

outward-facing projects (Director of an SMO, personal communication, April 20, 2022; Local council member and civic activist, personal communication, May 19, 2022; Member of Knesset, personal communication, July 23, 2017; Prominent activist, personal communication, April 12, 2022, personal communication, February 6, 2023). Still, the lion's share of their work is focused inward, on the Palestinian community. These organizations face special challenges, working at the intersection of gender-based, sexual and ethnic discrimination. They make claims against the state's discriminatory policy and practices, such the systemic failure to solve gender-based crimes within the Palestinian community, but they also struggle against patriarchal violence within the community (Prominent activist, personal communication, October 7, 2021; Ziv, 2019). While the ideological differences between these progressive organizations and other, conservative and religious elements of the broader counter-hegemonic movement have threatened joint activities on several occasions, their counter-hegemonic commitments, and their embeddedness within (and dependence upon) other SMOs makes it difficult to forge an entirely separate path. As a result, collaborations persist, despite occasional inter-organizational disagreements (Director of an SMO, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

Although practitioners from all of this movement's industries interacted with government officials, various Members of Knesset, and parliamentary committees, they have also all expressed fundamentally confrontational, oppositional attitudes toward the state and frustrations with its ethnic-hierarchical policies. As noted by a coexistence activist: "The work was primarily facing government policies, which were harsh, regardless of whether it was right or left leaning, mind you. The government's policy toward the Arab community broadly, and especially the Negev community, has more or less remained unchanged over the years [regardless of the

government's makeup]" (Prominent activist, personal communication, February 15, 2022). Another activist – the director of a large, secular Palestinian empowerment organization – said: “[our goal is] to maximize the Palestinian community’s ability to make political changes, and to maximize political representation, in order to contribute towards creating the necessary majority for ending the occupation and ending the discrimination against the Palestinian community” (Director of an SMO, personal communication, July 24, 2017). After expressing a desire to mount larger, more frequent protests, the director of a progressive Palestinian organization said the following: “This policy of divide and rule; the policy of keeping people from engaging with each other... You know what? It extinguished everything... It succeeded. This state succeeded in extinguishing the hope that keeps you going” (Director of an SMO, personal communication, April 20, 2022). Taken together, these quotes demonstrate that although these organizations do engage with the state, with international organizations and with large charitable foundations, their politics are fundamentally confrontational. Indeed, as Jayusi & Binhas (2023) note, these organization walk a tight rope between protesting state policies – oftentimes contentiously, by sponsoring demonstrations, for example – and cooperating with government officials in order to achieve material and structural organizational objectives.

The historic inclusion of an Islamic Palestinian party, the United Arab List (UAL) in a governing coalition alongside right-wing Israeli parties in 2021 caused a rift among Palestinian empowerment SMOs. As others have noted, Palestinian SMOs within Israel have always had unofficial party affiliations (Jamal, 2020, pp. 137–154); they most closely work with members of their own, affiliated parties. Nevertheless, activists, politicians and organizations from different ideological backgrounds and movement industries used to cooperate with each other on a regular

basis. Cooperation improved further in 2015, when the four predominately-Palestinian parties within Israel united to form a single electoral list, the Joint List (JL; Abu Rass, 2024). The UAL's defection from the JL in 2021, however, resulted in the formation of deep strategic and ideological schisms among Palestinian SMOs. Actors rejecting the UAL's defection on ideological grounds minimized their contact with the party and its affiliate SMOs in spite of the benefits associated with working with a coalition partner (Abu Rass, 2024). In an interview which was conducted during the UAL's tenure in government, a professional working in the secular Palestinian empowerment industry made the following remarks about an annual conference their organization had recently held:

“Before the Joint List's disbandment, we would invite its head, and one additional representative, to give some opening remarks ... We might have even co-hosted the conference with the JL. But in the most recent conference, we refused to include both sides [the JL and UAL]. We did not want to invite someone from the UAL, because they are in the coalition, but we also did not want to be partial, so we invited neither. There were no JL representatives in panel discussions, though some members of the List attended the conference [as ordinary participants]” (Prominent activist, personal communication, April 26, 2022).

Interviewees representing coexistence organizations were more likely to cooperate with the UAL, despite its inclusion in government alongside right-wing parties, indicating greater strategic pragmatism and ideological flexibility compared to other movement organizations (Co-executive director of an SMO, personal communication, December 1, 2021, personal communication, January 10, 2023; Prominent activist, personal communication, February 15,

2022). Thus, the UAL's defection caused rifts not only along ideological and strategic lines, but also between SMIs. While some interview participants regretted the UAL's defection, notable figures from coexistence organizations viewed its inclusion in government as a positive development; a realization of their commitments to inter-ethnic cooperation. As one participant stated:

“We are truly non-partisan. Some of my friends and comrades are mad at me, saying: ‘why do you speak with and whisper to Mansour Abbas [head of the UAL]?’ I tell them: ‘but of course, this is my work! I work with everyone. My professionalism comes from being able to work with everyone’. ... a few months ago [a special forum]² was established, headed by Abbas. Other activists and politicians boycotted it. How can NGOs boycott a forum, just because it is headed by Abbas? Were it headed by someone else, from Meretz or Labor, they would have attended. They boycott it because it is headed by Abbas, and he is the opponent of Ayman Odeh [head of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE) / JL] – who is my dear friend, you see? But I participated.” (Co-executive director of an SMO, personal communication, December 1, 2021).

Another professional, who worked for a progressive Palestinian organization, made the following remarks:

“I used to work with MK Said al-Harumi, from the UAL. He was my primary address [in the Knesset]. ... When the UAL left the JL, I asked ... if we could maintain our working relationship. But I found out that [our issues were not] as important to the UAL as they

² The name of the forum was omitted to protect the interview participant's identity.

used to be ... so I ended my relationship with them. This was difficult, because there are still people in the field that think I am affiliated with the UAL. But this stream did not adopt our issue properly, so I was forced to leave it, and find another, which would advance the issue properly and support us. ... [At that point], some MKs from the UAL started ignoring me. Now, every time I reach out to MKs from other parties, like Ayman Odeh, Aida Touma-Suleiman [of the DFPE/JL], or Mossi Raz [of the liberal Zionist party Meretz], they [UAL-affiliated activists and politicians] attack me, as if my goal is not to advance an issue, but to defame the UAL” (Prominent activist, personal communication, April 12, 2022).

These quotes illustrate the deep strategic and ideological rifts that were caused by the UAL’s defection, both among Palestinian empowerment organizations (on ideological and strategic grounds), and within the broader movement (between coexistence organizations and others). They are also important for indicating the various ways in which movement actors were and continue to be interlinked across industries and ideological camps: internal conflicts, at times fierce, were considered exceptions to the norm, which was characterized by routine, if challenging professional interactions across ideological lines and between SMIs. Other studies confirm the interlinked, networked nature of interactions among actors outside the formal electoral sphere (Jamal, 2020, pp. 209–220; Sa’di, 2016). Furthermore, while the networks that form the movement have transformed as a result of the UAL’s defection, actors from different movement industries continue to interact in a similar, goal-oriented fashion, on the basis of their counter-hegemonic commitments.

5.6. Theoretical implications

The social movements theoretical framework is more appropriate to the case of Palestinian mobilization in Israel, for several reasons. Firstly, it more accurately reflects the networked, inter-ethnic organizational realities that were described in the preceding section. Its actor-agnostic, inclusive nature allows for the incorporation of important organizations that had been excluded from past analyses, like mayors, politicians, and grassroots activists. At the same time, its emphasis on shared political objectives leads to the exclusion of irrelevant actors that bogged down prior analyses. Most notably, it facilitates the inclusion of ethnically mixed organizations – HR and coexistence organizations – into the frame of analysis, recognizing the integral roles they play within the movement. While scholars recognized these organizations’ prominence, they were still treated as separate from the rest of the Palestinian organizational field, and were thus excluded from these studies’ ethnic, religious or subaltern theoretical frameworks. Payes, for example, dedicated a separate chapter to coexistence organizations in her study, but she conceptualized them as part of a Palestinian civic sphere, undervaluing the input and leadership roles played by coexistence and HR organizations. Additionally, the interaction- and goal-centric nature of the social movements paradigm excludes religious organizations that neither collaborate nor make claims against the state’s ethnic hegemonic order; organizations that scholars had previously grouped together with other predominately-Palestinian ones *as* civil society organizations. This bogged down prior analyses. Jamal dedicated some space in his studies to tensions between religious and nonreligious organizations within the Palestinian civic sphere (Jamal, 2011, pp. 190–191, 2020, pp. 197–202), while Agbaria & Mustafa’s article is, in itself, an attempt to remedy existing scholarship’s lack of engagement with Israel’s religious-

Islamic voluntary associations (Agbaria & Mustafa, 2014). Omitting apolitical organizations, as well as political Islamic organizations that do not make claims against the state's ethnic order, resolves this classification problem.

Second, this framework's emphasis on shared commitments to broad political goals bridges prior theoretical gaps. While past scholarship tended to treat the Palestinian civic sphere as distinct, the suggested pivot toward a networked, interactive, social movements approach emphasizes the ways in which Palestinian organizations are integrated into a wider, binational, counter-hegemonic movement. Thus, while Payes (2005) and Jayusi & Binhas (2023) emphasize the differences between coexistence and Palestinian empowerment organizations, this approach focuses on the ways in which they are socially integrated. The disagreement between Jamal and Haklai is also resolved: the movement can simultaneously include conservative, religious and nationalist components, on the one hand, alongside liberals and human rights defenders, on the other, as they frequently collaborate toward the accomplishment of shared objectives (Snow, 2013). Rather than portraying the *Palestinian* civic sphere as ethnic, liberal or subaltern, this approach questions its categorization as Palestinian, in the first place. As interview and secondary data make evident, coexistence and Jewish organizations collaborate on both ad-hoc and ongoing bases; they are embedded in the network that comprises this movement, alongside certain (but not all) Palestinian organizations. Over time, these interactions become institutionalized. Palestinian and Jewish activists from different organizations grow familiar with one another, become aware of each other's areas of specialization, and over time, inter-organizational collaboration becomes routine. As della Porta and Diani argue:

“Networking in-action increases the influence of each organization and individual.

Coordination starts on the pragmatic grounds of facilitating mobilization, and then helps the development of inclusive norms. The logic of the network as an instrument for the coordination of activity facilitates the involvement of different political actors. The network is often kept together mainly through an emphasis on mobilization around concrete goals, but beyond this instrumental aim, protest campaigns are spaces for the development of mutual understanding” (della Porta & Diani, 2011, p. 76).

In short, this approach, which incorporates organizations based on interactive rather than legal categories (civil society organizations; registered associations), allows for greater analytical flexibility; it includes a variety of important actors and excludes unimportant ones, while avoiding the normative baggage that is associated with the civil society literature.

Lastly, the social movements framework, which emphasizes conflict, contention and confrontation, is much better suited to tackle mobilization in deeply divided societies, in which conflict, rather than consensus, is the norm. The civil society paradigm, which emphasizes consensual, routine politics, has fewer tools to offer analysts of politics in deeply divided polities, which are marked by conflict rather than agreement. Indeed, as scholars of conflict, ethnicity and nationalism have already noted, ethnic minority politics tends to be confrontational – movement-like – in deeply divided societies (Asal et al., 2012; Bakke et al., 2012; Seymour et al., 2016). Some authors have made similar observations regarding the Palestinian minority’s political leadership within Israel, specifically (Jamal, 2011, pp. 188–225, 2020, pp. 21–27, 2020, pp. 243–256; Navot et al., 2023). The interview and secondary data presented in the last section clearly show that the relationship between the state and counter-hegemonic activists is primarily characterized by antagonism, opposition, and confrontation – even among coexistence and HR

organizations: while many organizations cooperate with government officers and ministers, they maintain counter-hegemonic, egalitarian commitments, and they mount, sponsor and participate in contentious protest activities against the state. This confrontational stance defines their political program, and the social movement paradigm most accurately reflects this reality. As this case shows, members of disenfranchised minorities naturally play disproportionately central roles in such movements, but they are not alone; they join forces with members of the ethnic majority that share their counter-hegemonic goals.

Granted, this paradigm has its own set of limitations and classification challenges (Snow, 2013). Is Israel's counter-hegemonic movement norm-oriented, demanding changes within the system, or value-oriented, demanding fundamental systems change (Smelser, 1962)? Is it characterized by constrained contention, in which established actors and tactics predominate, or by transgressive contention, in which new actors, innovative and illegal tactics predominate (McAdam et al., 2001, pp. 7–9)? I will leave these important questions for future studies. Regardless, as I have shown in this article, there is a lot to gain from adopting theoretical perspectives that are informed by social movement theory when analyzing Palestinian mobilization in Israel, and minority politics in ethnic states more broadly. I hope that future scholarship on Palestinian mobilization within Israel incorporates elements of this literature. I also hope that students of ethnic, national and colonial conflict situations utilizes insights from the field of sociology more broadly, including novel methodologies, such social network analysis.

5.7. Bibliography

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Chapter 6 Conclusions

6.1. Summary of findings

This dissertation has established a link between ethnic minority leaders' perceptions of political opportunity and threat, on the one hand, and ethnopolitical movements' internal organizational patterns and strategies, on the other. Over three articles, it has shown how the structure of political opportunities facing ethnic groups can facilitate and constrain their leaderships' strategic choices, the formation of inter-ethnic alliances, and ultimately, movements' level of cohesion and fragmentation. Environments which are perceived as exceptionally open or closed are associated with fragmentation, while medium values on this independent variable are associated with cohesion. Ideological and strategic differences serve as intermediary variables: political actors face incentives to reconsider their broad strategies in extraordinarily challenging, closed political environments (causing fragmentation), set aside internal strategic and ideological differences in moderately challenging environments (leading to increased unity), and differentiate along ideological lines in exceptionally open political environments (causing fragmentation). This broad argument was established through diachronic comparative analysis using evidence from Israel, synchronic comparison using additional evidence from Turkey, and through process tracing and discursive content analysis of data from both of these cases.

This project's first article has shown that the Palestinian formal parliamentary leadership's rapid fluctuations between cohesive and fragmented mobilization since 2015 were caused by diverging strategic responses to Israel's increasingly entrenched hegemonic ethnic order. Unlike previous scholarship, which divided the leadership of the Palestinian movement within Israel along internal ideological lines, this article points to a new axis, centered on actors' strategic responses to the ethnic hegemonic order. The hegemonic-accommodationists,

spearheaded by Mansour Abbas' United Arab List (UAL), chose to conform to the demands of Israel's increasingly hierarchical ethnic hegemonic order, in exchange for political legitimacy; the hegemonic-rejectionists insisted on opposing this order, despite the cost of continued exclusion. At the same time, a growing constituency within the rejectionist camp has become disillusioned with the prospect of achieving change from within the system, increasingly favoring the creation of alternative, community-based institutions and, in some cases, contentious mobilization. While internal ideological divisions within the community remain electorally and organizationally significant, the rise of the hegemonic-accommodationist approach – exemplified by the United Arab List's participation in a government coalition alongside Israeli right-wing parties – has solidified this axis as the principal organizing framework for Palestinian Israeli politics in the twenty-first century.

In line with recent literature, this article focused on leaders' perceptions of opportunity and threat, rather than these variables' absolute value; objective shifts in the structure of political opportunity are important, but elite perceptions are ultimately the more proximate cause of change in the pattern of elite behavior (Goldstone & Tilly, 2001, p. 182; McAdam et al., 2001). For this reason, interpretive, interview methodology was used extensively in the data collection stage. These data show that, in 2015, Palestinian parliamentary leaders chose to set aside their ideological differences, pooling resources together in response to the perception of declining political opportunities (most immediately, the raise in the electoral threshold, which threatened Palestinian parties being left out of the Knesset). When the strategy of unity failed to produce the desired outcomes – political leverage, greater inclusion, and the satisfaction of voters' demands for executive power – and as political conditions continued to deteriorate, a threshold was

crossed, leading some leaders to reconsider their strategies, triggering organizational fragmentation.

The project's second article relied more extensively on the ethnic politics literature, adding conceptual and theoretical layers to the first article, while testing some of its findings. Did exclusion have a similar impact on Turkey's Kurdish minority, which shares many background characteristics with Israel's Palestinian minority? This article uses the literature on intra-ethnic competition as a theoretical point of departure, especially Christina Zuber's groundbreaking system of classification, which outlines six possible strategies ethnic elites can pursue when competing for the support of their co-ethnic constituencies (Zuber, 2013, p. 761). These strategies emerge from the intersection of two criteria: the positional criterion (how moderate or radical are the group's claims compared to preceding, co-ethnic actors?), and the appeal criterion (does the group appeal exclusively to the ethnic community, or not?). Using evidence from Israel and Turkey, this article shows that, under conditions of systemic and cultural exclusion – when the ethnic hegemonic order is impermeable – ethnic minority parties are not likely to make lateral appeals to members of the dominant ethnic majority. In other words, conditions of systemic exclusion are more likely to result in ethnic bidding dynamics; in internal, within-group mobilization and segmented electoral markets, with little cross-ethnic mobilization on the basis of non-ethnic, cross-cutting identities. This result confirms past findings. On the opposite end, inclusive ethnic constitutional orders incentivize lateral bidding strategies – they encourage cross-ethnic mobilization – but they do not necessarily disincentivize outbidding radicals. Furthermore, somewhat contrary to recent studies (Zuber & Szöcsik, 2015), this article finds that exclusive, ethnic-hierarchical polities with impermeable ethnic hegemonic

boundaries do not necessarily disadvantage moderates. Indeed, both the Turkish and Israeli cases show that moderation is viable, even when the political environment becomes more exclusionary, repressive and harsh, as it can offer a path toward political survival, legitimacy, and access in some competitive electoral environments.

This project's third and final article demarcates the boundaries of the Palestinian ethnopolitical movement within Israel. Using discursive content and social network analysis based on interviews with Palestinian and Jewish activists and politicians, it argues that the Palestinian ethnopolitical movement is embedded within a broader, binational counter-hegemonic movement in Israel. This broader movement is comprised of five industries. The first two are the human rights and coexistence industries, which form the joint, Jewish-Palestinian element of Israel's counter-hegemonic movement. The remaining three – the secular and religious Palestinian empowerment industries, and a progressive Palestinian industry – form the Palestinian element. Thus, this article argues for the existence of a broader binational counter-hegemonic movement within Israel, based on interactive, organizational and political criteria rather than ethnic-identitarian ones; on its members' shared opposition to Israel's ethnic hierarchical order, as well as the frequency, strength and durability of their joint activities. This article has important implications for future research. The joint, Jewish-Palestinian element of the movement, and its close connection with Palestinian empowerment organizations, has been under-emphasized in the extant literature. Reconceptualizing the Palestinian ethnopolitical movement as part of a broader counter-hegemonic movement constitutes a major departure from common academic practices, as scholars of Palestinian mobilization within Israel tend to separate the civic from the political spheres, as well as Jewish and Palestinian mobilization.

6.2. Theoretical implications

The independent variable was conceptualized as *the perception of political opportunity* in this project's first article, and as changes in *states' hegemonic ethnic orders* – or the way in which ethnic hierarchies are institutionalized, and the extent to which they are understood to be normal – in the second. In the context of hegemonic ethnic states, which “energetically promote the interests of a single ethnopolitical group” (Peleg, 2007, p. 3), changes in the ethnic constitutional order constitute a central dimension of political opportunity, shaping the institutional and ideological environment in which ethnic minority movements operate. Thus, while movements' organizational-developmental trajectories are shaped by political opportunity structures, broadly, ethnopolitical movements, specifically, have to contend with special dimensions of political opportunity, unique to ethnic states, emerging from changes in the ethnic constitutional order. Past investigations of ethnopolitical movement mobilization have thus far refrained from classifying the ethnic-hierarchical environment as a political opportunity structure; this ethnic dimension of political opportunity is not well-recognized in the literature on social movements (Asal et al., 2012; Cunningham et al., 2012; Seymour et al., 2016; Van Cott, 2005). It is my hope that scholars integrate insights from the ethnic politics and social movements literatures in this manner, considering the various ways in which ethnic hierarchies are preserved as central dimensions of the political opportunity structure with which ethnic movements contend.

Overall, this project's results suggest that the relationship between leaders' perception of opportunity and ethnopolitical minority movements' level of cohesion follows an n-shaped curvilinear trajectory (Figure 6). Environments which are perceived as exceptionally open or closed are associated with fragmentation, while medium values on this independent variable are

associated with cohesion. Ideological and strategic differences serve as intermediary variables: political actors face incentives to reconsider *their broad strategies* in extraordinarily challenging, closed political environments (causing fragmentation), set aside internal strategic and ideological differences in moderately challenging environments (leading to increased unity), and *differentiate along ideological lines* in exceptionally open political environments (causing fragmentation). In other words, the costs incurred on fragmented movements' leaders are low when political opportunities abound, and as a result, they are free to differentiate, forming new organizations along ideological lines. When the costs associated with fragmentation increase, leaders are incentivized to pool resources together, setting aside ideological differences in order to overcome new challenges. These medium levels of opportunity and threat are also associated with inclusive appeals, moderation (lateral underbidding) and coalition-building. When environmental challenges cross a threshold, and actors perceive scarce opportunities to accomplish their goals, internal *strategic* differences are amplified, leading to fragmentation. In deeply divided societies with one main ethnic cleavage, this is also associated with increased exclusion, ethnic segmentation and, therefore, ethnic rather than lateral bidding dynamics.

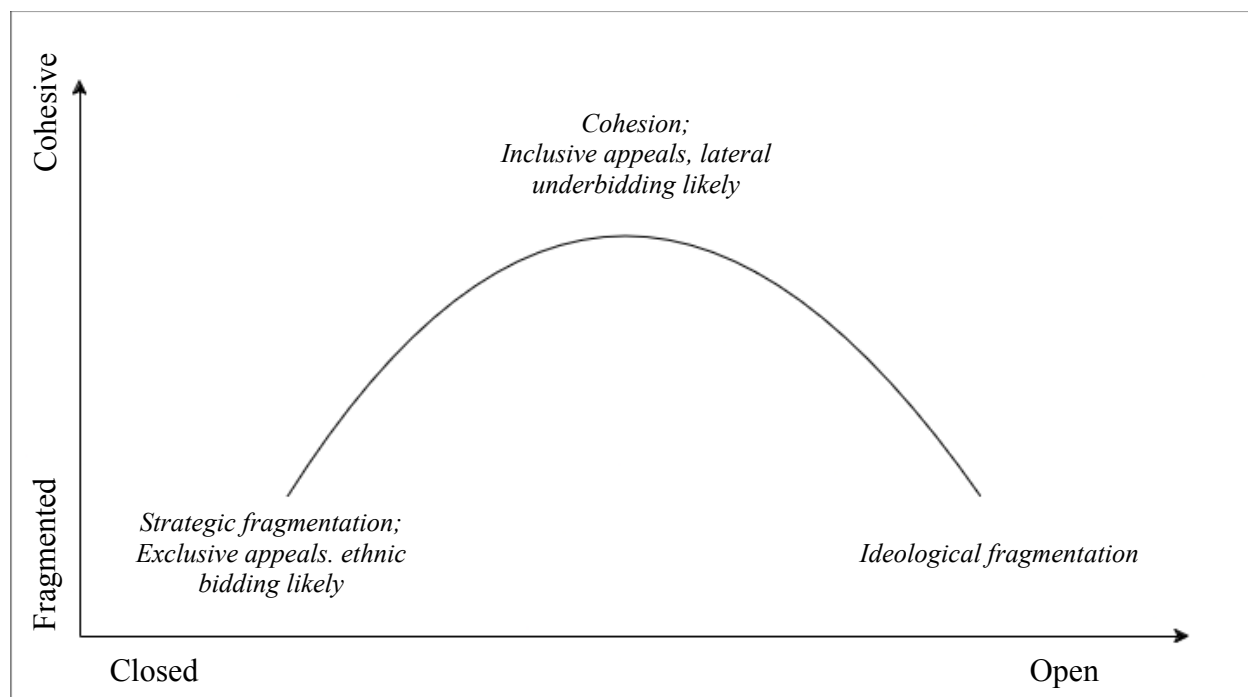


Figure 6.1: The perception of opportunity and its impact on organizational cohesion

In the Israeli case, this relationship can be observed over two temporal resolutions: from a distant vantage point, between the state’s establishment and the Second Intifada, and over a shorter timespan, in the fourth phase of Palestinian politics within Israel (since 2015; Haklai & Abu Rass, 2022). During the first phase, between 1948-1966 (see Article 1), Palestinian citizens of Israel were fragmented and demobilized. They were subjected to military rule, with limited opportunities for political mobilization. The lifting of military rule and easing of restrictions during the second phase, spanning the late-‘60s–mid-‘80s, altered the political opportunity structure facing the Palestinian leadership, allowing for cohesive mass mobilization for the first time since the state’s establishment. Still, the Palestinian minority and its leadership continued to face significant challenges during this phase: discriminatory policies persisted, and mobilization was constrained and directly repressed; the binational Israeli Communist Party / New Communist List remained the only tolerable frameworks for Palestinian national expression and

mass mobilization. Lastly, during the third phase (late-'80s–2015), further openings in Israel's political opportunity structure allowed nascent political streams to form new parties, leading to organizational diversification along ideological lines. The explosive growth of Palestinian civil society organizations during this phase – which had (and continue to have) unofficial party affiliations (Jamal, 2020) – had also contributed to this fragmentation, with power horizontally dispersed among a large number of organizations.

Thus, from a distant vantage point, we can see that the Palestinian leadership within Israel followed the n-shaped trajectory, illustrated in Figure 6. Although there could be differences and delays between objective changes in the structure of political opportunity and leaders' perceptions, studies confirm that the Palestinian leadership was perceptive of these changes, viewing the environment as exceptionally closed during the state's early years, with gradual openings in the late '60s and '70s (Cohen, 2010; Lustick, 1980; Robinson, 2013; Sorek, 2020). The Oslo years are also known as a time of hope among Palestinian citizens and their leaders (Jamal, 2020, pp. 137–170; Pappé, 2011, pp. 201–228; Sorek, 2020, pp. 173–190). Critical junctures in state-minority relations include the lifting of military restrictions in 1966, the 1976 “Land Day” protests, which provoked a mixture of hope for further mobilization and trepidation over the state's harsh response, Israel's “constitutional revolution”, the Oslo Peace Process, and the October 2000 Events – a low point in state-minority relations. These events shaped leaders' perceptions of opportunity and threat, leading to ideological, organizational and strategic recalibrations, including the growing influence of Palestinian nationalism, the rising discourse of indigeneity, and the drafting of the 2006 Vision Documents (Haklai, 2011; Jamal, 2011). Other processes shaped the structure of political opportunities facing the Palestinian leadership in an

indirect manner, including the decentralization and declining power of Israel's state institutions, gradual economic liberalization, and the rise of the Palestinian middle class. As Oded Haklai shows in *Palestinian Ethnonationalism in Israel*, "[t]he Israeli state has seen the cohesion and extensiveness of its institutional infrastructure decline considerably over several, decades, a transformation that increased the opportunities available for minority mobilization and encouraged multiple organizations to form" (Haklai, 2011, p. 7). And so, between the state's establishment and the start of the third phase, Palestinian political-organizational cohesion increased together with leaders' perceptions of opportunity. Passing a threshold at the beginning of the third phase, with further diminishing threats, improved opportunities for change, and low costs associated with organizational differentiation along ideological lines, the leadership became fragmented again, along ideological lines.

The quick deterioration in the structure of political opportunities following the Second Intifada, which is extensively discussed in this project's first article, brought the Palestinian leadership back along the n-shaped curve, from fragmentation, through cohesive mobilization under the Joint List, and finally, to fragmentation again – along primarily strategic rather than ideological lines. As shown in this project's first article, Palestinian leaders' perceptions of opportunity deteriorated quickly following the Second Intifada. When the electoral threshold was increased ahead of the 2015 elections, and parties were suddenly at risk of being excluded from Knesset, the threshold was crossed, leading leaders to set aside ideological differences and establish the Joint List. Israel's 2019-2022 crisis catalyzed the deterioration in the perception of opportunity. Leaders like Ayman Odeh had hoped to leverage the List's popularity and electoral strength to be included in a Center-Left coalition; with 15 seats in the Knesset and no clear

majority for either the pro- or anti-Netanyahu blocs, the List's leaders hoped the Israeli mainstream could no longer afford to ignore them (Hecht, 2020). To facilitate the JL's inclusion in a Center-Left coalition, Palestinian leaders had also moderated their stances and extended their appeal to the broader Jewish-Israeli public. When this strategy repeatedly failed to bear fruit, as Israel's political stalemate became clear over the course of three elections (in 2015, 2019b and 2020), some leaders lost faith in unity, seeking alternative strategies to accomplish their goals, satisfy their voters' demands, and maintain their seats in the Knesset.

Of course, political mobilization is a complex phenomenon with many variables at play. The Kurdish movement, for example, had maintained relatively high levels of cohesion since the PKK's establishment despite periods of harsh repression and heightened exclusion. While Islamic alternatives had sprung up in the electoral arena, they never presented a serious threat to the PKK's hegemony within the Kurdish national movement. This is likely due to Turkey's historically high threshold of 10% (recently lowered to 7%), which restricted the ability of internal ideological rivals to emerge in the formal electoral arena; outside of it, formidable, conservative Islamic rivals did emerge, openly fighting the PKK. Still, this case confirms several elements of the proposed relationship between leaders' perceptions of opportunity and political-organizational cohesion: firstly, cross-ethnic voting had only emerged on large-scales when Turkey liberalized, in the '90s, around the same time the first Kurdish parties were established. As environmental conditions continued to improve, especially in the years preceding the 2013-2015 peace process, the PKK-led movement's hegemony grew, and cohesion improved. At the same time, the movement became more inclusive, appealing laterally to members of the Turkish majority, and simultaneously to members of the religious Kurdish constituency, by shedding its

Marxist-Leninist commitments. Thus, both cohesion and inter-ethnic inclusion improved as Turkey liberalized.

Although this project shares a causal mechanism with several studies that were mentioned in the literature review, its conclusions are ultimately at odds with them. Shriver & Messer (2009) and McCammon & Campbell (2002) identify a similar causal pathway between political opportunities and organizational fragmentation; both studies make the case that worsening political opportunities and increasing threats induce tactical and ideological recalibrations, leading to organizational shifts. Unlike this project, they argue for a *linear* relationship between opportunity structures and organizational fragmentation, reaching opposite conclusions (Shriver & Messer link closure in the structure of political opportunity with intra-organizational fragmentation, while McCammon & Campbell link it to inter-organizational cohesion). Meyer & Corrigall-Brown (2005) and Reese et al. (2010) agree with McCammon & Campbell's findings. Similar to this project, other authors found the relationship between political opportunity structures and organizational fragmentation to be curvilinear, but their conclusions are at odds with this project's findings. Staggenborg (1986) argues that social movement organizations are most likely to form coalitions "under conditions of exceptional opportunity or threat" (p. 374). Similarly, James DeNardo argues for a curvilinear relationship between political opportunities and movement cohesion, using tactical reconsideration as an intermediate variable: he argues that closed political opportunity structures favor ideological purists within social movements, since compromise is unlikely to bear fruit in unfavorable political environments, and open opportunity structures favor pragmatists, since flexible demands are likely to be met under favorable conditions. An intermediate degree of political opportunity, DeNardo argues, causes maximum

friction between purists and pragmatists, leading to organizational fragmentation (1985). The results of this project point to the exact opposite mechanism: under conditions of exceptional *opportunity*, actors are likely to fragment along *ideological* lines, while an exceptional *lack of opportunity* causes fragmentation by amplifying internal *strategic* differences; moderately challenging environments are best associated with cohesion.

Lastly, this project underscored *the need for political legitimacy* as a driver of discursive, strategic and, ultimately, organizational change within ethnopolitical movements. Although some might suggest this driver boils down to leaders' personal, career-driven aspirations to stay in power (Bates, 1974), this project has shown that leaders' willingness to compromise in exchange for greater legitimacy can also reflect popular demands for access to the executive. This project's first two articles identified it as a central driver for moderation among the Palestinian leadership within Israel. This result runs contrary to the classical model of outbidding: in societies with one major, ethnic cleavage, competitive environments do not necessarily promote outbidding; electoral competitions can also heighten the need for legitimacy in the eyes of an ethnic majority when minorities face pressure from their constituents to gain access to the executive and/or achieve certain political goals. Relatedly, this project's findings highlight the mutually-constitutive nature of majority-minority interactions. In Israel, for example, Palestinian parties' lack of legitimacy grew clearer and more acute through the 2019-2022 political crisis, as the Joint List faced successive rejections. The Jewish majority's red lines became clearer as the crisis progressed, informing Palestinian leaders and shaping their strategic responses, leading, ultimately, to the UAL's defection and strategic reorientation. In Turkey, the PKK's moderation – its adoption of Democratic Confederalism around the turn of the millennium – improved the

party's legitimacy in the eyes of both religious Kurds and the Turkish left, paving the way to the 2013-2015 peace process. Furthermore, changes in the patterns of Kurdish voting and support for the ruling AKP party shaped Erdoğan's own politics and discourse. These processes – ethnopolitical movement fragmentation, ethnic party strategies, and states' hegemonic ethnic orders – are dynamic processes that feed into and shape each other in a mutually-constitutive manner. Abstract generalizations about both intra- and inter-ethnic competitive dynamics have limited explanatory power *in abstracto* – instead, these processes should be seen as dynamic, asymmetrical and context-dependent. It is my hope that scholars continue to identify and unpack the causes of organizational fragmentation among ethnopolitical minority movements, and the formation of ethnic party strategies, using evidence from additional cases.

Ethnic actors are rarely entirely isolated from others. This project has shown that, even under conditions of extreme ethnic segmentation – as in Israel – ethnopolitical minority movements, struggling against ethnic-hierarchical orders, find allies among members the dominant majority. This was true in apartheid South Africa, the Jim Crow South, and many other cases (Goodwin, 2007; Zinn, 2016, pp. 443–467). As Israel's case shows, the work of inter-ethnic organizations, and the work of counter-hegemonic members of the ethnic majority, is inseparable from ethnic minorities' own activism. These relationships, within inter-ethnic coalitions, are also mutually constitutive. As Israel's case shows, these networks are deeply integrated; a community of well-acquainted activists forms over time, and inter-organizational cooperation becomes routine. Even when facing extreme ethnic segmentation, exclusion, and delegitimization, counter-hegemonic actors make space for joint political action based on (what they perceive as) the shared interests of both ethnic communities. This project has also shown

that extreme ethnic segmentation does not necessarily lead to chauvinism. Though exceptionally harsh environments can cause schisms among movement leaders based on strategic disagreements, this project showed that, even under these conditions, moderation is viable.

Beyond their theoretical implications, these findings are valuable for stakeholders seeking to empower disadvantaged minorities and promote egalitarian values and peacebuilding in conflict-ridden areas, especially those which are characterized by ethnic hierarchies and asymmetric power relations. This dissertation was researched and written as inter-ethnic relations gradually and steeply deteriorated in Israel and Palestine. It was written through the May 2021 events, through the October 7 massacre in Israel, through a regional international crisis, and through an ongoing campaign of annihilation in the Gaza Strip which doubtlessly included countless war crimes and crimes against humanity. As I conclude this project, I notice a growing number of domestic and international stakeholders losing hope in a peaceful and just settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. I hope my findings outline a possible path forward, or at least some elements of such a path. I think they do, by suggesting that the seeds of inter-ethnic cooperation – based on shared egalitarian values; not mere tolerance – have long been planted, waiting for a favorable environment in which to germinate. At the moment, Israel's inter-ethnic, counter-hegemonic movement is small and ineffective. As this project's first article has shown, the Israeli Left has shrunk tremendously over the past few decades. Rebuilding it into a mass movement that could serve as an alternative to Israel's Netanyahu-led ethnonationalist Right is possible, but it will take time and great efforts at the grassroots level. People's minds need to be changed; existing coalitions must be strengthened, and new ones built based on the shared interests of some of Israel's disparate tribes – including its Palestinian citizens, the liberal Zionist

left and, most likely, large segments of the Haredi community. But right now, amid this year's horrors in Israel, Palestine and Lebanon, those goals are only aspirational. To begin paving the way toward these goals now, international stakeholders can support the movement that was identified in this project's third article: Israel's small, but capable and well-integrated, binational, counter-hegemonic movement. They could single out committed activists – Palestinians and Israelis, working together in some of the most difficult political terrain – and assist them. Interested international stakeholders – policymakers in the US, EU, the Arab world, and intergovernmental organizations – can help shape the incentive structures facing Israel's disparate ethnic leaders, especially its Palestinian citizens, who, this project has shown, serve as an invaluable bridge between peoples. Key players among them are still willing to participate in Israel's political-electoral game. In the long term, the most effective work that can be done by the international community is to help empower Israel's disadvantaged communities and promote these inter-ethnic coalitions, which could serve as scaffolding for a reinvigorated Israeli Peace Camp.

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Appendix A: Research Ethics Board Approval



March 8, 2021

Mr. Rida Abu Rass
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GREB Ref #: GPLST-177-21; TRAQ 6031972
Title: "GPLST-177-21 Divided We Fall: Cohesion and fragmentation in excluded ethnic minority movements"

Dear Mr. Rida:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "**GPLST-177-21 Divided We Fall: Cohesion and fragmentation in excluded ethnic minority movements**" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS 2) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 6.14) and Standard Operating Procedures (405), your project has been cleared for one year.

You are reminded of your obligation to submit an annual renewal form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html>; click on "Events;" under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies"). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form in Romeo/traq indicating that the project is 'completed' so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion; there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one-year period (access this form at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html>; click on "Events;" under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form"). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To submit an amendment form, access the application by at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html>; click on "Events;" under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies." Once submitted, these changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, GREB, at University Research Services for further review and clearance by GREB or the Chair, GREB.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dean A. Tripp".

Chair, General Research Ethics Board (GREB)
Professor Dean A. Tripp, PhD
Departments of Psychology, Anesthesiology & Urology Queen's University

c: Dr. Oded Haklai, Supervisor
Dr. Rachel Laforest, Chair, Unit REB
Michelle Knapp-Hermer, Dept. Admin.

Appendix B: List of Interview Questions

1. Describe your day-to-day working experience. What does a typical day look like for you?
2. Describe your tactical preferences. What types of broad strategies have you found most fruitful in your work, so far?
3. What are your biggest successes? Can you name specific projects or events that you are especially proud of?
4. What helped you with these accomplishments? What facilitates your work? What are you most thankful for, professionally?
5. What obstacles do you face in your work? Which aspects of your work do you find most frustrating?
6. Which external organizations, or individuals, do you most frequently work with?
Describe your working relationship with them.
 - a. Do you work with organizations from across the ideological spectrum?
7. How has your work changed over the last 10 years?
 - a. How has your work been affected by the establishment and breakup of the Joint List?
 - b. Has cooperation with other organizations improved or deteriorated in this period?
8. What factors facilitate cooperation between you (or your organization), and others?
9. Are there any organizations or resources that effectively facilitate coordination between you and others?

10. What difficulties do you face when working with others? What barriers toward cooperation do Palestinian organizations, politicians and activists within Israel face, in your opinion?
 - a. How can those problems be resolved?
 - b. How would you characterize the relationship between Palestinian organizations in Israel? Is the relationship between Palestinian organizations competitive? If so, how?
11. Are there any substantial tactical differences between you and others within the Palestinian political community?
12. What is the most common cause of disagreement between you and other organizations? Are disagreements mostly tactical, ideological, or both?
13. Do you believe greater cooperation between organizations, politicians and activists is beneficial to your work? If so, how?

Additional questions for MKs:

1. Why, and how, did the Joint List form? Why, and how, did it break up?
2. Which NGOs do you work with most frequently?
3. Have you been facing grassroots pressures to adjust your political platform?
4. What were the main difficulties you faced when establishing the Joint List?

Additional questions for NGOs:

1. Which parties and NGOs do you work with most frequently?

Appendix C: List of Interviews

Personal interview with a prominent civic activist (Palestinian empowerment – secular), July 13, 2017.

Personal interview with the director of a Palestinian CSO (Palestinian empowerment – secular), July 15, 2017.

Personal interview with MK, July 23, 2017.

Personal interview with a Bedouin grassroots activist (Palestinian empowerment – religious), July 24, 2017.

Personal interview with the director of a Palestinian CSO (Palestinian empowerment – secular), July 24, 2017.

Personal interview with two prominent civic activists working for the same CSO (coexistence), July 27, 2017.

Personal interview with MK, July 27, 2017.

Personal interview with the co-executive director of a CSO (coexistence), July 30, 2017.

Personal interview with a union organizer and Israeli Communist Party member, August 2, 2017.

Personal interview with MK, August 6, 2017.

Personal interview with MK, August 7, 2017.

Personal interview with a prominent civic activist (coexistence), October 7, 2021.

Personal interview with the co-executive director of a CSO (coexistence), December 1, 2021.

Personal interview with a prominent civic activist (coexistence), January 25, 2022.

Personal interview with a prominent civic activist and consultant (coexistence), February 15, 2022.

Personal interview with the Head of an Arab Locality (religious), April 5, 2022.

Personal interview with a prominent civic activist (Palestinian – progressive), April 12, 2022.

Personal interview with the director of a CSO (Palestinian – progressive), April 20, 2022.

Personal interview with a prominent civic activist, April 26 (Palestinian empowerment – secular), 2022.

Personal interview with a Palestinian lawyer (HR), May 18, 2022.

Personal interview with local council member and civic activist (Palestinian – progressive), May 19, 2022.

Personal interview with prominent civic activist (Palestinian empowerment – secular), November 16, 2022.

Personal interview with a journalist, civic and grassroots activist, January 2, 2023.

Personal interview with a union organizer and Israeli Communist Party member, January 3, 2023.

Personal interview with a grassroots activist (HR), January 5, 2023.

Personal interview with a grassroots activist (HR), January 5, 2023.

Personal interview with the director of a prominent CSO (HR), January 8, 2023.

Personal interview with a prominent grassroots activist (coexistence), January 9, 2023.

Personal interview with an academic & civic activist (Palestinian empowerment – secular),
January 9, 2023.

Personal interview with MK, January 10, 2023.

Personal interview with the co-executive director of a CSO (coexistence), January 10, 2023.

Personal interview with a prominent civic activist (coexistence), January 11, 2023.

Personal interview with the director of a prominent CSO (HR), January 11, 2023.

Personal interview with the co-executive director of a CSO (HR), January 12, 2023.

Personal interview with a prominent grassroots and civic activist (Palestinian empowerment –
secular), February 6, 2023.

Appendix D: Codes Used in Interview Data Analysis

/accommodationist = makes a comment roughly aligning with the accommodationist camp.

/analysis = participant provides their own political analysis, perspective or opinion.

/collabs = mentions instance(s) of collaboration.

/external/donors = collaboration pursued to satisfy donor preferences.

/external/insecurity = collaboration in response to environmental threat.

/external/opportunity = collaboration was prompted by new opportunities (ex. individuals promoted to new position, org accessed new funding, etc.)

/government = collaboration occurred between an actor and government offices/officials.

/institutionalized = collaboration occurs routinely, regularly or effortlessly.

/internal/align = collaboration driven by alignment of interests around specific issues (and not by ideological compatibility).

/internal/ideology = collaboration was driven by ideological compatibility.

/internal/strategy = collaboration was driven by a strategic vision; to increase power.

/international = collaboration occurred with an international actor.

/network = collaborators had a prior working relationship / already knew each other.

/pal-jewish = collaboration occurred between Palestinian and Jewish orgs.

/who = identifies the actor with whom they collaborated.

/demobilization = mentions instances of demobilization, failure of initiatives, or disbandment.

/drama = expresses resentment or disdain, or mentions bad blood, disagreements and/or quarrels.

/family = either mentions their own family, or the role of family affiliation in politics, broadly.

/frustration = expresses frustration relating to politics and/or their work.

/govtclerks = mentions governmental officers/offices/clerks.

/grassroots = mentions grassroots organizing, mobilization or activity.

/hardcoop = mentions obstacles toward cooperation.

/external/funding = donors and funding (lack of them, their demands, etc.) served as an obstacle toward cooperation.

/external/structure = institutional, structural factors (e.g power relations, legal realities) served as an obstacle toward cooperation.

/external/threat = attacks by other political forces either directly or indirectly hindered cooperation.

/internal/age = intergenerational differences hindered effective cooperation.

/internal/competition = internal power struggles hindered effective cooperation.

/internal/culture = community/organizational/interorganizational culture/norms limited activists' ability to coordinate effectively.

/internal/demobilization = coordinative efforts were abandoned.

/internal/gender = sexism; gendered dynamics hinder effective cooperation.

/internal/geography = geographical differences/distances hindered effective cooperation.

/internal/identity = misaligned political identities hindered effective cooperation.

/internal/ideology = ideological differences hindered effective cooperation.

/internal/leadership = bad leadership; leaders' inability to compromise hindered effective cooperation.

/internal/misalign = political misalignment hindered effective cooperation.

/internal/religion = tensions between secular and religious individuals hindered effective cooperation.

/internal/strategy = strategic differences hindered effective cooperation.

/internal/tactical = tactical differences hindered effective cooperation.

/internal/unprofessional = a lack of professionalism hindered effective cooperation.

/hope = expressed hope for greater cooperation / mobilization / better politics.

/important = said something notable or exceptionally interesting.

/israeljudicialchange = mentioned Israel's 2023 Judicial Overhaul plans / demonstrations against those plans.

/JLbreakup = commented on the causes or the effect of the Joint List's breakups.

/JLformation = commented on the causes or the effect of the Joint List's formation and reformation.

/may2021 = commented on the May 2021 events.

/mobilization = mentioned instances of mass mobilization.

/nostalgia = expressed nostalgia for politics in the past.

/obstacles = mentioned an obstacle they face(d).

/external/culture = obstacles stemming from external (Israel-wide) cultural hostility.

/external/funding = mentioned funding as an obstacle.

/external/structure = mentioned structural, legal or long-lasting obstacles.

/external/threat = referenced direct attacks, hostility and/or repression as an obstacle.

/internal/crime = said crime and gun violence limited their/others' ability to mobilize.

/internal/culture = community/organizational/interorganizational culture and norms limited activists' ability to mobilize.

/internal/professionalization = professionalization; proliferation of CSOs limited activists' range of possible activities; hindered grassroots and party-based activism.

/racism = identified racism as a political problem.

/rejectionist = made a comment that aligns well with the rejectionist camp.

/disaffected = made a comment that aligns well with the disaffected response.

/Israeliinstitutionalist = made a comment that aligns well with the institutionalist response.

/repertoires = mentioned the methods they or others used in their grassroots activities.

/resentment = expressed resentment toward another actor.

/threshold = mentioned the electoral threshold.

/UAlEffect = commented on the effect of the UAL splitting from the Joint List.

/access = said the UAL's inclusion in a coalition government increased the community's access to power.

/legitimacy = said the UAL's inclusion in a coalition government resulted in greater legitimacy for the community.

/schism = recalled instances of disunity, lack of cooperation, resentment or disagreement as a result of the UAL leaving the Joint List.