Sharaf Politics

Honor and Peacemaking in Israeli-Palestinian Society

Sharon D. Lang

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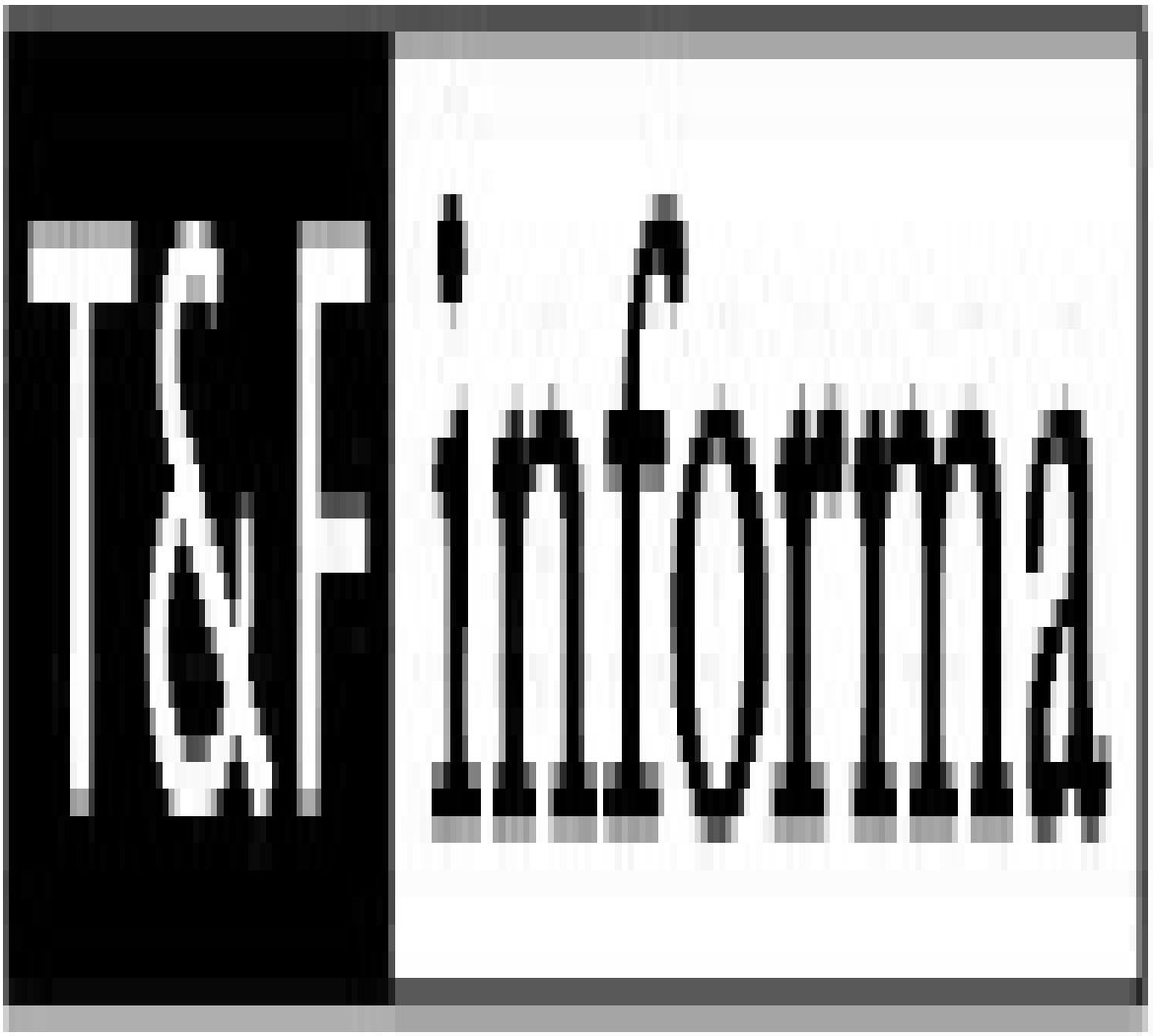

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This book is dedicated to my beloved daughters Micaela (March 28-August 27, 2003), taken from my arms by SIDS but forever cradled in my heart and Maya Lang, my "big girl" *who keeps me going every day*.

Friends in the Middle East taught me about the importance of honor and reconciliation in their lives.

My children challenge me to live each moment honorably, in search of peaceful reconciliation within.

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Chapter One
Entering the Community

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While a graduate student in Social Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard in the mid-1990s I received a grant to enroll in an overseas program and study Arabic at Haifa University in Israel. On my arrival I was surprised to find out that in fact there were no Arabic classes being offered. Such courses were listed in the catalog, and prior to my arrival, I had been told they would be available. Apparently, however, there had been some miscommunication and the staff now explained to me that no foreigner had ever registered for this program with the intention of studying the Arabic language. The administrators automatically enrolled me in an *ulpan*, a course of intensive study of Hebrew, and tried to place me with Israeli students being taught Arabic through Hebrew instruction.

Only after much insisting on my part, did the director agree to hire an Arabic tutor (whose main abilities turned out to be gorging food and ogling blondes). I did not learn much Arabic from him, however, I did learn a considerable amount of Hebrew and spoken Arabic that year,[1] mostly from the Israeli friends I made, and I took advantage of my time in Israel to travel around to Palestinian communities in the region. People in this region were so uniformly welcoming, generous, and open with personal discussions that it made fieldwork very feasible. These initial explorations or "field investigations" were the preliminary endeavors that expanded into three years of living in the Middle East and ultimately the writing of this book.

Before embarking on that year-long program in Haifa, I had spent the previous summer in Jerusalem and at the time initiated doctoral research on the Islamic Movement inside of Israel. To that end, I had forged contacts in Kufr Kana, an Islamic stronghold, attended various local events, and informally interviewed residents. I was interested in better understanding the nature and force of the Islamic Movement inside of Israel, given that Israel is about one-fifth Arab, most of whom are Muslim and some of whom fiercely support the Islamic political parties. The Islamic Movement, however, was a highly sensitive subject to be asking questions about at that time. In December of the previous year, the Israeli government had rounded up 415 alleged Hamas activists whom they identified as "terrorists" and deported them to the Lebanese border

zone (see e.g., Kristiansen 1993:9-10). No warnings were given to the deportees, no trials held. Palestinians were infuriated and the situation within the country remained tense throughout the following year when I was going around asking questions.

My friends told me that I would get nowhere with my inquiries on the Islamic Movement: "People will think you are a spy for the American or Israeli intelligence; you won't be able to obtain any genuine information on the subject." Furthermore, they warned, "You might be placing yourself in serious danger." Words of caution were repeatedly and frequently uttered. Often too, they ended the discussion by categorically dismissing my intentions altogether: "Anyhow, you're a girl. Why should you be interested in this?"

It was difficult for me to retreat from such a gendered challenge and I stubbornly resisted my friends' urging but ultimately I had little choice but to re-direct my studies. Cultural logics created methodological obstacles that proved insurmountable. I could only gain information through a facilitated process whereby well-connected local informants with whom I was friendly personally accompanied and introduced me to key contacts and, at that time, all my potential escorts politely declined to act as go-betweens and assist me; friends who were normally generous with their time made themselves unavailable. The favor of bringing "a girl," to the home of a notable religious sheikh to ask him questions was too much to ask; it would have put my male friends in an untenable and uncomfortable situation. Many of the Islamic leaders would simply not agree to meet and discuss issues with me and I had no means of winning their trust. I conceded that an ethnographic study of Israeli Islamists and political Islam inside of Israel would have to wait for the future male anthropologist. Although I was frustrated by my limitations at the time, this experience provided me with important lessons on gendered politics and the significance of mediation in this society.

I decided to turn my ethnographic attention to the overall system of Arab local government in Israel and observe more generally, rather than single out any particular movement or party. I consulted with Dr. Majid al-Haj, the only Arab sociologist employed at an Israeli university (as of March 1996), and, after several discussions with him, I chose to relocate my research to the town of Kamila,[2] a fairly accessible all-Arab town east of Fiaifa. Kamila promised to be a particularly interesting and appropriate fieldsite because the town had a history of organized local government since 1910 and was a pluralistic community comprised of various Muslims, Christian, Druze, and, until the 1920s, Jews.[3]

I contacted a man named Jafar Jubran, a Christian Arab notable, whom Dr. al-Haj had put me in touch with, and Jafar invited me to come for a visit. I traveled to Kamila on bus #167 from the central station in Haifa and though only about 18 kilometers away, the trip took over an hour. It was a slow and arduous journey; the noisy and polluting bus drudged along bumpy dirt roads, making countless stops. (Later I did discover the slightly more efficient "express" bus and *sherut*

or shared taxi.) My initial impression of this populous Arab town was not especially favorable and, to be honest, I found the physical surroundings uninviting and unattractive. An old washed-out billboard advertising a bridal shop stood at the western entrance of the town where we entered. At first I did not see any people on the streets, only grey, dusty heaps of rubble and dry dirt, and burnt carcasses of what were once presumably automobiles. Although a sizable town of about 20,000, this appeared to be a place that outsiders rarely entered, clearly not the first stop recommended by the Israeli Tourist Office. Commercial areas were not readily apparent and, in comparison with Jewish locales, the poverty here was apparent and striking. The houses populating the town were simple cement structures at various stages of unfinished construction, many with exposed beams and wires protruding in all directions. The undeveloped areas surrounding the houses were devoid of greenery or natural beauty with a major exception being the knotted old olive trees that lined the eastern entrance of the town.

My sense of unease, which had begun en route when fellow bus travelers cast perplexed glances at me, heightened during the seemingly endless period from when I disembarked and walked the 100 yards to my destination. I was an American, a foreigner, a Jew, with no previous connection to the city or its residents. The few people who appeared on the city streets overtly stared at me with an expression that seemed to ask, “What on earth are you doing here?” I felt intensely self-conscious and wished that I had not selected to do fieldwork in a place where I had no pretense of an insider’s legitimacy. The Arabs of Kamila[4] interacted with Israeli Jews and foreigners routinely when they traveled outside of their town for employment, education, and recreation, but the direction of such travel rarely ever reversed.[5] I do not think people’s reactions were caused by my physical appearance or apparel but, simply, my enigmatic presence in this space where all others were familiar entities aroused the guarded curiosity of onlookers.

I was marked as an unknown quantity, a being strikingly out of place, and yet I did not sense any hostility directed toward me. After a few moments, the silence on the street broke when dozens of young boys came bounding down the road, returning home from school in droves. The boys approached boldly and immediately and addressed me in Hebrew: *M’eefo aatf Uaan aat rotzaf* (“Where are you from? Where do you want to go?”). They were shocked and thoroughly amused when I responded to them in Arabic. I fought hard not to be overcome by self-consciousness, to ignore the voice inside of me that repeated, “You don’t belong to this world.” The boys wanted to know who I was, why I was there, and all that they could find out about me. The girls who were also walking home in clusters behind the boys did not speak to me directly but cast shy glances at me. Even though I wished to meet and talk with these children, I moved quickly along sensing that I should get to my destination, lest I do something socially inappropriate, more than I already had by my presence, and jeopardize my goal of being accepted into this community.

Jafar and I sat in “The House of Hope,” a nonprofit peace center that he had founded in 1978. From the outside, the stark stone structure with sealed shutters did not appear particularly hopeful but this Center, he told me, was the only Jewish-Arab peace organization that had sprung from and continued to exist in any Arab village. The Jewish synagogue just outside the window and off the main street was equally exceptional; it appeared to be centuries old and stood in its original form as a testimony to the fact that indigenous Jewish and Arab communities once coexisted in this town.[6] The two large Eastern Orthodox churches remain active and dominate the center of the town, while numerous mosques spread throughout the city sound the call to prayer five times daily from loudspeakers at the top of the minarets.

Once I stepped inside the House of Hope, I was in an altogether peaceful and lovely place. I did not know of course at that time that this inviting space in which we sat talking and sipping Arabic coffee, was later to become my home. The rooms were decorated with artistic posters, banners, and statues that displayed symbols of peace and were all in some way connected to the hope of a peaceful Israeli-Palestinian coexistence. Birds flew in and out of the open doors and internal courtyard; large cacti and flowering trees blossomed around the simple furniture. This house was an oasis, a shield from the harsh outside surroundings. Jafar and I talked endlessly about his work that day and many others—he held seminars on the prospects of Israeli-Palestinian peace and ran an interfaith kindergarten for local Arab children. He spoke of his dream of reconciliation between Arabs and Jews and was idealistic in his vision of coexistence. He showed me the blueprints and took me to the location for the planned expansion of the House of Hope where he was going to hold year-round courses and lectures on peace and coexistence and where students from all over the country and region would come to study.

It was during one of those initial meetings with Jafar that we first discussed his time-consuming work as a mediator in an indigenous process of peacemaking referred to as *sulba.* Jafar spoke of his involvement in this longstanding Arab custom with a clear sense of pride. I was intrigued by this elaborate traditional Arab practice that had rarely been discussed in the anthropological literature, and encouraged Jafar in his musings about recording some information on sulha.[7] Sulha and the mediators such as Jafar who engage in processes of peacemaking are elaborated on in much of what follows in this book but it took me quite some time to see and understand sulha as the basis of local politics and a means of maintaining order as well as constructing and competing for power among men.

Jafar invited me to come and live in Kamila and told me that I was welcome to stay with his family indefinitely. I took advantage of his incredible gesture of hospitality and went to live in “The House of Hope,” feeling myself to be extremely fortunate. I had been welcomed into the home of the Jubrans, the most reputable Christian family of the Arab town. The only named road, which runs through the center of town, is Jubran Jubran Street, named after Jafar’s late

father who had served as *mukbtar* (a chosen communal leader) and mayor for over four decades. Though Jafar himself had never obtained quite the level of societal respect accorded to his father, he had become a well-known and reputable regional leader in his own right. Jafar had been involved in local and national politics all of his life and remains one of the village's most prominent citizens, along with the current Muslim mayor, Ibrahim Nimr Muhammed, and the Druze Sheikh Saleh Zuhayri.[8] Jafar approved of my explorations in Kamila, and commended the general anthropological aim of bringing some understanding of Israeli-Palestinian culture to western outsiders whom he believed had little to no knowledge of his world.[9] In the privacy of his office and home, Jafar was willing to treat me as a friend and scholar. We passed many hours, days, and months in conversation with other local residents hashing out the meaning, theory, and mechanics of sulha, and I felt fortunate to be privy to this information from the perspectives of true insiders.

A Signpost

Having portrayed my inexpert launching of fieldwork in the town of Kamila and my fortuitous entrée into the subject of sulha peacemaking, my aim for remainder of this opening chapter is tri-fold: First, I will provide information on the history and sociopolitical context of Kamila, the city where much of my research was conducted, and on villages and towns in the wider region of the Galilee in the north of Israel, where the balance of my work was carried out.[10] Second, I will offer a reflexive discussion that further details some of the instructive experiences and challenges that I encountered during the formation and carrying out of this research. I bring in certain informative and revealing personal moments of fieldwork experience only as a means and to the extent that they shed light on various cultural forms and understandings that are relevant to the subject matter of the book. Finally, in conjunction with this background information on the sites of research and methodology, I shall present the main foci, premises, and theoretical arguments of this ethnographic study.

Kamila's Colonized History: A Socioeconomic, Religious, and Political Sketch

Kamila is a town located on the western edge of the Lower Galilee, approximately 18 kilometers from Acre, Fiaifa, and Nazareth, the three cities that form the points of a region commonly known as "the Triangle." By the 1990s, Kamila had a population of 23,000 inhabitants, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics (1994), and 26,000 according to local estimates, making it the second largest all-Arab locality in Israel after Umm al-Fahm. As is typical of the

rest of the Galilee, Kamila has been home to Muslims, Christians, and Druze for centuries. These groups co-exist peacefully in general but the religious division between these communities has always been a salient boundary (cf. Zenner 1972:169). The Muslims of Kamila are Sunni, as is true throughout most of Israel although there is a small Shiite group of Arabs living near the Lebanese border. The Christian Arabs of Kamila are a mix of Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox predominantly, with smaller numbers of Latin Catholic, Protestant, and a few Armenians, Maronites, and Copts. Religious identity regulates significant aspects of life including marriage, divorce, and inheritance and though interfaith friendships are commonplace, each religious community has remained exceedingly endogamous in terms of marriage and family. These clear religious group identities, as well as other communal identities, become especially significant and sharp during times of crisis and conflict. When a homicide occurs, for example, the family, clan, village, tribe, or entire religious community may feel victimized or be held collectively responsible.

Druze and Christian communities both claim to have been the original settlers in Kamila, and indeed their adjacent and overlapping neighborhoods are situated in the middle of the town today. Judging from the visible layers of ancient stone at the base of the town's castle, which marks the geographical peak and center of the village (and now functions as a community center), the town has certainly been inhabited for many centuries. Christians tell an anecdote of the time when Jesus came to Kamila, which is said to have been a thriving village during this period. As the story goes, Jesus traveled north to this town when he was a young Jewish boy in order to attend synagogue. After the Sabbath services Jesus stayed around and started gambling with the other young boys but apparently he was not too lucky at his game. After losing all of his money, Jesus wagered and lost his *kippah* (a Jewish head covering for men) and hence we have the beginning of Christianity.

Although comprehensive historical records of the town do not exist, a resident and notable scholar has compiled some socioeconomic information that mentions the ethnic-religious composition of the Kamila population in past centuries, "[Kamila] had attracted many immigrants: There was considerable movement in and out of the area, with some Christians settling temporarily, then moving to Lebanon but returning during the eighteenth century" (1987:24). It was not until the rule of Dahar al-Omar (r.1698-1775), however, that Muslim families began to settle on the eastern edges of Kamila. Present-day Bedouin state that by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bedouin from the Turkman, Sawaid, and Hujairat tribes primarily, began camping in the fields surrounding the town in order to engage in commercial relations with the rest of the Kamila population. According to town records, by 1917, eighty-nine Bedouin families had settled permanently on the outskirts of the town.

Kamila was the first settlement in the northern part of the country to be granted municipal

status in 1910 by the Turkish authorities. A local delegate explained to me that the founding of a municipal council in Kamila was the direct result of political events taking place in the weakening Ottoman Empire. In 1908 there was a rebellion against Sultan Abdul Hammid, who was widely considered by the local population to be a corrupt dictator. The two rebels, Anwar and Niyassi, who led this Young Turk movement, were successful in obtaining some concessions from the Sultan, one of which was to establish autonomous local governments in these areas of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, to the delight of Kamila residents, in 1910 a municipality was established and, according to an informant's recollection, the local people of Kamila considered this to be "the first dawn of freedom, the first ray of light." Another elderly resident concurred, "People were not happy about the Ottoman regime. Everyone wanted to get rid of this."

Within a decade Palestinians were fully liberated from Ottoman rule, but this freedom came with a price. "At the beginning of the first World War," a Christian inhabitant explained, "(Kamila-ites) hoped that the British would win and liberate them from the yoke of Ottoman oppression." My informant explained what did in fact happen: "Lawrence of Arabia told the Palestinians that when England wins the war, British authorities will give the Arabs their independence and let them run their own government. In 1920, however, when the Arabs found out that the British had promised the land to the Jews,[11] the people were frustrated and disappointed." "The more things changed, the more they remained the same," another elderly man added. "Having just broken free of Ottoman rule, the Arabs did not welcome British interference."

Jubran Jubran, then mukhtar and mayor of Kamila, took pride in the Arabs' self sufficiency and found the arrogance of the British utterly offensive. His son Jafar Jubran recounted the adequate means his father had developed to run the town, prior to and independent of British "expertise":

> My father already had a simple primitive way of collecting garbage: two men in two carts driven by mules. They would walk through these small lanes, because there were no roads, and collect trash. There was not a lot of garbage then with fewer people. There was no sewage or water system. Women carried jars on their heads and went to the *'ain il-ma'* (the spring) or the *naba'* (the water well), and that is where young men would go to meet girls. By the 1930s my father had already brought a pumping machine working on diesel to bring water directly to this village. We put in a pipe system. In this city we also had a slaughter house, better than today's, and every piece of meat was examined by checkers.
>
> So when the British said, "We are going to bring food to these people," my father said, "Go and take care of your own towns. We do not need your help. Maybe we can teach you how to run London." At that time, in the 30s and 40s, there was enough Palestinian intelligentsia

> to be able to administer the town. There were doctors and lawyers; of course not the majority of people, but a good portion of the people were educated.

Nevertheless, the Mandate was imposed between the world wars and new laws wrought massive socioeconomic changes. First 30,000 dunam of land were declared government owned because they were alleged to be uncultivated hillside country. Much of this "superfluous" land was in fact either olive groves or grazing areas for cattle. The Land Registration Act of 1933 led to a complete breakdown of the *musba* system of collective ownership in Kamila, as it did in other parts of Palestine (Waschitz 1947; Stein 1984). Land became privately owned and hence sellable. Saleh Affendi, a wealthy landowner who resided in Acre, for example, sold 7,000 dunam to Bedouin and Jews. The transformation of the socioeconomic fabric was radical and changes only somewhat delayed in Kamila as compared to other Arab villages due to the fact that many residents did not cooperate and register their land but continued to act as they had before this policy was introduced. The rate of proletarianization or transformation to wage labor was slightly slower in Kamila than in other parts of Palestine for additional reasons: much of the Muslim Arab labor force was absorbed onto farming areas within the town. With exceptions such as Saleh Affendi, most of the large landowners did not sell their land; the Druze as a group in particular were adamant about keeping their family land and labor force in tact.

Before the 1930s and 40s, ownership of land provided not only a means of subsistence but also a measure of social status. Kamila society was divided between the landed and the landless, with land ownership forming the primary basis by which to confer status and maintain class distinction. Class and religious group divisions did not coincide precisely as each religious group was comprised of several classes, yet there was a strong correspondence between these categories. Up until the middle of the twentieth century, four main occupational strata existed in Kamila, each linked to one or more religious groups: merchants and business owners were nearly all Christian; large landowners were Christian and Druze; small farmers came from all three religions; and the poor peasants and hired workers were almost exclusively Muslim (al-Haj 1987:36). Thus in this town, the Druze and Christians dominated economically—Druze in agriculture and Christians in agriculture, trade, and industry—while Muslims were economically dependent on the other religious communities.

Before 1948, most Christians of the Galilee, in contrast to Muslims or Druze, had an urban orientation, meaning that they had ties to Christians of Haifa, Acre, Jaffa, and Beirut. In Kamila, however, such external links with other Christians were insignificant and unnecessary. Christians were the elite of this town and, despite their somewhat resentful attitude toward British arrogance, had the support of the British powers during the Mandate. Kamila Druze, on the other hand, sought assistance from distant "co-religionists" as they were not recognized by British

authorities and there were no Druze villages nearby. Kamila Druze maintained strong ties with Druze of the Golan Heights, Lebanon, and Jabal el-Arab in Syria. From the mid-twentieth century diary records of a Druze Sheikh in Kamila, al-Haj (1987:50) reports that there was extensive correspondence between these Druze groups. External Druze even mediated conflicts involving Druze families within Kamila. Also, according to al-Haj (1990:52) there was a closer affiliation between the Druze and Muslims communities at that time than subsequently. This is suggested by a diary passage from a Druze of Kamila that refers to Druze and Muslims as "two Muslim branches," an indication that Druze and Muslims should be regarded as two segments of the same religion (al-Haj 1990:52); certainly not a sentiment expressed during the course of my fieldwork.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, Kamila retained its intimate, small-town flavor. One resident recalled his memories of the heavy walk and grim face of the town crier and lamplighter in the early 1940s when he was just five years old: "How can I forget this personality who imposed his presence on everybody in the town?" My informant remembered with nostalgia the "good old days" when:

> The town was small and beautiful [and] life was quiet, dull, and in slow motion. There were only several hundred people and a few hundred homes, most of which were located around the castle and built so close to each other that neighbors would share walls. The roads were very narrow earthen paths; you could only call them lanes, not roads. The silence was very deep then. With no cars, but horses and donkeys as the only means of transportation, no factories and no industry of any kind, I wonder where any noise came from?

Another senior resident reminisced about how "men and women attuned themselves to the rhythms of the sun." He reflected:

> At dawn, all the villagers would wake up, men, women, and children. Everyone had to go to the fields before the heat of the sun became too strong. They drove their cattle and their animals to the pasture. Plowing would be the responsibility of the men, while harvesting the crops was in the hands of the women. Little children, boys and girls, would be put in charge of the animals. And when the sun was setting one could see long lines of humans and animals returning from the fields, dragging their exhausted bodies, just before it got dark.

Despite this quaint depiction of village life, Kamila was for centuries a vital commercial town serving as the district center *(mudiriyyah)* that provided goods and services to twenty-two surrounding Muslim and Jewish villages. The town (including the surrounding agricultural plots controlled by Kamila residents) was 125,000 dunam or 500 acres before the creation of the State

of Israel in 1948. Most of this land was under the musha system of collective tenure. In this system plots of land were redistributed every five years among the three major religious groups; each community received its land share based on the size of the population and duration of settlement in the town. Throughout the British Mandate, Christians maintained their majority status in the city comprising 45 % of the residents and controlling about half of the land. The other half of the land was divided among the Druze, who were just 17% of the population, and eight Muslim households that comprised 38% of the population (al-Haj 1987:30). Muslims received the smallest portion of land despite being a sizable group because they were the last settlers to the town.

Like most of the inhabited areas of the Galilee, Kamila had been predominantly an agricultural settlement during the first half of the twentieth century. Agricultural employment here formed the overwhelming means of subsistence: 90% of Druze, 80% of Muslims, and 70% of Christians engaged exclusively in farm labor. According to municipal records, the majority of Christians and Druze subsisted by cultivating their own land and without other forms of employment (60% of Christians, 53% of Druze, 22% of Muslims).[12] Residents of Kamila depended and subsisted on cereal agriculture (i.e., wheat, barley, and sesame), fruit and olive trees, watermelon, and cotton. These crops were grown primarily for internal consumption and secondarily to sell to outside markets to earn money and pay taxes. Most of the large landholders of Kamila were locals, unlike in other villages and towns of Palestine where absentee owners tended to live in the large cities. Kamila landowners emerged as a distinctive and elite social class in the town. These wealthy families hired other local residents for assistance, especially during the harvest season, as did most of the farmers who owned middle to modest-sized plots. Only a small number of middle-class peasants who owned modest-sized plots (i.e., approximately 22% of Druze, 17% of Christian, 18% of Muslims) did not hire extra seasonal help.[13]

Kamila-ites were never exclusively agriculturists however. By the end of Ottoman Empire and during the British Mandate, 15% of all households made their living primarily in trade and industry especially in the nearby seaport towns of Haifa and Acre. In addition, there were semi-nomadic sheep and goat-rearing Bedouin (distinct from camel nomads) in and around Kamila. From July to September Kamila workers were hired to ride camels and transfer crops to Haifa and Acre (see al-Haj 1987:33). From the middle of the Mandate until the late 1940s, there was a minor recession in Kamila and throughout the region, but a limited amount of craft, industry, and trade activity continued, mainly controlled by Christians and conducted with the surrounding dependent populations (al-Haj 1987:34).[14] During the late 1930s and early 1940s the first signs of proletarianization were apparent but still only an estimated 10% of the men (mostly Muslims) turned to non-agricultural wage labor and women, of course, remained agriculturists and unpaid household laborers.

Kamila and the Creation of the State of Israel

With the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, demographic and social changes took place among the Arab population on a scale that was far beyond what they had experienced under the Mandate system. Kamila was captured by Haganah (volunteer Jewish militias) troops on July 14, 1948. Narratives of foreign imperialism generally figure prominently in recollections of senior Israeli Palestinians, but the war with the Jews in 1948 particularly stands out in bas relief—it serves as the defining historical moment for Palestinians including those Palestinians who are Israeli citizens. For the older generation this watershed event is etched in their living memory.

Below Jafar recalls how his father, the mayor of Kamila at the time of the invasion, handled the events that took place when the Zionist troops arrived:

> Ours is the first city you have to occupy in order to conquer the entire Galilee…. The Haganah came here with just a few soldiers. Did you think there was an army here [spoken rhetorically]? The Jewish commander of the Haganah, at 3 or 4 in the morning, knocked on the door of my home on that day in 1948. We were kids and my mother opened the door. They asked my father, "Are you the mayor?" and he said, "Yes, I am the mayor." They wanted control of the town so they took my father to the fortress—this was where all the important events happened. It was the headquarters of the town and until 1948 it was in the hands of the Arabs. My father was very angry and we were very afraid. I was 13 years old then. I remember hearing shots fired when they led my father out in the street. People were panicking and beginning to flee. Some passed by my father and he told them, "Stupid, do not go!" Some did though and they escaped to the fields but there were a few killings. The sad things that happened here….
>
> They took my father in an armored car, a jeep, up to the castle and wanted him to sign and surrender the city to the high general. My father was brave and he was angry. While signing the paper he said, "I am surrendering the town now to you but you have to know that you will sign it over to someone else in the future. It is a hopeless decree. The British were sitting here before you."
>
> This made them mad. There was one general there who ranked higher than the others and he [physically] confronted my father. While they were having this argument in the castle, they heard gunshots outside. It was from another Haganah troop that did not know that the first Haganah troop was already there! Even the Haganah were not organized. There they were shooting at the castle, not knowing that another group of their own was already inside.
>
> So these first officers with my father said to him, "It is now our job to protect you, you are

> an Israeli citizen and we are your commanding officers." And they tried to find a hiding place for him. They then took their white shirts off, tied them onto their rifles and hung them from the windows, so the other Haganah fighters would think that we, the Palestinians, were surrendering. This is how they stopped the shooting. The second troop was so happy and relieved to find another Haganah troop inside. They were children, too afraid to fight.

Jafar laughs when he tells me about the tragicomic mishaps of that day, but his laughter is laden with a pained sentiment of irony—these young, frightened Jewish boys and their amateur invasions were to have a devastating impact on his life, the lives of his family members, and the lives of all his fellow villagers from that day onward. The words of his father have not yet come true and Kamila has remained subject to Israeli authorities now for nearly six decades.

One cannot speak of Palestinian social practice, values, and identity construction without recognizing the history and significance of this national conflict because this is the fundamental experience of reality for all Palestinians, including those that never left their land.[15] There were 1.3 million Arabs living in mandatory Palestine in 1947 of whom 700,000 (75% Muslim) lived in the area to be designated the "State of Israel" by the Armistice Agreements at the end of the war. The war of 1948 brought drastic changes, indeed the "total, catastrophic breakdown of, or severance with, every imaginable personal and group context" for the remaining Palestinian population (Al-Haj 1989:207). Palestinians refer to this moment in history as "al nakba" or the catastrophe. Arabs fled in mass exodus from hundreds of villages that were then annihilated by the Jewish armies. Approximately eighty percent of the indigenous Arab inhabitants went into exile, becoming refugees in neighboring Arab countries.[16] Of the 434 Arab villages that existed before the war only 100 remained intact afterward. Thus many of the 150,000 remaining Arabs,[17] new citizens of the State of Israel, became "internal refugees," displaced from their own villages and towns into others within the state's boundaries.

The majority of urban elite and middle class Palestinians fled the region and left behind a rural, fragmented, and traumatized population. The Palestinians who chose or were forced to remain in the region were now transformed into a scattered minority, comprising only 13.5 to 14% of the state's total inhabitants.[18] In early 1948 the population of Kamila was 4,869 according to municipal records. In contrast to many other Arab villages, the majority of the people in Kamila remained in their homes due to the mayor's urging that they do so. Nevertheless, several hundred Muslim, Christian, and Druze of Kamila did flee when they knew that Jewish troops were about to enter the city. They traveled east to Safurieh, north to the Jodpata region in the Galilee, and further into Lebanon (al-Haj 1987:25).

Shortly after the end of the 1948 war, Israeli leaders announced that it was possible for

indigenous Arabs to return to their homes and receive Israeli identity cards. Dozens of families returned to Kamila and only a small number of refugees migrated further north to settle in Lebanon. According to al-Haj, whose account is based on interviews with officials during this period, not everyone was permitted to return home at that time, reunite with relatives, and receive Israeli identity cards (i.e., citizenship). Those who had left during the war and were not allowed to return were almost exclusively Muslim (1987:25).[19] During the period from 1948 to 1951, 494 inhabitants (474 Muslims and 20 Christians) emigrated from the Kamila municipality. The few Druze who left at the beginning of the war (I was unable to obtain a precise figure but was told there was "only a handful") had returned and none were denied Israeli citizenship.

In the aftermath of the war, Kamila gained its share of internal refugees. During the first three years of statehood, 548 residents from destroyed neighboring villages sought shelter in Kamila.[20] In addition, an increasing number of Bedouin, mostly from the immediate area settled within the town limits and surrounding areas. The first wave in 1954 brought approximately one hundred Bedouin to the southern and eastern parts of the town (Golani and Katz: 1963) and a second current in 1958 consisted of 241 additional people (34 families) who settled on the fringes of town but were not formally incorporated into the municipality (i.e., they did not vote, pay taxes, or receive municipal services such as water and electricity). Since 1967, however, the jurisdiction of the municipality has been expanded to include these areas and inhabitants. By the early 1990s Bedouin comprised 6.5% of the town's population and 13% of its Muslim community.

Another new group, "Druze al-Jabal," from the Syrian mountains set tled in Kamila during the first decade after the 1948 war. These Druze were the soldiers who came to the town in 1948 as soldiers under the Syrian commander Sakhib el-Wahhab. el-Wahhab returned to Syria with most of his army in 1948 but approximately 100 soldiers remained behind. After the war many volunteered to serve in the Israeli Army within the Mahal ("volunteers from abroad") framework. Thirty of these soldiers married local Druze women and settled permanently in Kamila but did so in a special neighborhood for released soldiers that was constructed by the Israeli Defense Ministry in 1958 (al-Haj 1987:30). Despite the intermarriage of foreign and indigenous Druze, the former have never been fully accepted by the latter. Indigenous Druze refer to the latecomers as "el Harwarne," a negative label that denotes their region of origin. The Druze as a whole are a significant group both in Kamila and the country at large but there are salient divisions within the community itself.

Shifting Inter-Group Dynamics: The Political-Economy of Kamila Post 1948

The Arab population that remained on their land, the new Israelis, were to suffer severe economic hardship on an unprecedented scale due to government policies of land confiscation, militarily imposed restrictions on movement, and the dramatic transformation of this population from agriculturists to wage laborers dependent on the dominant Jewish sector. Before the establishment of the state, the vast majority (more than 90%) of Palestinian men in the region were agriculturists. Subsequently, Arab land holders lost between 50 and 100% of their territory through government confiscations, often legitimized by the claim of absentee landlordship.[21] The loss of agricultural land had an enormous impact on the entire Palestinian society and especially on senior males, who, when agriculture was corporately organized under the musha system, maintained their authority over youth and women by controlling the means of securing a livelihood. Land ownership was a source of competition for men and a marker of power among groups.

Economic hardships were exacerbated by a military administration that was imposed on the Arab population inside of Israel with the Emergency Regulations of 1948 and which remained in place until 1966. Palestinian citizens were treated as enemies of the state and subjected to military rule entailing constant armed surveillance, restricted mobility, and frequent imposition of curfews and blackouts.[22] Trade activity became entirely localized within each community. Residents had to obtain special permits in order to be able to leave the area even for a limited amount of time to work in Jewish sectors. The first decade after the creation of Israel saw the rise of a black market, high rates of unemployment, and rapid inflation for Arabs.

The land confiscations and military impositions that came with the establishment of Israeli statehood altered socioeconomic realities for Kamila residents radically. This city, once a centrally located community that enjoyed the dependency of neighboring villages, transformed from a dominant regional provider to a powerless town, equal in its weakness to other neighboring Arab populations dependent on Jewish powers.[23] According to municipal documents, 34,518 dunams or 36% of the town's land was confiscated by the government between 1948 and 1958. Land confiscation was carried out in Kamila, as it was in the rest of the region, largely through absentee regulations. Kamila residents reported to me that Israelis stole their land and claimed it was uninhabited when really it was being used for grazing or growing olive trees. In the late 1980s the amount of land owned by the town's entire population was 35,329 dunams, only 37% of pre-1948 Kamila-owned land (al-Haj 1987:40). By the 1990s nearly all Christian, Druze, and Muslim men of Kamila engaged primarily in wage labor in the external Jewish sector, and already during first years of the state, 22% of laborers worked outside the locality.

These economic shifts erased the structural correlations that had previously existed in Kamila between religious/ethnic community, land ownership, and status. All Arabs became equal in their

dependence on the external, dominant Jewish sector. The sale of land added to the leveling of the previously fixed hierarchy among Arabs. Approximately 11,455 dunams were sold to Bedouin, whom the state encouraged to settle in and around the town so that they too would be subject to taxation. Arab refugees who arrived in Kamila as a consequence of the 1948 upheaval continued to be disadvantaged in that they did not own land but they competed equally with others in town for wage labor positions outside of Kamila.

During the second half of the twentieth century, Kamila completely lost its position as the regional economic center. Many of the surrounding dependent villages had been destroyed: of the 22 Arab villages surrounding Kamila, eight were thoroughly annihilated (6 Muslim, 2 Muslim-Christian). In this transitional period post statehood, 320 laborers or 30% of the Kamila work force were unemployed. In 1959 there was marginal economic improvement for Israeli Palestinians when they were accepted as members of the Histadrut (General Federation of Labor).[24] By 1961, *57%* of Kamila's labor force worked outside of the municipality in construction and service industries, 43% worked within the locality (24% in agriculture, 19% in trade and business, education, and public service). By the 1990s the total transformation of the employment structure of Kamila was complete, and typical of other large Arab villages in Israel. Local wage laborers were fully dependent on employment in Jewish centers: 90% of Arab men were employed in construction and other services outside of the locality and only 10% were employed in agriculture and breeding cattle. The Druze population owned 60% of the agricultural land left in Kamila. Of the 224 stores that existed in the 1990s, 55.3% were owned by Christians, 32.2% by Muslims, and 12.5% by Druze. Immigrant groups owned 9% of the shops. These stores serve only the local population with the exception of Kamila's printing press.

For many Israeli Palestinians the confiscation of their land remains the salient painful fact of life. Although most are resigned to this loss, the memories embodied in the physical surroundings are a haunting reminder of the injustice and indignity they have suffered. I walked with a friend to the land his family used to own and harvest. Tears welled up in his eyes as he recalled his life on that land as a child. Land symbolizes and constitutes Palestinian identity in terms of heritage, religion, family, and livelihood. Israeli Palestinians would never leave their land and move to a newly created state of Palestine in the adjacent Territories. My friend Jameel expressed the common Israeli-Palestinian view: "I will never leave this town; this is my home, where my father lived and my grandfather and all my family. If I left here I would be a fish out of water, I would die." Not one Israeli Palestinian I met, regardless of his or her political perspective, contested this sentiment.

Modernization Theories: Keeping Arabs Divided

In the literature of academic theorizing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, modernization theories have been prevalently applied to understand the sweeping changes that took place in Kamila and other Arab localities. These theories focus on how the introduction of "western-style" states and institutions to "traditional" systems (i.e., colonialism and neo-colonialism) affects and impinges on prior indigenous customs, behaviors, and ideologies. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, modernization theory aptly gave emphasis to the problems of social dislocation and poverty in the aftermath of Israeli colonial intervention. Many of the expectations of the modernization formula did take place, or more accurately, were forced into reality. After the war in 1948, for example, Arab localities were destroyed and replaced with Jewish towns that bore an equivalent Fiebrew name.

During the past half-century of Israeli state control, the government has taken extreme measures to Israelify and Judaize the national territory within the Green Line while simultaneously ignoring and denying Palestinian nationalism. Officials implemented programs to "Judaize the Galilee" by forming new Jewish settlements strategically spread across every hillside to break up contiguous Arab localities.[25] Potential threats of Arab nationalism created through village networks were thwarted. With the goal of divide and rule, Israeli policies attempted to distance Palestinians from any national identity they might have had by representing them as a mixture of religious or ethnic minorities (see Smooha 1980:17; Lustick 1980:82-149; Wood 1994:3). A significant law that separates Druze from other Arab minorities, for example, is the "Law on Compulsory Army Service for the Druze" enacted in 1956 and applicable to all male Druze. In 1957 the Minister of Religious Affairs issued regulations that recognized the Druze as a separate religious community. In 1961 the religious leadership of the Druze was officially acknowledged as a "Religious Council" headed by the spiritual leader Sheikh Amin Tarif. In 1962 the Knesset approved the "Law on Druze Religious Courts" (Falah 1974; Stendel 1972). In the "nationality" space on their identification cards the designation was changed in the 1960s from "Arab" to "Druze." Finally, in 1976 the government established the separate Druze Education Committee.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of this alteration of cultural forms ("modernization") of the indigenous communities is the sedentarization of the Bedouin. With the cooperation (some view it as co-optation) of certain influential Bedouin *wastas* or go-betweens, Israeli state authorities were able to settle the Bedouin in towns and villages. In just a few decades the Bedouin population largely relinquished their centuries-old lifestyle of nomadic pastoralism and became settled tax-paying wage laborers. One man told me, "I am now an Ashkenazi Bedouin," indicating that his lifestyle was no different from that of his Jewish neighbors. Another said, "I am no longer Bedouin. My mother and father were Bedouin, but I cannot claim to be a Bedouin." Fie has lost the cultural traditions that he considers essential to Bedouin identity.

Kamila's Political History and Intra-Arab Competition

Kamila's first city council was appointed in 1910 by the *mudir* ("regional governor") under the Ottoman authorities. This first council comprised of five Christians and one Druze. Daoud Talhami, one of the Christian councilors was appointed mayor. Muslims were not permitted to serve on the governing board as membership in the city council was the exclusive right of the Christian and Druze tax-paying landowners of the Ottoman and later the Mandate periods. Thus, the religious composition of the council remained for decades, directly reflecting the economic well-being or lack thereof of the various groups.

In the wake of the 1948 war, the city council ceased to function and for three years Mayor Jafar Jubran dealt with city affairs from his home. In 1951 a new city council was appointed by the Israeli authorities that consisted of seven councilors and one mayor (three Christians, three Druze, and two Muslims). The pre-1948 situation was maintained in that council representation ran along religious communal lines. The Christians retained their dominant position (the mayoral post), but the Israelis strengthened the position of the Druze by allowing them to represent 37.5% of the council though they were only 20% of the population at the time. The Muslims, the poorest of the groups and those least trusted by the Israelis, remained politically marginal and with little influence over municipal procedures.

Within a couple of decades of statehood, however, the inter-religious power dynamics in Kamila altered dramatically in connection with the changing socioeconomic and demographic factors. By the 1960s, as the internal economic-political hierarchy collapsed, peripheral and marginal groups were able to compete successfully with the Christians for power. In addition, the Muslim population had grown significantly because of their high birth rate and had come to equal the size of the Christian population; each group represented approximately 40% of the population by the late 1960s. In a radical shift of power, the Muslims, who historically had had little to no political strength, gained hold of the mayoralty by the end of the decade with the appointment of Ibrahim Nimr Muhammed.[26] Muhammed, a Muslim man from a small hamula, won subsequent re-elections and was able to retain the mayor's office for nearly four decades. The Druze also became a disproportionately powerful group because their support in a coalition could put either the Muslims or the Christians in the dominant position.

Israeli Palestinians: Discrimination and Identity

Israeli Palestinians in the Galilee embraced their Israeli identity as one of several selfhoods, though not without ambivalence at times. People ardently proclaimed, "I am an Israeli," and, "This is my country. I was born here." Indeed every Palestinian born in the region since 1948 has

been raised as an Israeli citizen, albeit a marginal or second-class one. The Israeli-Palestinian ambiguity of being caught in the middle of Israeli and Palestinian nationalism makes them an interesting choice of people to research. While these dual loyalties coincided smoothly for the most part, on occasion they clashed and Israeli Palestinians found themselves feeling alienated from the Israeli Jews around them.

From 1948 to 1967 there was no communication between Israeli Palestinians and West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. After the Six Day war contact resumed and there developed some sense of camaraderie but Arabs of the Territories tend to have a more developed national consciousness, unmitigated by the Israeli-Palestinian reality of being an Israeli. Israeli Palestinians told me that the Palestinians of the Territories consider them to be "Jews who happen to speak Arabic" and Israeli Jews consider them to be Arabs who at best only tenuously belong in the country.

One might think that these intermediaries would be well suited to foster dialogue between both sides and serve as models in the efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Unfortunately Israeli Palestinians have not taken on or rather they have not been allowed to take on this role; there has not been anyone who has risen to a position of recognized leadership at this international level. Unlike the British who ("dishonorably," according to Arab leaders,) chose to remove themselves from a role of mediator, Israeli Palestinians are precluded as ineffective peacemakers or mediators because, according to Israeli Palestinians themselves, they are not respected by either side.

Jewish Israelis, in general, do not trust the Palestinian citizens and highlight violent incidents to support their fears that the Palestinians are not loyal, reliable citizens. They do not have any hesitations in expressing blunt prejudice against these citizens, though many people who expressed these views to me admitted that they had never been to a Palestinian village and did not know many Palestinians personally. The fact that Palestinian citizens have been barred from the highest echelons in the Israeli Defense Force (e.g., they cannot become pilots) is one institutionalized reflection and product of this distrust.[27] Israeli Jews draw on selective evidence to support their claim that Palestinian citizens are disloyal and do not truly want peace. During the 1996 national elections, for example, Israeli Jews highlighted the fact that many Arabs turned in blank ballots, which if had they voted, could have made the difference in terms of putting Shimon Peres into office and thus continuing the Labor government's peace efforts.

This "evidence" that Arabs did not want to engage in the peace process was a selective and distorted reading of their abstentions however. Large numbers of Jews too turned in blank ballots that election; by and large these were acts of protest by both Israeli Jewish and Arab citizens who believed that neither candidate was committed to serious peace efforts. Benjamin Netanyahu had a policy of "no negotiation" and Shimon Peres had just engaged in a bombing campaign in

Lebanon in order to prove that he was tough on terrorism. Nonetheless, many Israeli Jews were ready to read the actions of the Arab non-voters as anti-Israeli and "pro-terrorist."

The statements and debates surrounding the first Gulf War serve as illustrations of the ambivalence Palestinians sometimes do feel toward Israel and offer another example of the readiness for Israeli Jews to seize upon any opportunity to construe Arabs as fundamentally disloyal and untrustworthy citizens. Many Jews were dismayed by Israeli-Palestinians' initially supportive reaction to Saddam Hussein's 1990 bombing of Israel. Israeli Jews understood the support for him in one way: as support for a man who was threatening to destroy Israel with chemical warfare. President of Israel Chaim Herzog and the Zionist left expressed disappointment with the Israeli Palestinians (see *Arabs in Israel,* October 14, 1990:1-2). In the midst of this conflict, the Zionist left who have long supported PLO dialogues and measures toward equality for Israeli Palestinians, threatened to terminate their political support for the Israeli Palestinians. Ahmad Darwish of the Arab Progressive Party responded that the Zionist left does not understand that Palestinian identity is also nationalistic. Darwish stated, "Saddam's step has exposed the true face of the Israeli Left which is capable of supporting the Palestinian problem only from a position of superiority and selfishness" *(al-Sinara,* August 24, 1990). Indeed many Israeli Palestinians did support Hussein at an ideological level; he tapped into nationalist sentiments. Feelings of identification were strong at least initially despite their awareness that Hussein threatened to attack Israel and that these bombs fell on Arabs too *(Ha'aretz,* August 24 1990).[28] Many Israeli Palestinians later reversed their position and came to feel that Hussein was simply using their plight to gain popular backing. The multiple identities of the Israeli Palestinians, in the sense of being Israeli and being Arab or Palestinian, generally do not exhibit much tension, but at certain key moments of political tension, ambivalent feelings toward the Jews and the Jewish state may arise and appear.[29]

Israeli Palestinians complained about the fact that state authorities treated them as criminal suspects. Racist attitudes, they say, persist despite the end of military rule and the many inroads toward ethnic equity. Illustrative stories of prejudice frequently recounted by Israeli Palestinians were set in Ben Gurion international airport, a place where security and terrorist fears are always high. Dr. Saliba Munzer, a gynecologist who received his medical training in Venice, told me that each time he was arriving to or departing from the airport he would be investigated. He says of himself, "I am a respectable, professional man and I feel totally ridiculous when this little girl (i.e., an Israeli soldier) comes up to me and starts asking all these questions. I mean she is probably just an 18-year old girl!" He continued:

> I would figure five hours for the flight, and another five for sitting in the Tel Aviv airport. When I was younger, maybe 20 years ago, I used to get so angry and defiant. They told me

to open my bags, and I would cross my legs smugly and say, “I am tired, you can open them yourselves.” They would ask me such stupid questions:
“Did you pack these bags yourself?”
“No.”
“Who packed them?”
“My uncle.”
“Where is your uncle?”
“In Kamila.”
“But you are coming from Italy!”
“Oh, I do not know, what did I say? I cannot remember. I am very tired.”

Mocking the authorities is one strategy people use to deal with the routine harassment but even so, the sense of humiliation Palestinians endure is profound. The airport discrimination sometimes went beyond an inquisition, Munzar recalled:

> I will never forget the time when I arrived off the plane in the 70s and the military came at me with their machine guns. I put my hands up, all the Jews went to the other side and they took me just because I am Palestinian. I could hear all the Jews in a panic, “What! We have a terrorist on our plane!” And I felt so humiliated and angry.

Munzar told me about the secret report written by Israeli Konig entitled “How to Keep the Arab Students Who Study Abroad from Returning to Israel.” He explained, “The plan was to harass us so much that we would not want to return. Of course now the situation is a little better but the last time I was at the airport, just two months ago, it was the same!”[30]

The struggle of Israeli Palestinians has not been one for the right to self determination and against a foreign military presence like that of Diaspora Palestinians and those in the Occupied Territories. Rather it is a battle for civil equality within Israel. Some informants likened their position to the African-Americans who have equal rights officially but suffer disproportionately from economic, social, and political hardship due to structures of racism. Israeli Palestinians also frequently compared their struggle to that of Native Americans whom they view as a similarly dispossessed people living in a situation of internal colonization.

Sulha Reconciliation

While Israeli Palestinians often told me of their sense of injustice and fight for equal rights, they simultaneously aimed to persuade me that indeed they accept, have respect for, and feel a part of Israel and Israeli culture. Peaceful coexistence with Zionist Jews who now hold power over their

lives has come about but not without tremendous social, psychological, and economic suffering. Still, it is an important ideal for Palestinians to express and achieve. Sulha, or reconciliation, one of the major foci of this book, is a fundamental factor in Palestinian social endurance. Israeli Palestinians by and large are not comfortable with the notion of living in conflict with their Jewish counterparts. The following story typifies these ideals of reconciliation. Jafar told me about the time in the late 1970s when he met up with Dov Yerimia, the very Haganah commander who had taken his father's village back in 1948. Dov had "disappeared" after the war, and "we did not hear anything about him for 30 years." After the invasion approximately twenty soldiers remained in the village while the rest went off to conquer Nazareth. In 1979, one year before Jubran Jubran died, Jafar attended a meeting and had taken his son, also named Jubran Jubran, with him.[31] While introducing his twelve year old son in the forum, Jafar said:

> An old man jumped from his seat, and shouted, "No that is not right. This is not Jubran Jubran!" I responded, "Well, he is my son. What are you telling me?" And the man said, "Jubran Jubran is an old man." I asked, "How do you know that Jubran Jubran is an old man?" He said, "I am Dov Yerimia, the Haganah officer who captured his village." "What?" I cried, "Where have you been? My father has been looking for you!" "Is he still alive?" he asked. My father was 85 years old then and I said, "He is not dead and he is looking for you. You must come now!"

Jafar took Dov to his father Jubran Jubran who was then sick and on his death bed and for hours the men laughed and argued over what had happened like long-lost friends. The following year Dov attended the funeral of Jubran Jubran. Jafar recalls that after that Dov would come to visit and stay all day. Jafar's mother would say to Dov, "You terrified us that day!" and then she would hug him, and he would hug her. In accordance with sulha norms, Jafar's family joyfully reconciled with the troops that invaded his home, captured his village, and ultimately facilitated the confiscation of his father's land. At that moment he was able to forgive all blame, laugh easily, and reduce the entire Israeli-Palestinian conflict to an unfortunate misunderstanding: "They're coming to kill the Palestinians and on the other side they said that the Palestinians are going to kill the Israelis but nobody wanted to kill anybody else. So it is all a lie, a lie that caused our tragedy. The people really did not want to kill, neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis; we were made to kill each other."

This ideal of reconciliation was pervasive throughout Israeli society.[32] In an interview that is very telling of the outlook of reconciliation and specifically of the role of local notables in peacemaking, an elderly sulha leader of the community expressed his views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He told me that he blames the British for the problems between the

Palestinians and the Jews: “The British were in the middle, it was their duty to mediate the conflict, to negotiate a peaceful settlement. Instead they pulled themselves out and washed their hands of it. But they cannot, they should not, ignore their responsibility. This is forever a great disgrace (*kbizy*)!” He added, “A person with sharaf (“honor”) would not do that.” These weighty comments foreshadowed much of my research and writing on sulha logic, processes of mediation, and the role of local peacemakers.

The recurring motif of peace and reconciliation throughout my fieldwork was necessarily linked to events and expressions of ongoing tension between Arabs and Jews in Israel. Aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were central to daily life for Israeli Palestinians, and even when not the explicit focus of discussion, the conflict was never far from the surface. My talks with Palestinians frequently turned to analyses of the Israeli state and its inherent discrimination against Arab citizens. Sometimes there was the complementary discussion of reconciliation and peace too. In terms of my role in such conversations, sometimes I was made to serve as a judge while Palestinians decried the state’s unfair treatment toward them and the concomitant privileges of Jewish citizens. The tone of these conversations was often one of anger and frustration. I listened as people expressed their bitterness, delineated the injustices they suffered, and sought to convince me of their position. This opportunity to express one’s grievances to a “neutral” party is an important part of the traditional sulha process. In these situations they viewed me as a neutral party in the sense that I was outside of the dichotomized clash.[33] As an American I may have sometimes been conflated with “the enemy camp” because the U.S. has long been an ally of the Zionist Israeli government. In these cases, Israeli Palestinians had a safe forum in which to voice their frustrations in front of “the enemy,” as is characteristic of the sulha process. Yet because I am female, I was never placed in the prestigious position of “arbitrator.” Unlike male ethnographers involved with Arab communities who have described their experiences (see Ginat 1987; Peters 1972), I was never made to serve in this exalted role.

From Local Government to Local Politics

During the summer of 1993, just before I took up full-time residence in the town, I made regular visits to Kamila, sometimes with friends that I had met at the University, other times with political contacts that gave me access to members of the local council. In studying issues of local power, I began with institutions of the state, no doubt due to my western perspective of centralized government. The obvious place to begin seemed to be at the offices of the municipality. I met with the mayor, the vice-mayor, many of the local councilors, political activists, and social organizers. I conducted interviews and asked numerous questions about the functioning of local government, the interaction of local government with the central authorities,

and the representation of the various religious groups within the council. My intention was to formulate a study on the workings of local politics and how it incorporated and intersected with religious-based affiliations. During this period of interviewing, I learned much about the workings of local government and how these men ran their town, planned and executed infrastructural matters, and negotiated with the central authorities of the state. As I sat translating and transcribing tapes, I kept dwelling on the fact that this top-down approach to village politics produced rather sterile material. Many of the interviewees would give me only ideal representations of political institutions and the data that I had collected did not strike me as compelling. It would not be easy to get past the formal and idealized representations put forth by politicians. The conceptualization of my project on local politics needed to alter and did so rather dramatically once I relinquished my western-centric focus on centralized politics and forms of government.

Sulha, Sharaf Politics, and Local Government

While the subject of my study remained local politics in its broadest sense, the focus shifted from the local council buildings to the more diffuse and indigenous processes of creating power and resolving local conflicts. I came to realize that although the Israeli-Palestinian population undoubtedly must contend with living in the state's imposed political forms and structures, this reality does not over determine every aspect of their political lives. Official government structures—the municipalities and government offices—housed Israeli-Palestinian participants with perspectives, priorities, and behaviors, in contradistinction to those of the Jewish local government. I observed that indigenous systems of local politics were very much alive in terms of cultural values (of sharaf, gender, and patriarchal conceptions) and cultural forms (i.e., sulha). Indeed indigenous practices of politics permeate and sometimes supersede state institutions and practices. Local politics, meaning power struggles and quests to control social order, centered on long-standing family and religious based conflicts in Kamila and a process of conflict resolution known as sulha.

Sulha is not centralized government but rather a diffuse web of relations that entangles all members in the locality. It is a form of law and order that depends on the constant movement and mediation of certain key male players collectively known as the jaha. Sulha processes are not anything static or fixed. The sulha angle on and approach to local politics seemed to me to be a far more compelling avenue of exploration than the politician's idealized portraits of friendly internal relations and harmonious dealings with each other and the central government.

Palestinians battle for local power, primarily as a form of competition with close Palestinian counterparts and as a means of defining themselves. These political battles sometimes entail

struggles for official government positions. One witnesses fierce electoral battles in numerous Arab localities. With the dismantling of other economic indices that occurred after the Israeli state took hold, local political office took on greater significance in Kamila. Local government in time has became the marker of status, a tangible post of power over other men and groups of men within the locality. As al-Haj writes, "control of the local administration became the touchstone for determining the power balance between the various local religious groups" (al-Haj 1987:48). This same process also occurred over time in other Arab villages and towns.

There is no evidence, however, to support al-Haj's (1990) contention that Israeli Palestinians engage in local politics as a springboard to attain national power and in order to contest unjust state policies directed against them as Arabs. Certainly these aims may motivate certain individual politicians who may or may not be effective in achieving their intended goals. Yet to read local power battles as a gateway to national aspirations is to postulate that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict overdetermines all aspects of Palestinian politics, it is also to miss the details of the cultural values and norms entailed in competition and constructing the powerful male identity beyond or perhaps before state institutions. Although the national context is significant, it does not entail a full or even accurate depiction of local politics.

The power battles that I look at in this book include political battles for governmental office but are not limited to these. My focus reflects the ethnographic reality that competition between men is more than a political quest to control centralized state institutions; power struggles are diffused throughout the town and region. The struggles among men to create and establish individual, familial, communal, and gendered power manifest in various tangible forms, only one of which is control over municipal governance. In this study, I will elaborate on two perhaps less explicit political arenas in which men construct their honor, power, and identity: (1) *qadiyat sharaf al-'a'ileh* ("cases of family honor") referred to in English as family honor killings, the murder of women by male agnates; and (2) sulha processes of conflict resolution among men. Thus my ethnographic research evolved from a study of local government into one that highlights political processes of indigenous conflict resolution, the construction of male identity, and violence against women. Although my study centers on the traditional forms and values of Palestinian politics, it is sensitive to the ways in which these practices intersect with state and central forms of Israeli politics.

Ethnographic Limitations: The Gender Barrier

Taking up residence in Jafar's house was really my only means to reside within the village once I had been invited. Although occasionally married couples do rent the homes of others, there was no possibility of my doing so, nor was there any possibility of paying for my room and board. As

a guest, I was fully taken care of all of the time. I was not allowed to pay for anything; not even my own stamps! With a few exceptions (i.e., three European-born women who married men from Kamila and reside in the village), only Israeli-Palestinian villagers inhabit Kamila. As a foreign guest (khwaga) I was an anomaly. Being American was a benefit and because of my nationality people treated me with honor and felt my presence to be honor-conferring. I thus was continually invited by local people to visit them in their homes where, if my "family" gave me permission to go, I was provided with elaborate meat-filled meals. Hosts would repeatedly tell me, "Beiti beitik," ("My home is your home"), which as Herzfeld noted is an expression that ultimately underscores the opposing reality of a power imbalance; that one is most definitely not in one's own home.

I never attained anything like a full sense of belonging, of being a true member of the community and family such as the situation and feeling described by Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) during her stay with the Awlad Ali. Still, I approached some level of social integration and did become a part of this society, sharing in many of the experiences and intersubjective norms and values of those in the community. In the classic anthropological fashion, I observed and participated in all the daily routines of women and girls as we linked pinkie fingers and walked to the shops and markets, cooked meals, ate together, took care of children, constantly visited each other, attended religious services, and the more momentous family and village affairs, such as weddings and mourning rituals. As a foreigner, I was sometimes able to engage in activities and attend sites typically restricted to men, albeit I was always escorted by those deemed "proper" guides. I visited the primary and secondary schools, the health clinic, the local government offices and met with children, patients, and authority figures. During the first several months of my residence in Kamila I spent many hours of many days engaged in political discussions with men, drinking Arabic coffee, and cracking watermelon seeds. In these settings I often felt that I was accepted as an equal as we analyzed and argued about issues of politics, gender, and racism.

Although I had these opportunities to explore political interests with male and some female villagers, my ambiguous status did not always afford me access to the people and situations I hoped for. As my time in Kamila went on, I gradually but increasingly was restricted in my social interactions to the point where, after about six months, I was only permitted to engage with Jafar and those within his close circle of relatives and friends. Jafar kept increasingly tight control over my social interactions such that I was only supposed to speak with those he dubbed "good" families. I would remind him gently that I wanted to meet with and get to know as many and as various people as possible. I knew, however, that I was in no position to demand anything. As I became less of a guest and more of a member of the family, I was beholden to the patriarch and required to work through the channels of his permission and assistance; there was

no other choice. As a young unmarried woman (a *bint* or "girl") being assimilated into this culture it was inevitable that I would encounter the gendered constraints of Arab village life.

Jafar never wavered from expressing his complete willingness and desire to comply with and facilitate my research endeavors. He would often tell me that as his guest he was obliged "to make my path smooth" and pledge his promise to help me with generous grandiosity. Nonetheless, the introductions and opportunities to meet and speak with others abated as time went on, as did my independence. Jafar's proclamations were contradictory: "You are free as a bird, go wherever you like. Who am I to tell you what you may or may not do? You are my guest!" I did not initially realize that this requisite congeniality as articulated to the guest was not meant to be taken literally. For when I did venture out for a walk one day on my own during the first month of my stay, Jafar was extremely distraught. He grimly explained that I must understand that this is not allowed in the village.[34] Once, I wanted to have some Druze friends from the North come and visit me but Jafar ruled this out stating that he was not certain about who these people were. On another occasion and only after much discussion with his wife, did Jafar allow me to have lunch in another resident's house. When I told him that I needed to leave the village every now and then to go to Haifa for other business, he frowned and told me that this might look improper. My guest status had worn off after several months and that of unmarried "girl" or "daughter" had increasingly taken over.

Living with the Jubrans afforded me privileged access to information about sulha, yet Jafar's imperative to maintain his good name in the community placed enormous constraints on me and limited the kinds of people with whom I was able to speak. The family's prestigious status heightened the tension; it meant that I was being watched with even more intensity than would have otherwise been the case. From the beginning, I knew the risks and limitations involved in attaching to a single family and to this particular one that was so highly visible in the community, but I was unable to operate as an independent agent and this opportunity to stay with a prestigious political figure had provided tremendous benefits. I believe Jafar wished to introduce me to many villagers as he proclaimed, but he had to take great precaution in how the community would read and judge his every move, especially when accompanying a young American woman around in public. Daily I was escorted by Jafar, my "brothers" Jubran, Rani, Jameel, Jamal, or other male relatives to visit with female relatives where I assisted in household chores, prepared, ate, and discussed food, played with babies and gossiped. Over time, I grew increasingly weary of these domestic interactions. As Jafar was off to meetings with other political leaders to discuss and resolve local conflicts, I went to prepare meals. What I learned about political events came later through conversations with him and his colleagues. My frustration peaked when an American man with whom Jafar was friendly arrived for a week-long visit and was taken along to a political meeting to discuss a recent local conflict.

Cast as an unmarried daughter, I was under the same constraints that any Arab girl would have been.[35] Certain behaviors are thought proper for females, and moving around independently, talking to and interviewing residents was not something the community would tolerate. In some ways I was more restricted than a native Arab unmarried woman because I so obviously was not a native. A family member told me once, much to my dismay, "Everyone knows that you are here for more than research." People were watching me suspiciously, thinking that I had come there "to find a man— for what else could a young woman want?" Others felt sorry for me: "Her family must really not love her, allowing her to roam the world on her own." "Don't you miss your mother?" people asked me with pity. Villagers, whom I had never formally met, nonetheless, knew of me, and I could feel them scrutinizing my every move; I could literally hear them whispering about me as I walked by. This reversal of subject observation, the constant scrutiny, was often quite discomforting.

Fieldwork grew frustrating. I was not learning enough about what I wanted and needed to know. I felt excluded from certain realms and forced into others; helpless to change the situation. One of my Israeli Druze friends, Fiussein, from the village of Kufr Yanuh, was serving on reserve duty in the IDF[36] and stationed to guard Fiamas activists. Speaking on the phone he said to me, "Sharon, you know, the terrorist prisoners have more freedom than you do!" We laughed but it felt true; after so many months in the village, I felt like a prisoner. I was tired of cooking and cleaning with the women, and playing with the children in the Kindergarten. I thought of Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) who said she had to choose between the men's or the women's world and so chose to write about women's poetry. I thought of Geraldine Brooks (1995) who experienced the challenges of being a female journalist in Saudi Arabia and finally, after many years of problems with trying to speak with men, made a decision: "I will speak to women." And then I thought of my own professed declarations to focus on local politics within Israeli-Palestinian villages. Politics I believed were not exclusively male terrain, in the field or within academia.

Yet what could I do to overcome the real gender barriers? I recalled Michael Fierzfeld's experience bonding with men by holding his own in the coffee shops of Crete, but as a woman, I could not socialize in Arab coffee shops. I thought of James Watson telling his graduate seminar class about how he cultivated the distinguished look of an elderly man to court respect in China. Israeli-Palestinian society too holds a patriarchal respect for advanced age over youth but this approach would not work for me. Although my foreign American status gained me privileged access at times, ultimately, I was still a bint and this fact barred me from many social circles and events. Only my initial cultural naivete and perhaps arrogance could have led me to believe that I could overcome gender norms. Fieldwork taught me the lesson that politics, struggles for power and prestige, are thoroughly gendered arenas. Losing my illusion of being able to negotiate and

change certain cultural norms was another part of my apprenticeship in the rules of Palestinian patriarchy.

Over time, I myself came to embrace these patriarchal norms to some extent. When Jafar was away and I was out of his direct hold, I declined the opportunities to go around town and interact with others. Certainly I would not do anything to jeopardize Jafar's reputation—I wanted to be respectful to this man who had taken me in. I also never forgot that I was completely dependent on him. But beyond that, I began to feel that open social interaction with male villagers was improper not only because I wanted to preserve "my father's" reputation but because I did not want men to get the "wrong ideas" about me. When I did go out on the streets, to go to the store or post office, I found myself automatically looking away from men and avoiding eye contact. I felt indignant if a man looked at or addressed me directly; such boldness and disrespect. I had internalized cultural ideologies of patriarchy, and gendered notions of respect.

My transformed self coupled with my methodological goal of "fitting in," being integrated and accepted in the community, necessitated that I be a "good girl," but my research aims required otherwise. Gaining insight into local politics meant overcoming these categories and logics. Thus, I became at odds with myself and ultimately, it was a losing battle. The more I tried to play up my western, educated, and English-speaking status to gain access to male politics (as I sometimes had to do), the more irritated May eh—the mother of the family with whom I was associated—seemed to become with me. She snapped at me one day, "Why aren't you doing the dishes now, and go wash the floors!" After some moments of being a self-pitying Cinderella, I realized that her outburst meant that I was no longer a guest but a member of the family and for this I was pleased. I was upset by the fact that my presence had clearly been causing her distress. Such open criticism in a society governed by politeness and hospitality, meant that I had long overstayed my welcome. Mayeh's resentment was justified: Why was I able to spend so much "leisure" time engaged in intellectual conversation with men, including her husband, while she had no choice but to labor in the kitchen and home for the better part of the day? The more I tried to move in male realms, the more I had alienated women and appeared to shun their company. I vowed to clean and scrub more, while trying not to think about the time it was taking away from my other goals. I did not want to play the role of privileged Westerner. While some women resented me and felt I had too many privileges, I felt increasingly burdened and constricted; not able to permeate political realms beyond the domestic setting.

The challenges of this awkward position bore fruit in terms of cultural insight. Through the experience of being treated as a girl, I comprehended how deeply embedded gender and age distinctions were in all social practices, how these factors determined much of social life and identity. I came to see how these gender conceptions intertwined with conceptions of a moral universe—what it meant to be a "good man" and a "good woman." As I integrated into the

patriarchy, I experienced how rigid the boundaries may be by which society defines and enforces appropriate gender behaviors. I started to judge myself according to societal norms. Finding myself unable to discuss my "inner feelings," even with my closest associates, I came to realize that the expression of feelings is conditioned and limited by the range of expression a society encourages or tolerates. In this community that places a premium on outward appearances rather than "authentic" inner expression, it was as if my affective expression was blocked. It became apparent over time that social formalities, which often frustrated me in the moment, also contributed to maintaining a level of inter-personal civility that served to bolster peace within and between families in the community.

Jafar promised so much but delivered less and less in terms of new contacts and new sources over time. The requirements of formal politeness *(mussayara)* dictated that he promise me all of his time and assistance. Any respectable elder must practice extensive mussayara, especially to a guest. Yet the extent to which Jafar felt comfortable being seen to escort and assist me was limited. Elaborate and graciously offered promises were not often followed through, nor do I believe were they ever intended to be. As an esteemed member of society, Jafar was in no position to promise anything to a bint, however foreign or educated. It would be improper, or at least questionable, behavior for him to take me many places and introduce me to people; this treatment was reserved for his wife or other male friends. Jafar's reputation was augmented by the fact that he was hosting an American, but it was also at risk by my presence. Reputation is an all-important possession that has to be carefully and constantly guarded.

After one year in Kamila, I felt that I had reached the limits of my ability to accomplish further research while residing with the Jubrans. I spent my time washing floors and playing with children rather than talking to adults and gaining a deeper understanding of political processes—my whole aim in being in the village. I wanted the perspective of others from within and beyond this village; I wanted to meet other participants in the sulha process and incorporate a variety of Muslim, Jewish, and Druze perspectives. My host was not in any position to introduce me to "criminal" families. Fie insisted—despite my protestations—that he would bring me to the "best families," "the good families," "the people who actually had something intelligent to say." But I wanted to talk to the families who had agreed to engage in sulha, to the killers who had shaken hands with the brothers of their victim, to the fathers that had murdered their own daughters. The restrictions had become too confining but I could not leave the Jubrans and move in with another family because the whole village recognized me as belonging to the Jubran family; it would have been highly inappropriate and insulting to the Jubrans. Dr. Abassi (a Sufi resident and friend of Jafar) called Jafar one day to ask his permission to invite me to a wedding in Acre and to have me stay with his family for the night. This was typical; all my experience was being channeled and controlled by the patriarch. Other families were playing by the codes of sharaf, and so I

would have to as well. Even if I could have found some other family to accept me, I would not show such ingratitude to the Jubrans, and, in any case, similar problems would have prevailed.

Fieldwork from Beyond Kamila

Thus I left Kamila and moved to Haifa, a nearby city where I could rent a room and function a little more anonymously. I knew that leaving my host's home meant that I could no longer rely upon his extensive network of connections for assistance. I knew that by extracting myself from his responsibility and care I could no longer expect from him the extent of his assistance and time as offered and given before. Leaving his family did not seem too disrespectful so long as I went beyond the immediate setting of Kamila, for after all I was only a guest. I did, however, feel guilty about my decision, as if by leaving I was betraying this man and his family, but I had to make a change. I became an independent agent, no longer under a family's protection. This meant that I could negotiate my status as a foreigner and be treated very differently than when I was in the village. For example, I went to a wedding in a northern Arab village where all the men of the bride's family were in one house and all the women in another. My status was not fixed into a set category and so I was able to go and join the men who were talking in a lively manner, drinking beer, and eating lots of food. I was allowed to enter their circle because as a foreigner I was accorded the same status and social abilities as a man. Altering my methodology, I became a traveler roaming all over the Galilee, staying for shorter periods of time with various families. I was able to do this with ease because over the years I had forged close relations with many Israelis in the north.

People were remarkably candid and open, willing to take me into their homes, introduce me to their families, and pour out personal stories. At times I became a conduit for delicate family secrets to be passed down to the younger generation. Once I recorded at the speaker's request the story of how he had murdered the village man who had murdered his father many years before. This avenger could never bring himself to disclose this story in full to his sons until I had provided this semi-formal forum. Through tears and much emotion he expressed gratitude to me. My altered methodological approach not only alleviated my sense of being bound, it had led to new avenues of research and, it allowed me, on occasion, to provide meaningful storytelling opportunities for my informants.

Branching out and spending substantial time interacting, observing, and simply speaking with villagers in the wider Galilee region proved valuable. Many people kindly offered me their time, knowledge, and insight, if not simply out of selfless generosity, than in the hopes that one day the favor might be returned. My connections to Harvard and the US were helpful in my research; people responded well to me because of where I was coming from. Sometimes at the end of the

day or week, informants would question me about teaching opportunities in the States and ask if I could “put in a good word” or help them find a job. I felt grateful for all of the assistance I received and regretful that I often could not return the favors in the practical and tangible ways informants sometimes sought.

Gendered challenges followed me beyond the village. Many Israelis presume American and European women are sexually promiscuous, forming stereotypes from watching movies and television, and perhaps from actual observations. When I tried to pursue male contacts via telephone their wives sometimes refused to allow communication and hung up the phone on me. When I was invited to discuss my research with a Palestinian university lecturer, I was initially pleased by his friendly and receptive manner. As soon as we were alone in his office, however, he inquired if I was involved with anyone because, he “wanted to know how to treat me.” Another scholar invited me to dinner before I left the country and I mistakenly presumed that dinner would be at his house with his wife and children. Instead he drove me to a secluded area and made aggressive sexual advances. It is no exaggeration to state that in nearly every interaction I had with Palestinian (and Jewish) Israeli men, I was highly conscious of how the conversation was infused with sexual politics. I had to negotiate issues of sexual harassment on a daily basis.

With my close male friends the problem took on an altered form because of their sense of proprietorship over me and their desire to “protect” me from their conniving male peers. One day I was interviewing the mayor of an Arab town with several other local councilors and officials present. I had taken a couple of male Arab friends with me to facilitate the introductions. During the interview, a man I had not known came over to me and politely introduced himself, saying that he had heard I was doing research, that he worked in the local government, and that if I wanted any assistance I could call him. He handed me a business card. When I was in the car returning home with my friends, one of them took the business card out of my wallet and tossed it out the car window! I was furious and accused him of trying to sabotage my work. He explained with complete conviction that he was a man and knew other men’s motivations.

Experiencing Sharaf and Sulha in Practice

Although I was never placed in the esteemed role of sulha mediator, I did, however, once unintentionally play a central role in a social rupture and subsequent kind of sulha process. One day I was in a coffee shop in Daliat el-Carmel, a Druze village adjacent to Haifa, with three male Druze friends. As I glanced out the window I was reminded of an unpleasant event that had taken place in a store down the street just a few days earlier: While surveying the souvenirs, the shop owner approached and engaged me in conversation. I conversed with him politely about who I

was, what I was doing in the country, and about his village and family. Much to my surprise, this elderly man pulled out a camera and quickly started snapping photographs of me. Within moments the polite conversation had taken an unfortunate turn as he began uttering provocative and lurid remarks to me in Hebrew, Arabic, and whatever English he could muster up. He propositioned me, offering me whatever I wished from the store in exchange for a sexual encounter. I left the premises immediately feeling quite disturbed but after walking a few hundred yards down the road I was largely able to brush off the incident and proceed with the routines of my day.

Without thinking about the ramifications and mostly for the sake of conversation, I recounted to my friends what had happened at this store across the street and down the road a bit from where we were then sitting and drinking coffee. They instantly dropped all other subjects of discussion and fixated on my story, pressing me for every detail. They seemed extremely pleased to have such an enticing scandal in which to entangle themselves. I realized then that I had made a mistake in mentioning this incident. Once they had acquired all the information they could, I became irrelevant. They turned to each other and transformed into both the victimized "revenge" party—for the woman in their charge had been violated—and the *jaba,* a delegation of involved authorities, pouring over how they would bring this criminal to justice. They conversed adamantly and debated which actions or responses they should take. After a lively discussion, in which my remarks were completely ignored, "the jaha" had agreed on how to proceed to settle the case. They would ask around the neighborhood and attain the name of this offender. Then they would type and print out the entirety of his offensive remarks, making it clear precisely who had uttered these shameful words, reproduce numerous copies, and circulate the flyers throughout the town. I was mortified by this public amplification and pleaded with them to forget the entire incident, but they would not hear of it.

We started out from the cafe, and one of my "friends" approached a bystander. He easily attained the shop owner's name and background and then reported to the fellow members of his party that the shop owner was a man of disrepute who had actually been to court before on similar offenses. Since the goal became to humiliate the offender immediately and without an expended effort, the original course of revenge truncated into an abbreviated version. We traveled around the town for about an hour, first on foot, then by car. My companions would stop and speak with every person they encountered, male and female. They asked them, "Do you know Abu Farris?" and the person would invariably answer in the affirmative. Then they would recount an exaggerated version of the story in all its lascivious details much to the shock of the listener. We would then move on to the next resident and repeat the scandalous story. I remained in the back of the car, helpless and wishing I had kept silent on the matter. When these Druze men had done what they felt was sufficient damage to the shop owner's reputation, and when

they had had enough amusement from their gallant duties of “protecting my honor,” we headed home from Daliat el-Carmel.

There are a variety of instructive points from this incident I would like to note here: (1) The Druze men acted like the male kin of a female family member (myself) whose sharaf had been attacked through the outsider’s sexual advances. Thus they had to take retaliatory action to restore their honor. Men generally will become actively involved if a woman to whom they are related or feel themselves to be the protectors of has been spoken to or treated in ways that are considered socially inappropriate. It makes no difference whether the woman involved wishes to have her reputation restored by actions of her male kin. Men view control of certain female’s sexuality as their responsibility. A significant difference of this episode in contrast to others that involve Arab women was that, as the involved female, my safety was not compromised. I did not become the target of retaliation as often happens when a woman is connected to any social improprieties, no matter what the nature of her involvement may have been. (2) Men can use the sharaf system and logic whether or not sharaf is really their primary goal or concern— in this case the real motivations for their actions were amusement and control and only secondarily, if at all, indignation caused by the disrespect shown to a woman under their charge. They acted out of feigned anger for they were not really offended at all, nor was their family’s social standing in any way affected. Thus, this event with hindsight appears to me as a mixture of revenge and sulha procedures, as well as a manipulation of the sharaf principles and logic upon which society is founded. (3) These Druze men employed a process of conflict resolution of some sort in part to show off and act like big men, and, perhaps, for the satisfaction of appearing morally correct. In addition to playing the part of the victimized family, they also appropriated the jaha role, the role of moral leadership during a sulha process, but again in a distorted form. Though they themselves are not wise and respected elders called in to forge a settlement and though they had only listened to the “victim’s” perspective rather than hearing both sides, they held a closed meeting in which they poured over how to resolve the issue, as jaha elders would have done. Rather than focusing on the mending of social relations and the forging of peace between conflicting parties, these “mediators” were intervening solely to punish and humiliate the offender. There was to be no continued social interaction between myself and the offending party and hence no need for any active third party involvement. Male honor and identity in relation to female sexuality (see chapter 2), the processes of sulha reconciliation (see chapter 3), and the creation of esteemed men within the sulha-sharaf system (chapter 4) are central themes that will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Overviews

In the next chapter, I will discuss the prevalent cultural value of sharaf and how sharaf links the moral worth of a man to the sexual behavior of the women under his charge. Sharaf is central to a man as it is the foundation of his reputation, social standing, and sense of self. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of Palestinian patriarchy is the practice known as *sharaf al-'a'ileh* ("family honor") killings. I had heard stories and news reports about young women being murdered by their fathers and brothers for the sake of sharaf. As I understood this atrocity, young women were occasionally killed by male family members who felt that these women somehow had brought humiliation on the family by having sexual relations outside of marriage or by marrying against the wishes of the father. Yet in certain cases all that was necessary to spark such a killing was a rumor that the girl had been seen with a man. The disgrace or slander of a woman affects her father, brother, and children directly, and her husband much less so, unless he is also patrilineally related to her.

Sharaf is not a static quality of an adult male but something that can rise or fall depending on a man's actions or non-actions, and the reputation of his female relatives. Men may attempt to guard their sharaf, even at the cost of murdering their female kin. Analyzing these murders forced me to confront disturbing events and question the limits of cultural relativism, the hallmark of an anthropological attitude. When cultural relativism collides head-on with feminist or human rights issues, one can respect other people by engaging with them, questioning their attitudes and practices, and giving voice to dissenting views. I try to do this in this next chapter which focuses on sharaf and sharaf killings. I introduce the idea that sharaf is fully a political issue not only by providing examples of the interweaving of electoral and familial politics with these murders, but also by exploring the gendered aspects of attaining and maintaining sharaf. The male's power is his sharaf and this is based on, among other things, female sexuality.

The drastic alterations that took place in Kamila and discussed earlier in this chapter did not erase the importance of sharaf in defining one's identity and structuring social interaction. Israel has not eradicated the practice of sharaf killings through which the strong man and his honorable identity are configured. Furthermore, the state has not erased the Arab practice of sulha through which sharaf is balanced between families, and men of prominent sharaf are created. The sulha system of reckoning of balanced sharaf has not disappeared, despite the implementation of alternative methods of maintaining law and order.[37] The fact that the sulha system and its concurrent sharaf values and norms did not disappear with the extensive and thorough imposition of foreign institutions of local government after 1948 is an indication that there is something exaggerated in the claims of modernization theories.[38]

In Chapters Three and Four, sharaf reappears in a different though related contextual practice to the one presented in the second chapter. Chapter three highlights the significant political aspects of sharaf apparent in the sulha process of conflict mediation between men. The contexts of sulha and sharaf killing may be overtly linked, for example, in a clash between men, and hence between families, that is sparked by a sexual indiscretion involving a woman. Always they are linked through the playing out of sharaf logistics. The discussion of the sulha-sharaf system continues in Chapter Four where I show that the moral worth of a man, that is, his sharaf, is the basis for political authority. More than that, sharaf is the key concept on which a sociopolitical predicament hinges, namely the fact that certain Palestinian men, those who run the sulhas, have more sharaf in this society of professed equals. This chapter essentially deals with the construction of power and the prestigious male self.

In the fifth chapter, I contend with seasoned yet still common paradigms of political theorizing. I argue that modernization and subsequent dependency approaches tend to be analytically problematic in the studies of Israeli-Palestinian village politics for several reasons. First these theories presuppose two separate and bounded systems: an indigenous Palestinian one that is traditional, timeless, unchanging, and unconnected to larger contextual frameworks (i.e., governments, nations, market systems) and a "modern" one that is western, imposed, bounded and whole. Furthermore, there is the problem of valuation—commentators have judged "modern" institutions of government to be superior to the traditional practices, which they often consider pathological because of their segmentary and feuding character. Finally, the nature of the relationship between the two systems is theoretically predetermined. Essentially the two systems are thought to be: a) separate; b) antagonistic; c) the latter imposed on the former; d) in a fixed relationship such that that the Israeli system is dominant and; e) in the process of taking over and replacing the indigenous system.

Modernization theories assume that the new institutions drive out or replace indigenous customs and that any "traditions" still extant are residual. Thus local government based on a separation of public and private authority, located in local council buildings and authorized personnel, and installed by a "democratic" electoral processes, is increasingly competing with and displacing the past tribal codes, customs, and ideologies. Abu-Ghosh's early thesis (1970) typifies modernization theory with regard to Arab local government in Israel.[39] His study, while commendable for acknowledging the external national system and its influence on the internal situation in Qabila, remains set in a fallacious dichotomy of fixed concepts (i.e., the traditional vs. the modern), and presumes a straightforward evolutionary transition from the old to the new. Other analysts too have taken a similar position. Farsoun (1970), for example, in speaking about indigenous practices such as *wasta*, a mediated form of seeking benefits practiced in Lebanon (and elsewhere), states that its use has diminished with a higher degree of western education.[40]

Gellner's (1983) thesis on the inviability of cultural pluralism in industrialized nations has its supporters in Israel where analysts proclaim to be witnessing a setting of cultural diversity giving way to homogeneity with all communities conforming to the ways of the dominant culture. In a comparable modernizationist vein, Rouhanna and Ghanem (1993) have more recently argued that the Israeli Palestinians are undergoing a "democratization process," that is, a "westernization" of their political thought and practices, as a result of their extensive interaction, socially, politically, and economically, with Jewish Israelis. Remnants of the indigenous political practice will presumably fade with time, unless reified by the state to suit its purposes.

It is important to contend with modernization and dependency theories because they are still very much in play, particularly when it comes to Israeli scholarship. While nationalism and "cultural" change are key factors in Israeli-Palestinian politics, I believe that some of the more fruitful work on political culture and identity among Israeli Palestinians has come from those who recognize the fortitude of indigenous cultural forms, because of and in spite of interference by the state. Sharaf systems exist and not only in reaction to or as determined by national pressures. Anthropologist Davida Wood (1993; 1994) notes that an Arab ethnic identification was fostered by the Israeli state but argues that "the categories of identity as conceived by the villagers are not necessarily congruent with those the state attempts to impose (1993:90)." The state has not been successful in defining terms of identity for Palestinians. One needs to acknowledge a *multiplicity* of identities and the dynamic way these identities are constructed and reconstructed. From Wood's research I took several cues including the fact that indigenous and state politics are in dynamic interaction. Wood writes of the coexistence of hamula and nationalist political parties believing both to be significant.[41] Fier work rests on Bourdieu's idea that cultural practices are inherently ambiguous and that it is often impossible to determine whether any given action is the fulfillment of a social norm, an ethical ideal, or a pragmatic move (Wood 1994:12). Bourdieu's notion of "structural ambivalence" is useful in understanding this particular colonial experience, especially to grasp the way colonial agents lose control of local concepts of power.[42]

In the fifth chapter on sulha and state politics, I pick up on Wood's argument that new modes of political self-representation do not replace indigenous ones. In some ways the process of reification renders indigenous practices more fused with the dominant culture than distinct from it; more politically ambiguous than coherent. All Israeli-Palestinian contests for local power are set within a history of embattlement, as the above narrative has sketched. The quest for Arab local power remains within and is unquestionably affected by the context of power imbalance between Israeli Jews and Israeli Palestinians. In practice, however, it becomes impossible to isolate actions and representations that flow into each other. A blood feud provoked by issues of sharaf may lead to sharp delineations of familial alignments in a village, such that when local

elections are held, one may support a given political party (e.g., the Communists, the PLP, or Abna' al-Balad), based on these hamula alignments and the placement of individuals on particular party lists. The Israeli state has not replaced national consciousness with hamula consciousness, nor has it eliminated indigenous forms and values.

In short, I show that sharaf politics, particularly those sentiments and behaviors that are connected to sulha, are very much alive (in part due to Israeli design) and in dynamic dialogue with aspects of national politics and systems of Israeli governance. The topics that I raise throughout the book— violence against women, gendered construction of identity, peacemaking and conflict resolution, conceptions of and quests for power and prestige— are all intricately woven together in practice by the pervasive key concept of sharaf, a complex cultural conception and value that is loosely (and inadequately) glossed in English as "honor."

Chapter Two

Murder in the Name of Family Sharaf[1]

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Dawn will come and the girls will ask about her
Where is she? And the monster will answer,
We killed her.
A mark of shame was on our forehead
And we washed it off.
Her black tale will be told by neighbors,
And will be told in the quarter even by the palm trees,
Even the wooden doors will not forget her,
It will be whispered even by the stones.
Washing off the shame … Washing off the shame.
O neighbors, O village girls,
Bread we shall knead with our tears.
We'll shear our plaits and skin our hands,
To keep their clothes white and pure,
No smile, no joy, no turn as the knife so waiting for us
in the hand of father or brother.
And tomorrow, who knows which desert
Swallows us, to wash off shame?

—al-Malaika[2]

Everyone was talking about the young Druze woman named Iptihaj Hassoun who had fled her natal village, Daliat al-Carmel, in the northwest region of Israel nearly two decades ago. Iptihaj was just twenty at the time and pregnant. The year before she ran away, her family had married her to Majid Kassem, a Druze man of the same village. But shortly after their marriage he divorced her, charging that she was having an affair. If a Druze man divorces his wife it is a final separation—husband and wife are never again to see or speak to one another, and the woman

typically returns to live in her parents' home. But Iptihaj did not return. Instead she ran away with the man she loved—a Muslim. In Arab society, elopement, particularly with someone of a different religion, is *bar am,* forbidden. Iptihaj's scandalous action rapidly became known by all in the community, for as it is said, "Nothing is secret" *(fish ishee musakker).* Her behavior was commonly regarded as a betrayal of the family honor *(sharaf al-'a'ileh).* But she had managed to slip away and find residence in Tzfat, a mixed Jewish-Arab city, and her family did not pursue her. As a neighbor later said to me, "They just swallowed the pain."

Iptihaj lived with her Muslim lover Ismael (and later gave birth to their son Ahmed), completely cut off from her family and the entire Druze community—a kind of social death in Palestinian society. Her relatives knew where she lived but they refused to communicate with her until in 1995, just after Ismael had tragically died, Amir Hassoun, Iptihaj's youngest brother contacted her. Amir had been a small child when his sister left Daliat al-Carmel. Now a 21-year-old man, he reached his sister by telephone and held several lengthy conversations with her. Amir told Iptihaj that he wanted to make sulha—or reconciliation—within the family. He informed her that their father was extremely ill and that he had forgiven her and no longer cared about her shameful conduct; he just wanted to see his daughter one last time before he died. Iptihaj traveled with her brother to Daliat al-Carmel on October 18th, 1995. When they arrived outside the parents' home Amir told her to wait by the car for a minute. He went inside the house and returned with a long sword in hand. Then, in broad daylight, in the middle of the street, Amir slit his sister's throat, and continued to stab her repeatedly amid a cheering audience until Iptihaj lay lifeless in a pool of blood.

An Introduction to the Phenomenon of Family Sharaf Killing

A "family honor *(sharaf al-'a'ileh)* killing" can be defined generally as a premeditated murder of a girl or woman, committed by her brother, father, or combination of male agnates in the name of restoring the family's social reputation.[3] I open the chapter with this particular case of violence because it illustrates many typical features of family-sharaf killings. The transgression of a woman, who defies her kin group by not marrying the proper spouse, or by committing some sexual offense, is a deeply-felt, fundamental violation of Arab norms and values. Once the family's reputation has been damaged in this way, the sister or daughter involved is in danger of being killed. The killer, most often the woman's brother, perceives his action as *ghassal issharaf* or "cleaning the honor," *masaha buqa'a sharaf al-'a'ileh,* "wiping away a stain on the family honor." Ironically this cleansing process is accomplished by the spilling of blood *(dam).*

Sharaf killings have largely been a taboo topic not only for indigenous people who may fear

repercussions of speaking out, but also within academia. This is not to say that there has not been limited mention of these violent acts in the literature and more recently the media but simply that there has been no fully elaborated analysis.[4] When I told a respected scholar and colleague about my focus, he expressed grave concern and advised me not to write on this subject. He recalled a disturbing event that had affected him in the field. Within the first few days of a return visit to his host family he noticed that one of the girls of his extended family was "missing." He said that he felt very uneasy during the weeks he stayed there, for it was not possible that she had married and moved; he would have seen the girl, her whereabouts would have been obvious. Although disturbed, he never said anything to the family and they never mentioned her name to him. While I understand my colleague's inability to do anything about the girl's disappearance, his silence haunts me and only strengthened my resolve to write and speak out on the subject.

Sharaf killings cut across class, ethnic, and religious lines. In the meager academic commentary on family sharaf killings in Israel, some scholars presume these practices to be fundamentally Islamic.[5] In fact not only Muslims, but Druze, Christians, and occasionally Jews (of Sephardic backgrounds), perpetrate sharaf killings.[6] In criminal courts Muslim attackers may claim they were following tenets of Islam that call for female modesty, but shari'a (Islamic law) and customary law alike have strict guidelines forbidding physical harm to be done to women. Four witnesses must testify that they saw the woman in the act of adultery before any retribution may be taken.[7] Cases of violence against women involving family sharaf are rarely if ever brought before a religious court. It is despite religion, rather than because of it, that family sharaf killings occur.

Notwithstanding the absence of any Qur'anic call to sharaf violence, and despite the existence of doctrine that officially contradicts such action, perpetrators of these attacks nonetheless may justify their actions in the name of Islam. One such example comes from a case that took place and went to court in the United States. Palestina Isa ("Tina") was murdered by her parents in Missouri in October of 1989. At first this appeared to be a murder carried out by parents who were enraged by their daughter's rebellious, disrespectful, and "too American" behavior. The father testified that it was his Islamic duty to kill his daughter. As the complexities unfolded, however, it turned out to be a layered case involving not only notions of religious propriety but also terrorist involvement. The father was a member of the Abu Nidal terrorist network and Tina knew too much. FBI-recorded conversations between Tina's father and another member made clear that Tina was seen as a potential danger who might expose them. Supporters of the parents cried out in protest after the guilty verdict was delivered and the killers were sentenced to death. Tina's own sister stated, "If my father has to die because he is a good Muslim then so be it" *(Jerusalem Post,* December 1989). Islam calls for the modesty of women and Tina, she believed, was brazen and hence deserved the fate she suffered. Yet distinctions between motives of

religion, cultural practice, and personal gain are conveniently blurred by those who believe their murderous actions to be legitimate and by those who wish to convince others that these extreme measures are socially proper and indeed mandated.[8]

Accurate statistics on the number of women killed in the name of family sharaf in Israel are impossible to obtain. These killings are carried out sporadically and police fail to keep any specific records for this type of crime. Ofer Silva, spokesperson of the National Police Fieadquarters stated, “We do not have that information available. We are trying to design a system that will separate information about the victim from information on the criminal.” *(Jerusalem Post,* March 1996). Even when this can be done, there will not be any retroactive material available. Without accurate historical data it is impossible to know if the occurrence rate of “honor crimes” is increasing or decreasing with respect to previous decades.

The killing of Iptihaj in Daliet al-Carmel was captured on camera and hence became highly publicized on Israeli television. In the vast majority of the cases, however, family sharaf killings are inaccessible to the outsider, hidden from the general public, Israeli authorities, and those who come from beyond the village. Indigenous activists and researchers estimate that more than forty women from a population of approximately 2.5 million Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories are murdered every year for perceived violations of family sharaf.[9] Proportionally, this is equivalent to the murder of 4,000 women in the United States each year. My information on family sharaf killings comes from several cases that took place during periods of my fieldwork in the Galilee region of Israel between 1992 and 1996, and from newspapers, texts, interviews, and extensive discussions with informants.

Sharaf and the Construction of Male Identity

In this chapter I aim to make this alien and troubling practice a little more comprehensible to outsiders. In doing so, I am certainly not suggesting that I believe these murders are justifiable. This may seem an odd and perhaps unnecessary clause to state explicitly but in fact my position has not been that of some other scholars who have written about sharaf killings. One Israeli sociologist, for example, told me of several video tapes he recorded to present to an American jury for a trial case on an honor killing. The purpose of these tapes was to show the jury that sharaf violence is an acceptable part of Arab culture and so, he felt, the jury should be lenient and forgiving toward the murderer on trial. The same expert told me of another case in which he expedited the presidential pardoning of a sharaf killer, again by taking on the role of scholar who renders these acts as customary cultural practices and hence permissible or at least pardonable.

Family sharaf violence is one manifestation of a patriarchal order in which male agents control female sexuality.[10] When discussing the universal asymmetry of the sexes, one could employ

Ortner's theoretical duality that holds that the male persona frequently symbolizes Culture.[11] Indeed the family sharaf killer is equated with the sociocultural order; he is the upholder of morality. Fie enforces and enacts the legitimate right of men to dictate female sexuality. In contrast the transgressing female is symbolic of Nature—she is an animal—and as such must be overcome and tamed by Culture or Man. Sheikh Muhammed Ali Fadi, an elder of Nahef village, in describing a sharaf killing to me, stated, *"wabad dbabab wabde"* (a man slaughtered a woman). The word "dhabah" or "slaughter" typically refers to the killing of livestock. The murder, he said, was carried out with a *kbanjar*; a small, curved knife used traditionally to kill sheep. From this perspective, the victim is reduced to a sub-human status, an animal to be butchered.[12]

From an alternative viewpoint, however, the woman is the quintessential embodiment of Culture. She and particularly her sexuality signify and maintain the family's honor and status in this cultural system.[13] It would "make sense" for a man to kill in defense of this profoundly meaningful value. Symbolizing the intact morality of the patrilineal group and being a potential point of rupture or social destruction, the woman becomes the supreme cultural symbol—she is invested with the social reputation of the kin group.

Recognizing family sharaf killing as an instance of patriarchy, however, reveals little. These murders are complex phenomena and cannot be explained away with any single, simple formula. Each case involves unique circumstances; each killer is driven by a host of personal motives and external pressures. People do not act according to a blueprint, and yet certain generalizations can be made about these killings. Fionor killings derive from sociocultural norms and values associated with the pervasive concept of sharaf; the killings are bound up with claims (or reclamations) to manhood and familial status, which are integrally related concepts.

To present a complex, multi-faceted analysis of honor killings, I will pursue three angles of investigation: The first part of my analysis focuses on the cultural construction of manhood, the meanings of *sharaf* and (*ard,* and how these concepts are bound to a man's identity and sense of self worth. The role of society or the public is particularly crucial in this construction of male selfhood. The second part of my inquiry views recent family sharaf killings within their sociopolitical context and historical moment. I assess existing anthropological literature on the subject and view the practice in light of interfamily competition for local prestige, and the ethno-nationalist tensions between Arabs and Jews in Israel. The final section of the chapter addresses the tenacity of sharaf killings and raises the question of whether or not this practice is likely to decline as a result of the feminist and human rights efforts to challenge it.

Constructing Male Sharaf

I begin with an examination of the indigenous concepts of "sharaf" and utard," both of which are often glossed in English as "honor."[14] Sharaf, in Arab society, is a pervasive code of beliefs and values manifested throughout interlocking moral, political, economic, and kinship systems of meanings; it is a *total social fact.* [15] As Evans-Pritchard wrote of Mauss' depiction of "archaic exchange," these practices that embody sharaf (such as sharaf killings and sulha) are "total social movements or activities. They are at the same time economic, juridical, moral, aesthetic, religious, mythological and socio-morphological phenomena. Their meaning can only be grasped if they are viewed as a complex concrete reality …" (Mauss 1967: vii). Likewise the social practices that are explored in this book are the simultaneous expression of numerous interlocking institutions and, although somewhat isolated for the purpose of analysis, must rightfully be viewed as expressions of the ubiquitous notion of sharaf.

Sharaf refers both to a man's social reputation and to his sense of self-worth based on that reputation—it is his public status and his pride in that status. Sharaf can be increased or decreased through certain social displays or actions. A man may gain sharaf and become known throughout the community as a *rajil kibeer*; a "big man," through traditional channels, by carrying out acts of hospitality and generosity, or through more recent tactics, by gaining prominence in arenas of Israeli local and national politics. On the other hand, a man decreases in sharaf and is said to have a bad name if he behaves in a fashion that is impolite, miserly, or antisocial.

Sharaf is tightly bound up with the construction of male identity and personhood. This implication of sharaf in the making of the male perception of self operates in two different ways. First, as I noted before, sharaf is a sense of self-worth, or feeling of pride, based on how one is regarded by society, by one's peers. Palestinians in the communities where I lived drew little if any distinction between an integral feeling of worth and a sense of worth based on reputation. The idea of an authentic, autonomous, and individual subject meant little in this world. People are what they are perceived to be. A man identifies his personal sense of self most closely with his immediate and extended family, and then his religious community, his village, his ethnic group, and finally the Palestinian nation as a whole. A man's sharaf and sense of self is invested in each of these collectivities.

The second related way in which sharaf is implicated in identity formation is that the sense of sharaf acts to maintain distinct boundaries between groups. The violation of these boundaries is experienced subjectively as dishonoring, a decline in reputation. Thus, for example, while it brings dishonor on her male agnates if a woman elopes, it brings vastly more if she elopes with a man of a different religion. Incidentally it is not only women who can damage the family's sharaf by marrying outside their group; a wayward man also brings dishonor. In Kamila cases when a son had married a woman who was not of his community, usually a "European wife," the

family considered it a major source of embarrassment and felt socially stigmatized. It was an issue they did not discuss openly and could never fully accept.[16]

Religious endogamy is rigidly enforced, and the primary psychic cost of infringing on this norm is "dishonor," a diminution of a family's status in its own community, and a subjective sense that its members no longer deserve to be respected. When I innocently asked people why they disapproved of marriage between men and women of different faiths, I was told only that such actions show gross disrespect *(ihtiraamish)* to the families involved. This answer appeared enigmatic initially given the fact that respondents of all religions claimed to get along well with people from other faiths, emphasizing the close friendships and daily neighborly interactions. Ultimately though, a sense of sharaf polices the distinctions that divide one community of faith from another. It allows one to maintain an exclusive identification with one's group.

A strong ideology of moral egalitarianism runs through Israeli-Palestinian society. Every man is regarded as having the same worth as every other man without regard to wealth, property, birth, or religion. Yet at the same time many men believe themselves to be superior to the next man, although it would be unpardonably rude to say so in public. This sense of superiority extends in concentric circles from the person: A man is better than his brother; his family is finer than his neighbors; his religious community is more principled than any other, and his village is a cut above all other villages. To give a rather trivial example of this sense of superiority in operation, it seems there is not an Israeli-Palestinian man who does not believe that his mother's cooking is superior to the cooking of all other women. The hummus one is served in every home one visits is always "hummus as one has never experienced it before." To offer another example, Jameel, a 35-year-old Christian man, confessed to me, after we had become friends, that in opposition to his previously held views he now realized that Arabs were not morally superior to all others in the world, and that their customs were not necessarily more virtuous than the American ways. This epiphany was confounding because he had been raised to believe that Arabs in general, and especially with regard to their customs of female sexual chastity, were ethically superior to immodest, irreverent Americans. Whether I was with Muslims, Christians, or Druze, I was told that their particular religious community was "special" and "unlike the others." Each family that took me in wanted me to interact only with the "right" families, the "good" people, or in other words, those most closely connected to their own families.[17]

The Arabic term "'ard" may be translated as "sexual honor" and is a form or subset of sharaf. 'Ard is possessed by all men and only by men but it depends entirely on the chastity and sexual purity of the women to whom these men are closely related by blood (Abou Zeid 1965:256). 'Ard is the core identity of a man that is bound up with the sexuality of his daughters, sisters, and mother—not, it should be noted, his wife.[18] 'Ard, like sharaf, has to do with a man's sense of his own worth and with what others judge his worth to be. A woman who is accused of committing a

sexual impropriety damages a man's ‘ard and thus jeopardizes his whole right to respect from others and his sense of self respect. The fact that ‘ard is intimately connected with the man's sense of self worth is the reason why he reacts emotionally when it is taken away or damaged.

‘Ard is a marker of the integrity of and boundaries between groups— familial, religious, or ethnic. In this respect it is significant that religious and ethnic groups in the Palestinian village are rigidly endogamous. It is considered grossly dishonoring for her family if a woman attempts to marry outside her own community. Likewise, it would be unthinkable for someone outside the group to ask for the daughter of someone within. An elopement of a young woman with a man from a different religious or ethnic community is a much greater disaster for her family than an elopement within the group. The Druze father whose daughter runs away with a Muslim—as Iptihaj did—feels that the whole Muslim community is laughing at him. This phenomenon of collective identification that fosters a sense of group humiliation or group pride is illustrated by a story related to me by one of my informants. The informant, a local mediator, had gone to the home of a Druze sheikh in the hope of preventing a family sharaf killing. The daughter of the Druze sheikh had eloped with a Christian man. The mediator himself was a Christian, so the first thing he realized he had to do was to "assure the Druze that [he] took no pleasure whatsoever in seeing him dishonored and that [he] would do all in [his] power to restore the family's sharaf" by seeing to it that the errant daughter would return and be married to some Druze who would still have her. The Druze father felt relieved to have a high Christian representative showing him respect, rather than taking pleasure in his disgrace. He agreed not to try to kill his daughter.

A man kills a female member of his family to restore his ‘ard and thereby his own and his family's sharaf—hence these murders are said to be committed in the name of *sharaf al-'a'ileh*, the "honor of the family." The accused woman's very existence is a stain on the family sharaf, but this stain can be erased by killing her. If, instead of killing its own woman, the disgraced family members kill her lover, they have ended the affair but have achieved nothing where their sharaf is concerned—the stain still exists as clearly as before. But by killing her, regardless of the fate of her lover, the stain is removed. The killing of the girl is a result of the burden of signification now attached to her continued existence. Thus, the reason why men kill female relatives who have been "violated," or accused of being involved in a sexual encounter, is that the sharaf and ‘ard of the man is literally invested in the bodies of his agnatically related female kin. Tamam, an Israeli-Palestinian feminist and founder of *al-Fanar*, the only Israeli organization dedicated to fighting sharaf killings, explains the logic: "The Arab man perceives his honor as residing *in the bodies of the women in his family.* He is responsible for them and they are under his protection. He alone is responsible for this honor and if it is violated then he must eliminate the disgrace" (Brooks 1995:51).

Murder of one's female relative is often sparked by the loss of ‘ard (and hence sharaf) but it

need not always be connected to sexual matters. Any defiance of the patriarchal order can lead to a woman's murder. In April 1996, a Druze woman from a West Galilee village named Mussarah was murdered for violating the patriarchal code and ruining the sharaf of the family but not as a result of illicit sexuality or because of damage to the male 'ard. Mussarah's father had physically abused her since the time she was a small child. At age 18, Mussarah went to study at an academic institution where she roomed with a Jewish student in whom she confided. Shortly thereafter, and most likely with the encouragement of her friends at school, Mussarrah filed an official complaint against her father. She had recorded tapes that served as proof of the beatings she suffered at her father's hands. He was arrested by police and everyone in the village was talking about the incident. This was the first time an Arab girl had filed such a complaint against her own father. The humiliated family pressured their daughter to retract the statement and she eventually did. The police released the father, no questions asked, and upon his return home, the father ordered his son to murder Mussarah.

A Woman's (Lack of) Agency

My male informants frequently noted that the primary moral imperative of their society is to "protect" women (cf. al-Khayyat 1990:10 for a discussion of the Qur'anic order for men to protect women). They even pointed out that if a woman is wrongfully killed customary law demands a *diyyab* (blood-money payment) twice the usual amount for the killing of a man. Ironically, and suggestively, the official doctrine holds that women are protected not twice but four times more than men, but because a woman is assessed at only half the worth of a man, the diyyah is double rather than quadruple.[19] The idea that Arab society specially protects women sounded like blatant hypocrisy to me when I first heard men articulate it, but I came to understand that to "protect" one's women did not mean to keep *them* from harm so much as to guard one's own sharaf. I was told repeatedly, "In the West women are so vulnerable; the media exposes all—whom she has slept with, when, and where. Here all is to protect the woman, even if she is committing a sin and having a love affair." One man's wry comment clarified the point, "We protect the woman to the point of killing her." If a man locates his sharaf, identity, and self worth within the bodies of his female kin, it makes sense that it is his first and foremost duty to guard or "protect" these women who are essentially now equated with his sharaf.

Although I am concerned to highlight the connection of family sharaf killings to the creation of the honorable and prestigious male self, I must mention that women too have sharaf, a sense of self worth based on social reputation. Her good name is based on the woman's ability to stay within the bounds of proper female behavior and particularly sexual modesty, or at least to appear to do so. Once, for example, a group of women were discussing their neighbor. They

condemned her harshly as a bad woman with the main charges against her being that she did not keep her house clean, she did not cook well, and that she had affairs with numerous men. The woman's sharaf is equivalent to the 'ard of her male agnates. Thus women themselves are generally engaged in guarding male 'ard because they care about guarding their own sharaf. One young woman told me succinctly, "Sharaf is everything."

As a signifier, however, the woman herself may have little or no agency.[20] In the logic of family sharaf violence, whether a woman is "innocent" or "guilty" of engaging in socially unacceptable sexual behavior is of little or no importance. A woman who has been raped is just as much a stain on the family's sharaf as a woman who had voluntary sexual relations. One informant told me that Arab men would sometimes kill their own sisters, daughters, and mothers before fighting a battle if the outcome seemed uncertain. This was done in order to avoid the risk of being dishonored; to avoid these women being raped by a triumphant enemy.[21] Even if this story is apocryphal, it is suggestive of the assumptions that underlie the system of sharaf and 'ard. Ultimately it is of no importance whether any incident really took place at all. What is important is that the public believes such an incident has occurred, and that the family feels affected by this belief. A rumor is enough to destroy the family sharaf and result in the murder of a girl.

A woman may choose to follow social dictates of sexual modesty, marry an acceptable spouse, and never encounter any conflicts along these lines. Yet it is also possible that this same proper woman may be cast as a mark on the family name. If the woman is cast as a mark on the family's name, there may be no avenues for escape. The following case illustrates the extreme limitations placed on a woman's agency. It did not alter the situation for this woman that her sexual involvement was involuntary; her will was inconsequential. Even if a woman is raped, she is often held accountable for the incident and may be further victimized by her family. This story was told to me by Kifakh, a social worker at the Rape Crisis Center in Haifa; it is the plight of an Arab woman who broke no rules through her own volition but who nevertheless paid a heavy price.[22]

A young woman named Ajia had been repeatedly raped by her teacher, Wasim, over a period of three years. He threatened that if she did not comply he would tell everyone that she had been a willing participant. Ajia was so fearful of what would happen if her family and village heard such a story that she acquiesced to her teacher's wishes. The situation remained so for over two years until Ajia, pregnant for the second time, decided she could no longer continue in this manner.[23] First she attempted to mask the problem and persuade Wasim to marry her.[24] When he refused she confided in an elder of Wasim's family, who then pressured Wasim into signing preliminary marriage papers. Wasim, however, told Ajia that he would only agree to the marriage if she had an abortion. Ajia complied, and after she had completed this second abortion,

he reneged on his promise to marry her. Apparently this had been his plan from the start.

Ajia's family, unaware of any of the history behind the engagement contract, demanded that Wasim explain why he had decided not to complete the legal marriage. When put in this situation, he responded rather paradoxically, that the reason he would not marry her was because she was not a virgin. Ajia broke down at this point and told her family the sordid tale. She really had no choice because now she was openly accused of being licentious. It seemed to make no difference to her family that Ajia had been raped, and it was unclear whether or not they even believed her story. They were furious with her for creating this scandal and causing the ruin of their good name. They beat Ajia and locked her in the house, where she remained an isolated prisoner for three years.

During this time of Ajia's home imprisonment, Wasim did not in fact break the legally binding engagement with her. Angry because Ajia had attempted to force him into the marriage process, he left her "married, in this way, without any real marriage" (Kifakh, personal interview, November 1995). According to the Muslim court, only the man has the right to divorce unless the woman can prove that he did something to her. Ajia could not prove anything. "Everyone in the village now knew that she had been having sex and got pregnant; Wasim had offered listeners his tailored account of events." Ajia's father and entire family thought of her as *fadiba,* a woman who is shameful, and by extension they as a family were socially shamed.

Turning to outside help, Ajia wrote to the editors of an Israeli newspaper. They advised her to go the police but, Kifakh told me, "Of course, she cannot … she *should* not have done that." Ajia in fact did speak with the police on the phone and the *qadi,* the Muslim court judge, "but this only resulted in further publicizing her shameful entanglements."[25] Ajia had no support; she thought she was going insane. "It was at that point she got in touch with the Rape Crisis Center, and social workers there have been in contact with her for over a year, trying to offer comfort, but there is no solution. For four years she has not left her home." Members of The Rape Crisis Center have been communicating with the shari'a courts and expect the legal divorce will be granted to Ajia but:

> Her future is black. She cannot easily remarry because she is not a virgin. Perhaps she will be married off to someone handicapped, or very old; someone else who will then control her, like her brothers. She has no choice because of family pressure, because what she did was shameful *('ayeeb).* She is the victim but she will suffer all her life and there can be nothing good for her in her future.

Kifakh further explained that the reason the brothers did not kill Ajia was because they did not want to go to jail. In many other cases "if a woman is raped her family will murder her. The

sharaf of the family is hurt because she is a shameful woman (*fadiiha*).” This story was not atypical. I was told, “Many Arab women have the same story.” Informants made it clear that there is little connection between intentionally breaking the rules and the violence that may be inflicted. A woman’s volition and agency cannot prevent her murder.[26] And even if she is allowed to live, as Ajia was, it will be in a state deemed a “psychological death” by indigenous feminists.

The Role of Society

I noted above that sharaf refers both to a man’s social reputation and to his sense of self-worth based on that reputation. ‘Ard, as a form of sharaf, is equally a function of social respect. Given that a man’s sense of sharaf is so closely intertwined with public perception of him, the community must validate any major step he takes to reclaim his reputable identity. The public can be seen as a third player in the drama of family sharaf killings. The society plays a vital role as instigator, audience, and witness. The Arab public nurtures a sense of humiliation and anger in men through gossip, ridicule, and ostracism of the family, prompting them to go through with the killing. In the case of Iptihaj, her brother Amir suffered public humiliation and was provoked by constant taunting about his sister. Amir had wanted to marry but when he expressed interest in several village girls, he was refused by each of the girls’ fathers who told him, “Go and take care of your sister first!”

Many Druze men and women witnessed the killing of Iptihaj. The crowd cheered, applauded, and danced in a display of enthusiastic support for Amir’s action even as the Israeli police escorted him off to the courthouse. The mother of the victim did not reproach her son; the family neither sought nor received condolences upon the death of their daughter. Iptihaj was labeled *sbarmuta,* a prostitute. Few of my informants, male or female, expressed sympathy for her.

The flamboyant and gruesome display for the spectators during a sharaf killing is a kind of performance. The killer’s theatrical moves are designed to impress an audience. Remorseless aggression demonstrates his unflinching adherence to the rules and morals of sharaf—it shows that he values himself. During the Ottoman Period, the killer sprinkled his victim’s blood on the weapon and paraded it through the street. Often in contemporary cases, the attacker stays on the scene awaiting the police and then volunteers to re-enact the crime. These dramatic events may capture media attention and thus become further publicized. The murder weapon is an important prop in this show. Most commonly the sharaf killing is carried out with a knife or sword. The killer stabs his victim repeatedly and concludes the attack by cutting her throat. Gideon Kressel, an Israeli anthropologist, notes that while male victims of revenge killings are generally shot, stabbing and throat slitting are reserved for female sharaf victims (1982:176). After a victim is

dead, the killer sometimes further disfigures the body in order to heap extra humiliation onto her and thereby more effectively express the family's indignation and restore its sharaf.

If during the act of murder the community is an approving audience, after the killing, it validates and, as it were, legalizes the act. The killer is not considered a murderer but one who *istaradd es-sbaraf*, restores sharaf. The killing itself is not referred to as murder but as *qadiyyet es-sbaraf*, a case of sharaf. The mayor of Daliat al-Carmel told the press after Iptihaj's murder that although he did not condone homicide, he understood why this young man had behaved as he had: "Amir lived with this shame all his life; finally he could take it no longer" *(Ha'aretz* October 20, 1995). Other Arab leaders were silent. In the days and weeks after Iptihaj's death the Druze community continued to justify her murder and downplay the actions of the murderer. Amir was repeatedly referred to as a hero. A collection of funds was taken up by the local Druze to provide Amir with the best possible legal defense; people told me that they were going to bring a lawyer in from the United States. The family sharaf killer is publicly hailed as one who righted wrongs, one who upheld the moral order.

Despite a projected image of unified public approval, however, privately people may feel ambivalent or even disapprove of these killings. In discussing the case of Iptihaj, Suleyman, a prominent Druze from a nearby village expressed to me his belief that the way she was killed was excessive; the theatrics of it he felt were unnecessary. A young woman named Amal told me that even though community identification is with the murderer and everyone will act as if they support Amir Hassoun, no family would approve of or allow their daughter to marry him under the circumstances. "After all," she pointed out plainly, "who wants their daughter to marry a murderer!" Most people will voice their support of the sharaf killer's action but, according to Amal, it is often a superficial approval; the private sentiment may well contradict the public claim (cf. Ha'aretz [Supplement] August 18, 1978:12-13).

Abhorrence with regard to this particular case was expressed to me only one other time. An elderly sulha man explained to me that the practice of sharaf killing contradicts tribal or customary law, even though as exhibited in the Daliat el-Carmel case "no one dares to say anything against this publicly." The silence included his own concealed reaction but in private conversation with him he seemed adamant about the injustice committed against this woman: "They killed this woman without any right to kill her, unjustly. They had no right to kill her. This is wrong! By the tribal law it is wrong, morally it is wrong, and by every standard. What they [the Druze] are doing is plainly wrong."

Family sharaf killings became less public after the establishment of western-style regimes in Palestine, according to scholars Rosenfeld (1964:30) and Granqvist (1931:102). Under the British Mandate, families began to hide their actions sometimes, killing and burying victims at night. Under Israeli rule, of course, open and unabashed murder leaves the killer with little

recourse before the justice system. Family sharaf killers, as any other murderers, are subject to Israeli law. In theory life sentences are given for first degree murder, regardless of motivation. In an attempt to lessen or avoid these jail terms, the killer at times denies his intention to commit murder to authorities, providing a more acceptable excuse to the Israeli judges. ‘Amir Fiassoun claimed that he had wanted to make sulha, to mediate a peace settlement within the family, and that he only reacted with violence when his sister Iptihaj attacked him. Implausible claims such as these, however, do not usually form a very effective defense in court. Thus increasingly family sharaf murders are committed behind closed doors and the killer’s identity is hidden from authorities. The aim is to elude prosecution while making certain that the Arab community knows that the death was a sharaf killing. Even when murders are carried out covertly, the role of the community is important.

Covert murders take a variety of forms. One method is to leave the corpses of murdered girls and women in remote areas of the Occupied Territories. Often the girl is left with her legs open and thighs exposed, signifying the nature of her murder. Alternatively, the victim’s body may be dumped in a well, a common place of disposal (Kressel 1981). Perhaps the most common strategy to disguise a family sharaf killing is to stage the woman’s death as a suicide. So widely recognized is this phenomenon that reading of news reports such as: “Woman, 37, commits suicide, found by Mariam Jatias of East Jerusalem” *(Jerusalem Post*, January 2, 1970) is usually met with a dubious response as to whether it was indeed a suicide. It is a relatively simple matter for the killer to whisper through the channels of gossip that the so-called suicide was really the work of a family that would not tolerate the dishonor associated with an errant female.

Fear of Israeli legal sanctions may incline the family to covert actions, but countering this inclination toward secrecy is the fact that an openly performed killing is more clearly legitimate in the eyes of the Arab public. A killing out of the public eye may arouse suspicions or doubts as to the purity of the family’s motivations. In one case where a 74-year-old father killed his 19-year-old daughter behind closed doors for a supposed violation of family sharaf, the rumor circulated that it was he himself who had raped and impregnated his daughter.

The public that plays such a crucial role in family sharaf killing is not just a male public; women play a role in family sharaf violence through their participation in gossip. Indeed it can be argued that by spreading rumors and casting aspersions, women become accomplices to family sharaf killings. By engaging in aggressive defamation women can effectively write the death sentence of a girl or woman. The centrality of gossip as a pillar of patriarchy in Israeli-Palestinian society is discussed by Glazer and Abu Ras (1994). Gossip in the village is extensive, according to Glazer and Abu Ras, because it is a “power of the weak,” a means whereby a woman gains the edge over another woman in her community.

While it is men who generally perform the actual killings, it is not unknown for women to

assist directly. Amal Musarati, a 16-year-old Bedouin girl was bludgeoned to death in 1991 by her brother and sister who were incensed by Amal's affair with a Muslim man. And in a unique instance of family sharaf violence, a Lebanese woman single-handedly killed her sister whom she considered immoral. This killer proclaimed her act was not at all a reflection of patriarchal values but rather one of women's liberation: now women too can be active upholders of the important family values.

Female complicity in family sharaf killings is reminiscent of the practice of female genital mutilation, a phenomenon that has been much more widely studied than sharaf killings by anthropologists.[27] In this practice, the woman's sexuality is curtailed before the fact to ensure her purity and suitability for marriage. Female genital mutilation is a practice that shocked the sensibilities of many Westerners; the British tried to stamp out the practice by making it illegal in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. When they did so, many women rushed to have their daughters "fixed" before the law came into effect. Indigenous feminists have taken more nuanced positions than many in the West—most wish to abolish the practice but some resent the cultural imperialism that proclaims the practice inhuman and ignores the cultural understanding and meaning of the practice to women and men of the society. Female genital mutilation in Middle Eastern, African, Muslim, and Arab worlds is largely carried out by women, and thus, as the anthropological literature on the subject emphasizes, these forms of patriarchy are not properly conceptualized as a victimization of women by men.

Likewise, Israeli-Palestinian women do not necessarily experience gendered control as imposed and oppressive. Indeed, most women seem to have quite thoroughly internalized the imperative of protecting the family sharaf, and at times even to the point of sacrificing themselves. This sentiment is expressed in a story entitled "Layla," written by a Palestinian woman of Tamra village,[28] which I present in summarized form below:

> Layla was as beautiful as the moon. When she went to the village to bring water all the men watched her, and all the women were jealous. Everyone said, "She will be so lucky, the woman who takes Layla for her son." Layla's cousin loved her. But when he asked her to marry him, she refused saying, "I am not ready to marry. And I must care for my little brothers since my mother has died."
>
> The cousin felt rejected. In anger he decided, "I will make a bad name for her." He stole her scarf and said he found it in the field. This was proof that she had been out with a man. Layla's brothers did not believe this story, so the cousin went to the mukhtar, "Layla has hurt our family honor. Either you must have her killed, or I must marry her." The mukhtar told him to be silent. But that night he thought, "If she has done it before she will do it again." The mukhtar went to Layla's brothers and ordered them to kill their sister.

> Amin, Layla's youngest brother, loved his sister dearly and knew she was innocent of any wrongdoing. That night when the brothers took Layla to the mountains, Amin whispered, "Run away." But Layla refused, saying "No, if I run they will say that I am guilty, and I am not. Only the one who has done wrong will run." When they held up the knife to kill her, Layla's brothers all cried but she said to them, "How I have raised my brothers to have such courage and to respect the mukhtar!" And Amin sobbed, "Layla, you can just tell the truth, you have nothing to hide." But she silenced him, "Kill me. No one here would believe my story."

This internalization of oppressive sharaf logic by Palestinian women is troubling for those who oppose the practice. They feel dismayed to witness women participating in their own oppression. Their view is captured by Shirley Arderner (1978) when she notes, "Members of [subordinate] groups instead of ignoring the dominant group or merely tolerating its demands, may even go further and accept the burden of maintaining or 'policing' a system that to the onlooker appears to disadvantage them. Among all the different mechanisms that keep women in their place, perhaps the most effective is the notion that the place is designed for their own good and that of their families."

The story of Layla also suggests that male hegemony does not mean that most men are anxious to kill their sisters or daughters. Indeed it may be difficult for a man to reconcile his principles of sharaf with other emotions. Layla's fictional brothers are not the only men who have suffered from the social dictates of family sharaf. In April 1996, a young woman who defied her father's orders was murdered by her obedient brother who then hanged himself on a nearby tree. Tamam Fahilya, a Palestinian feminist, summarized, "For most of us, our brothers are like big barking dogs who feel that their whole purpose in life is to guard our bodies. It is a kind of oppression for them too, that they have to go through their lives feeling this responsibility and worrying that at any moment we will snatch their honor away." (cited in Brooks 1990:51).

Determining When a Woman Will be Killed: A Critique of the Literature

I now turn from aspects of sharaf logic and construction to a critique of anthropological writing on family sharaf killings in Israel. In focusing on this form of murder, I do not wish to give the impression that all transgressions of sexual modesty or all supposed transgressions lead to sharaf killings. This is far from true. Young Palestinian women flirt with danger everyday, meeting young men, going to public places unescorted. If the woman is not seen, or if no one informs on

her, then obviously no actions are taken against her by her family. A suspicion or even discovery of a young woman's immodesty still only occasionally leads to murder. The inconsistent nature of family sharaf killing is explored by Israeli Anthropologist Yosef Ginat in his book *Blood Revenge.* Ginat (1997; 1987) provides brief case histories for nearly 50 incidents of family sharaf killings within the Israeli-Palestinian community from the 1940s to the 1980s. Fie argues that the girl will be murdered if, and only if, a family member declares in public that she has dishonored the family (1997; 1987).

Ginat's work[29] is a refinement of claims made by scholars such as Richard Antoun (1968), Abner Cohen (1974), and Fredrik Barth (1968) who previously pointed to the significant role public knowledge plays in leading to the killing of a woman in Arab culture. Ginat argues that diffuse public knowledge alone does not lead to her murder. A killing becomes inevitable, he believes, only when such knowledge is made explicit, when a member of the family states out loud something to the effect that the father or brother should do something about their daughter or sister. Ginat recounts that just before the murder of Iptihaj, Amir's cousin said to him in the presence of others, "As long as the stain on the family's honor remains, every woman whose hand you ask for will refuse you" (personal interview). This statement, Ginat contends, was the catalyst that led to murder.

If Ginat is correct, his explanation seems to raise more questions than it answers. To say that public accusation leads to murder begs the question: Why is public accusation so significant? Why does it matter so much that it forces a man to kill his sister? Reading his case histories, one wonders, further, if Ginat is not bending some scenarios to fit his theory—forcing public accusation to entail murder. While it is plausible that many of these attacks may have been instigated by public accusations that humiliated the family, it seems unlikely that social reality is always as neat and tidy as Ginat would have us believe. Ginat was not present before each case and cannot know if public accusations were the crucial factors in prompting murder. He does not test his theory by looking for public accusations that did not lead to violence. Accusations and public slander occur all the time; it is unlikely that they always lead to murder. Thus there may be no necessary causal connection between public accusation and family sharaf killing.

Gideon Kressel, focusing on the same question, offers an alternative explanation as to why some transgressions lead to murder while others do not. In his view, as in Ginat's, the surrounding families are again the deciding factor. Rather than an announcement of impropriety, however, Kressel argues that status concerns and jockeying for social position are critical in determining the outcome of each case. Kressel conducted fieldwork among Bedouin in Ramie and Lod and collected data from the Israeli Hebrew press of 63 reported cases of family sharaf murder, 38 inside Israel and 25 within the Occupied Territories, from 1973 to 1977. He details three of these cases to support his answer to the question of what motivates this kind of murder

(1981:178-188).

In one of these cases of homicide that occurred in 1978, for example (cf. *Ma'ariv*, January 2,1978), a Bedouin girl drowned in a pit in the area of the tribe's encampment. The newspaper article stated that the girl probably committed suicide because of family pressure, but Kressel's ethnographic fieldwork showed otherwise. The 13-year-old girl was seen by her brother holding hands with a boy. The brother ran home laughing and yelling about his sister's indiscretion. The public embarrassment was acute for the girl's father particularly because he belonged to a high status family and the boy who was with his daughter came from a family of low repute. Furthermore, the girl's father was the brother of the tribal sheikh. When the situation became known, the girl's entire family was stigmatized and this resulted in the father killing his daughter.

The girl's action in itself was insignificant—she held hands with a boy— but the injury to the family sharaf was too deep to ignore because of their high religious standing, the widespread public knowledge, and primarily because of the relative statuses of the families involved, according to Kressel. The fact that the offending family was of such low status and that the stained family was of such high status caused the humiliation to be too much to bear. If it had been otherwise, he argues, perhaps a blind eye would have been turned or marriage would have sufficed to save face *(wujih)* and the girl would not have been killed.

Thus, according to Kressel, family sharaf killings must be understood against the background of the struggle for social supremacy between patrilineal kin groups. One way elite groups distinguish themselves is through their ability to protect the modesty of their young women, either by endogamous marriage (i.e., marrying the woman to another family member) or by keeping them at home unmarried. Female sexuality is capital used to indicate and measure group status. Elite groups are particularly sensitive about the reputation of their women because scandal is likely to affect their position adversely in an informal hierarchy of kin groups. Thus, in this view, family sharaf killings are an expression of the sociopolitical organization of the community of competing hamulas or patrilineal groups.

Although not explicitly stated, Kressel's argument ultimately rests on the thesis that the reason why "honor" is significant at all is that it can serve the end of a system of social and political order that pits one patrilineal kin group against another. Kressel's account makes structural-functional sense but it suffers from a weakness typical of many such approaches: It fails to give a compelling account of the motivation of social actors. Kressel does not explain what *moves* a man to murder his sister. Fie merely points out that this response is functional for a particular kind of political order. But to argue that an emotional response is functional for a particular kind of political ordering is not so much to give an explanation of that emotional response as it is to create an enigma: Flow does it come to pass that a particular system of political order manages,

mysteriously, to elicit a particular, convenient, emotional response—in this instance the feelings of wounded dignity, pain, and anger, which are the stuff of the sharaf killer's motivation?

This functionalist explanation should be turned on its head. It is not the system of political ordering that explains the emotional response; rather, the emotional response, and the system or logic of male sharaf and 'ard of which it is a product, may be regarded as giving rise to a particular political order. Sharaf is the foundation of the political system, rather than the political system being the foundation of sharaf (not temporally speaking, but in terms of fundamental structures).

Ultimately I would argue that although issues of local prestige may well figure into the equation, there is no one formula that explains why a woman is killed in one instance but not in another. It is impossible to predict how aggressively a man will react when he feels his reputation and sense of self have been challenged. But one of the reasons that not all transgressions lead to murder is that several less extreme options are open to the discredited father and family. Marriage, for example, provides an alternative to killing a girl accused of sexual impropriety. An appropriate marriage does not remove the stain as completely as murder but it may serve as a "proper enough" solution to assuage the burden of a family's disgrace.

The "marriage alternative" works to reinstate the family's sharaf because it covers up the problem and makes everything appear socially appropriate. The principle is: if it looks proper, it is proper—appearance takes precedence over the "objective" disgrace. Even if people still mark a woman and her family as dishonorable (*makbaazin*), the taint will fade with each successive year of marriage. As one informant told me, "People will still know that the origins of this couple were shady, but they will talk less; it will come to matter less in time; the problem will pass." The marriage option takes on a cruel irony in cases of rape, as we saw above in the case described by Kifakh. Marrying the man directly responsible for rape, sexual abuse, and social notoriety becomes desirable not only to the girl's family, but to the victim herself. It may in fact be her only means of social, and literal, survival.

There are other tactics for ridding the family of the degrading stigma. In one case from 'Arabe village, a group of brothers had their sister committed to a psychiatric hospital.[30] I learned of several women through the Haifa Rape Crisis Center who, like Ajia, had been imprisoned in their homes for years. Removing a woman from public view essentially has the same effect as killing her without entailing a prison sentence for any members of the family. This option, however, is riskier than murder in the sense that there is always a slight chance that the woman could return to public view. Her invisibility is not as absolute as it is when she is physically dead.

Perhaps the riskiest, and rarest, alternative for a family that does not wish to kill its daughter in response to an accusation is to defend her vigorously and to deny the charge completely. The family denial must be total: they must reject the accuser's claims of any wrongdoing on the

woman's part, even in the face of strong counterevidence. For this strategy to be effective the family must not only fully support their daughter but they must also counter the charge by attacking the accuser. Their degradation can only be reversed through public, aggressive, and even violent denials that loudly discredit the original accusation and proclaim their 'ard and social repute intact.

The case of Maysoon,[31] an unhappily married 20-year-old woman who apparently had an affair with her neighbor, illustrates an instance of a family trying this strategy but ultimately failing to redeem their sharaf. Maysoon, it seems, fed her husband sleeping pills in his food, five or ten at a time. Then she would call her lover to come over. The husband's brothers, living in adjacent homes, noticed this man entering and exiting the house and became suspicious because of the late hours they saw him there on numerous occasions. The husband had not been suspicious of his wife at all and had just thought he was tired. The brothers came over, investigated the situation, and eventually discovered that their brother's wife was having an affair.

When the displeased husband confronted his wife and her family, the family vehemently supported their daughter stating that she would never do such a thing. Maysoon returned that day to live in her parents' home. Her father and brothers feeling dishonored by Maysoon's husband's declarations, marched to his house and initiated a brawl with him and his relatives. The police came and arrests were made on both sides. In the village some people believe Maysoon was guilty and others do not, but as Yusra, the woman who related this story to me, stated, "Her life was ruined anyway. She can only stay with her family now, for all her life. And she has many pretty sisters; now no one will marry them." This case shows that the possibility of denial is open to the family. But it also demonstrates the social dangers involved in such a denial. Ultimately, in this case the family failed to preserve their sharaf. The last few lines of the story are telling in this respect. Yusra points out that the public is dubious and now the family is left with all the pretty sisters whom no one will marry.

The Resilience of Structure: Reinventing Sharaf in the Contemporary Context

I have attempted to establish that exploring the complex logic and value of sharaf is essential to comprehend these murders while searching for a simple determining formula is not a fruitful approach. I have also tried to show how closely tied the cultural system of sharaf and 'ard are to the construction of male identity and personhood, even if individuals experience these categories in private, various, and personal ways. Challenges to and blemishes on a man's honor, in the form of charges against his family's reputation and namely a female relative's sexual propriety,

are often profound attacks against he who a man feels himself to be, his deepest sense of self, his entire existence and survival. Understood as such it becomes unsurprising that this form of murder occurs.

The issue I turn to in this final segment is the question of resiliency versus change in the contemporary sociopolitical context. Family honor killings and the creation of the self do not take place within a vacuum but rather are set within a particular society and historical moment. Ideas and practices of family honor persist throughout the decades in fact because they are somehow relevant to current and changing sociocultural and political factors. The hostility that reformers encounter when trying to halt the practice of family sharaf killing is symptomatic of the fact that sharaf and ‘ard are profoundly bound up with the Israeli-Palestinian male sense of self. This creation of manhood happens within the context of being an Arab in Israeli society. Social realities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and namely, the sense of discrimination against Arabs, greatly influence the creation of a man’s identity and sense of self.

In light of these views the remainder of this chapter will explore the likelihood that the practice of family sharaf killing will persist, change, or disappear as a common practice in Israeli-Palestinian society. I will discuss the challenge to family sharaf killings posed by indigenous feminists and human rights activists; and, I will argue that the resiliency of family sharaf killings is great because these acts contain important symbolism for both Arabs and Jews in the contemporary political context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As a first step to exploring questions about persistence or innovation, I will show how deep-seated and potentially resistant to change this practice is. In the process, I will offer some reflections on the ways that anthropologists currently theorize cultural change.

One of the most influential theorists of the relationship between structure and history is Marshall Sahlins. Sahlins (1995; 1985; 1976) argued that cultural structures are “risked” every time they are employed to understand the world. When a category, or set of categories, is used to apprehend the world, especially novel aspects of that world, the category risks taking on new meanings or collapsing altogether in the face of a refractory reality, a reality that resists categorization. Sahlins applied this conceptualization of structural change in an analysis of Captain Cook’s expedition to Hiawaii in the 1770s, showing how the Hiawaiian attempt to encompass this novel event in their own categories eventually initiated a radical mutation of those categories.

Notwithstanding this important corrective to earlier work that portrayed timeless and static cultural patterns, what is striking in the Israeli-Palestinian context is not how structure may be risked or changed when applied to a refractory world, but rather the power of that structure to change the perception of a world that ought to be a challenge to it. In the following discussion I will present a case of murder that had nothing to do with sharaf but nevertheless came to be

understood as a family sharaf killing. The facts of what happened were rewritten after a murder was committed to make them fit the logic of sharaf and family sharaf killings. Structure—the logic of family sharaf killing—was reproduced, ironically, through an event that ought to have been refractory to it.

When Ichlas Bassam was murdered it was initially regarded by the police as a family sharaf killing, and continued to be so regarded by the local community thereafter, even though the preponderance of evidence overwhelmingly suggested that Ichlas's brother really killed her as a result of a fight over money. From the early 1980s Ichlas had been residing with her uncle in New York, a somewhat unusual arrangement but not untenable since she was under the supervision or "protection" of her patrilineal kin. She maintained close ties with her natal village Rama and especially with the Druze community during this time, returning on a regular basis for extended visits. Ichlas had become a prosperous business woman in New York and wished to build a community center in Rama village. In the summer of 1994, local Arab leaders met with her to discuss these plans. Days later she was interviewed by Israeli Television's Arabic Service concerning her philanthropic activities and dedication to the Druze community. That same evening, July 8, 1994, Ichlas Bassam was murdered by 23-year-old brother, Fiusan Salah Bassam.

According to reports in the press, Fiusan, an Israeli-Arab soldier on leave for the weekend, quarreled with his sister when she returned home that evening after the television interview. Fiasan stated that he told his sister that her behavior brought shame on their family. Fie explained that his friends mocked and taunted him charging that his sister was immodest, that she was not a proper Druze woman. Fiusan's anger toward his sister had been building. Fie told police that he had expressed to Ichlas his indignation over her western dress, highlighted hair, and the fact that she had chosen to remain unmarried. Ichlas reacted angrily and retorted, "Nobody tells me how to live my life." At this, Fiusan exploded, threw his sister to the ground, took up his Galil rifle and shot her twenty times.

Husan remained quietly by the dead body of his sister. When the police arrived, he offered a full confession, stating that he killed Ichlas to "cleanse the family honor" and that "any proud Druze would have done the same thing to protect his family's good name" (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, July 10, 1994). The Bassam family appeared to accept his version of events; they did not condemn their son's action nor receive condolences on the death of their daughter. I was told by informants that Husan's friends paraded him through the streets raised on their shoulders like a hero, but nobody I spoke with had actually seen this themselves, and no one was quite sure when it had happened.

The police chief and all the journalists reporting on the case focused on Ichlas' "immoral" and atypical character as the cause behind the killing. Victor Ma'or, the deputy commander of the

Karmiel police said of Ichlas's behavior, "Her actions insulted the Druze tradition and community" *(Jerusalem Post,* July 10, 1994). Ma'or portrayed Ichlas's death as the logical consequence of her own wrongful behavior: "She was not responsible when she came back to her village, thinking she could behave just like she was in New York. It's like putting a penguin in the Sahara desert." Many of my informants agreed, saying that Ichlas should have known better than to behave as a Westerner in the village.

It is understandable that most people regarded this murder as a family sharaf killing at the beginning. The murderer presented it as such, as did the police and the press *(Fla'aretz* July 9-11, 1994). There was no evidence to suggest that it was anything else. Over time, however, it became clear from police investigations that Husan had lied, that he had not killed his sister to preserve family sharaf. Rather it seems, he had asked her for money and she had refused to give it to him. They quarreled violently and it escalated until he shot her in a moment of fury. This was the conclusion of the final police report, and this version of events was eventually publicized through the press *(Jerusalem Post,* August 1994). Apparently Husan had used family sharaf to legitimize an act carried out in a fit of rage and for reasons that may have had nothing to do with his family's good name.

This story represents something of a challenge to Sahlins's view that structure is "risked" in use. This case shows a structure whose power to shape perception and thus "reality" is so compelling that it succeeds in creating its own truth. Despite strong evidence that this was not a family sharaf killing, the community did not reverse its view that Husan Bassam had killed his sister for family sharaf. The killing occurred within a climate of expectation that any killing of a young woman is likely to be (or could only be) a family sharaf killing. The murderer played to this expectation in the hope that he could justify his action in front of the community if not in front of the courts. The police, the press, and the public seized on whatever details of the story fit the scenario of sharaf killing and ignored all others. New facts were created to confirm the accepted narrative. Ichlas's public image was transformed overnight from a morally upstanding, if unorthodox, Druze woman into a sharmuta or whore.

Once this narrative had imposed itself, there could be no reversal, no matter what evidence subsequent police investigation turned up. Despite the unveiling of Husan's motives, the public continued to treat Ichlas's murder solely as a family sharaf killing. Rumors spread that she had been a prostitute in the United States. One informant speculated, "While Ichlas was abroad she married someone American—Jewish or Christian—I think, or maybe he was just her boyfriend." Another commentator hinted at Ichalas's hidden improprieties: "No one really knew what she was up to in the States." Another informant noted that, "The brother [of Ichlas Bassam] took back the sharaf of the family, because she hurt their name. When she was in Rama she went out with Muslim men, and everyone suspected that in the States she was a whore. She probably came

back to take her sister too." The fear that Ichlas would spread her immoral ways to her sister and other Arab girls was repeated often.

Even those who disapproved of the murder never doubted that it was anything other than a sharaf killing. Journalists Allison Kaplan and Laura Rosen Cohen wrote of the "Modern Woman who Died an Ancient Death" *(Jerusalem Post,* July 15, 1994:IB). Why did no one notice that Ichlas did not die an "ancient death" but a quintessentially modern one, in a fight over money? I want to suggest here that the killing of Ichlas created a truth. It was as if the formal action of killing her changed the facts of the case retroactively. No one had a problem with her behavior before she died. Druze elders had met with her to discuss a plan to build a center for the Druze community. They certainly would not have met with a woman of doubtful moral character. Afterward, however, she was fit to the mold of a sharaf victim, and her crime was fabricated in line with errant female behavior that sparks the typical family sharaf killing.

The failure of the community to see the killing of a young woman as anything other than an sharaf killing, despite evidence to the contrary, is analogous to what Lévi-Strauss (1966) characterized as "mythical thought." Mythical thought sees only itself in the mirror of events. Events can be apprehended only in a limited number of ways, confirming what is already known rather than offering a challenge to accepted categories. Lévi-Strauss associated mythical thought with what he called "cold" societies, in contrast to "hot" or western societies that explained themselves to themselves with science and history. Since Lévi-Strauss advanced this idea in the early 1960s, anthropology has come to recognize that "mythical thought" is as central to all cultural thinking as it is to some non-western societies.

Sharaf Murder and National Politics

An Arab leader expressed his belief to me that sharaf killings are part of the deep structure of "tribalism," that these acts are the essence of Arabs in the Middle East: "That is the society. There is a deep (*'amiq)* element, this instinct for revenge. This is deep within the human being and it is easier for them to revenge than to forgive." While I do not believe, as this man does, that murder and revenge are instinctual, violence predicated on sharaf is a longstanding feature of Arab heritage. The fact that sharaf discourse is highly resilient and that actors have resisted relinquishing it in favor of alternative paradigms suggests that it somehow continues to "work" in present society. In drawing attention to the ways that the practice of family sharaf killing is reproduced in Israeli-Palestinian society, I am not at all suggesting that the practice is timeless or unchanging. The phenomenon of family sharaf killing is not an archaic holdover from the past or a manifestation of inherent traits. Like all traditions it must be reinvented by every generation under new circumstances in order to retain its relevance and vibrancy.

Furthermore, family sharaf killings do not take place within a bounded kinship system and are not straightforwardly the product of sexual indiscretions between unmarried couples, as the above cases have demonstrated. Since 1948 and even more so since the start of the first intifada, the practice of family sharaf killing is necessarily bound up with the national political struggle between Palestinians and Israelis. At the beginning of the intifada in 1987, for example, several Israeli Jewish women were found mutilated. The police brought in a well-known anthropologist to help them understand the occurrences and this expert's view was that the Palestinians were fighting the Israelis by attacking their sharaf and hence by killing their women.[32]

As "total social phenomena," sharaf and family sharaf killings relate complexly to multiple realms of social and political life. The murder of Taghrid Diyab illustrates the fact that family sharaf killings are often complexly intertwined with contemporary issues of national politics. In June 1994, Nabil Abu Khdeir, a 24-year-old man, brutally killed Taghrid Diyab, his 27-year-old sister, by slitting her throat and stabbing her sixteen times in the head and shoulders. Taghrid had been walking with her three children near Damascus Gate on a crowded street just outside of the Old City of Jerusalem when Nabil attacked her. After killing Taghrid, Nabil threw down his knife and fled to Jericho. When Taghrid's mother Mas'ada Abu Khdeir heard the news she cried for the ruination of her son as much as the death of her daughter saying, "I have lost two children this day."

The police, the press, and the general public presumed Nabil's motive was simply to reinstate family sharaf. Family members provided the background details on Taghrid's troubled marriage, which apparently played a crucial role in leading up to the murder. Ten years earlier Taghrid had married Abdel Hakim Diyab of Kafr Aqab and moved to his home in the north Jerusalem neighborhood of Shuafat. Tahgrid's relatives said that Diyab started to use and sell cocaine and heroine. Diyab's family would not tolerate his criminal activities and they told the couple to leave their house. Taghrid and Diyab moved in with her parents and had three children. But the situation worsened. Diyab became abusive to Taghrid. "He would hit her, tell her to shut up, but she did not leave him, she loved him," her uncle reported in a press conference. Her relatives further stated that they suspected Diyab was collaborating with the Israelis. The Abu Khdeir family was clearly distressed by their situation of being connected to this man.

When Diyab was convicted for theft in 1991 and incarcerated in Ramie prison, Abu Khdeir pressed for a divorce between Diyab and his daughter. The patriarchs of both families worked out a deal: in exchange for granting Taghrid the divorce, Abu Khdeir would give Diyab's father 1,000 Jordanian dinars and the couple's three children. I am uncertain if Diyab himself agreed to this arrangement but Taghrid rigorously opposed it mainly because she did not want to lose her children. Taghrid took the three children and left her parent's home and moved back to the Diyab household in Kafr Aqab in June, 1994. Her father and relatives were angry that Taghrid did not

obey their wishes but ultimately, they said, they allowed her to go in peace. “I told her it is your life, do what you want,” said her mother *(Jerusalem Post*, June 1994). But ten days later Taghrid was murdered by her older brother Nabil.

Reports appearing in the press and media after the killing highlighted family sharaf as the motive. Interestingly, Taghrid was labeled a dishonor *(makbzaaba)* to the family by Nabil’s friends because she refused the divorce demand placed on her family and chose instead to move back to her husband’s home. By putting her criminal husband and his family so obviously above her own father and challenging his patriarchal will, Taghrid displayed great disrespect to her father. Allegations of sexual impropriety were leveled against Taghrid and Nabil was taunted with the usual humiliating and enraging smear, “Your sister is a prostitute.” Nabil vented his anger on the object or sign of family disrepute.

At one level, this case straightforwardly fits the model of family sharaf killing. A young woman was murdered by her own brother in a very violent physical attack. The murder was premeditated, presumably the result of the accumulated anger and moral outrage. A member of the family explained that Nabil’s friends incited him to murder his sister. They would not let him forget that Taghrid dishonored the Abu Khdeir family by returning to Diyab’s home and the humiliation felt by the brother was apparently too much for him to bear. The murder was done in an utterly overt fashion—in the daytime, outside, in a public and crowded place, and in front of the victim’s children. There was no attempt to cover up the killing but Nabil did flee to Jericho in an effort to escape the sanctions of the Israeli legal system. Finally, no one including the distressed mother of the victim either blamed or condemned this killer.

A further layer of information, however, suggests that this murder was not solely motivated by Nabil’s and his family’s injured sharaf. Rather any considerations of sharaf by the Abu Khdeir family were heavily overlain with intricacies of national political battles when they decided to kill Taghrid. The declaration of a relative of the Abu Khdeir family testifies to the presence of other factors related to political loyalties. According to this relative:

> Rumors spread in the community that Taghrid was guilty of immoral acts, like prostitution. But the real issue of family honor is related to the intifada: All of Taghrid’s brothers had been security detainees. Her husband Diyab was an Israeli collaborator and had impersonated Taghrid’s brother Nabil when interrogating Palestinians. That put Nabil himself under suspicion as a collaborator … The family felt it could not get back at Diyab directly, he had too much backing. There is an expression in Arabic, “If you cannot kill a man riding on a donkey, kill the donkey.” Taghrid was the donkey *(Jerusalem Post*, June 1994).

This relative offers a new layer of understanding, a completely different perspective on the killing, and one that is squarely located in the realm of nationalist politics. When Diyab impersonated Nabil in front of other Palestinians, he jeopardized Nabil's position in the nationalist movement and put him in danger of being branded a collaborator. In the tense atmosphere of the intifada, an accusation of Israeli collaboration is a serious attack on a man's sharaf and one that puts him in grave danger of being targeted by Palestinian nationalists. Such a public charge required a visible countermove. Killing Taghrid was one way to restore Nabil's sharaf and attack the political enemy.

Set within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, much of the intra-Arab violence whether against men or women is a product of complexly integrated social, political, ethnic, ethical and other realities as the case of Taghrid Diyad illustrates. Why then does the public continue to presume that murder of women occurs as a result of family honor and specifically due to a woman's sexual indiscretions that have damaged family sharaf? Why does the family sharaf killing remain the common and legitimate paradigm for virtually all murders of women and why is the standard rhetoric of uncontrolled female sexuality consistently invoked?

Glazer and Abu Ras (1994:284) argue that family sharaf killings persist because they are in the political interest of both Arab and Jewish men. I agree with this assessment and add that the logic, rhetoric, values, and presumptions entailed in such killings likewise resist change because these support the patriarchal order. Family honor killings in their simplified and standard rubric help maintain the Jewish and Arab man's sense of ethnic superiority over the other. By upholding norms of female modesty and male control over female sexuality, Arab men gain a sense of superiority over Jewish men in a society where Arabs are second-class citizens subject to pervasive racism. Arab men attain positional superiority with moral capital. From the Arab perspective, Jewish women have no modesty; they walk around in revealing clothes. They are sexually loose, essentially whores. "Jewish men cannot control their women, they have no honor," explained an Arab informant. Arab women pride themselves on their morality and frown on the presumed decadence of Jewish woman.

Family sharaf killings at the same time validate racist attitudes held by Jews against Arabs. Jewish public opinion seizes upon family sharaf killings to portray the brutality of the primitive Arab Other. What kind of people celebrate and dance around the body of a ruthlessly slain woman—they must be barbaric! These gruesome images underwrite a sense of Jewish superiority and legitimate Israeli practices that treat Arab citizens as inferior. It is in the interest of Israel, as a Jewish state, to perpetuate negative stereotypes of Arabs and cast family sharaf killings as indicative of and inherent in "the Arab mentality." As a feminist said, "The Arab woman's body is a small price for Jewish authorities to pay for the ideological benefit of being able to look down on Palestinian Arab society as primitive and barbaric."

Family sharaf killings thus serve as potent symbols for both Arab and Jewish sides in the nationalist conflict. There is an unwritten cooperation between Jewish and Arab Israeli men to preserve the "traditional" practice of sharaf killing. For this reason, modernization theories that predict the decline of "traditions" (e.g., family sharaf killings) in the face of increasing contact with the West—in this case the Israeli state and economy—are unlikely to be borne out. Far from causing family sharaf killings to disappear, the imposed Israeli system may have prompted an expansion of the practice as Arabs struggle to maintain a sense of identity and national distinctiveness, and Jews to legitimize their dominance.

In theory Israeli law certainly makes no distinction or concession in cases of murder motivated by sharaf; the family sharaf killer should be prosecuted with the same force as any other murderer. Yet in reality, an Arab elder told me rather nonchalantly, "Everyone knows that the authorities are very lenient on honor-killers." Speaking about the recent killing of Iptihaj in Daliat al-Carmel by her brother, he stated matter-of-factly, "The boy won't serve more than a couple of years in jail." This charge of state leniency is backed up by experts who concur that it is common practice for family sharaf killers to receive presidential pardons after serving only eight to twelve years of their "life sentence" (Ginat, personal interview 1997).

The articulated rationale for commuting sentences in family sharaf killing cases is that Israelis are trying to be flexible when it comes to Arab cultural or religious beliefs; they are trying to be cultural relativists. A Christian leader reflected on the dilemmas of condemning or trying to alter sharaf killings after Iptihaj Hassoun was murdered. He individualized the case, and like other authorities took a cultural relativist stance:

> Here you have to understand a complex society—the Druze community. Let's talk about the Indians in America, for example. They have been living for so many years by their own customs. So what right do you have as a White person to impose on them another way, to tell them that their way of living is wrong and to enforce something from the outside?

I reminded him that the victim from Daliat el-Carmel was a Druze women, not someone from the outside, and asked, "Doesn't she have the right to make her own decisions, decide her own life for herself, including the right to criticize or reject her society's customs?" He replied, "Well, then why didn't this girl do that? Why wasn't she able to convince her parents of her ways?" He held firmly to a non-interventionist stance, "The change must come from the inside, we cannot impose this." And then he posed a final question as an outrageous proposition, "Do you want me to go to the Druze people and tell them let their daughters marry whomever they want?!"

Because police take no preventive measures and authorities frequently turn a blind eye to family sharaf killings, killers hold little fear of serious repercussions. The case of Ahmed Barkat

supports this view; however, it also reveals some ambiguity on the matter of court sentencing in cases of honor killings. Ahmed Barkat, a man who tried to murder his mother for reasons of family sharaf, does suggest that killers have little expectation that they will be harshly treated by the courts. The court's ambivalence in this case may have been due to the atypical twist that Ahmed's intended target was his own mother and matricide is an unthinkable violation in Israeli society where the mother figure is an exalted symbol.

Ahmed Barkat was convicted for the attempted murder of his mother in 1992 and sentenced to prison for eight years by the Haifa District Court. The pleading of extenuating circumstances had worked in Ahmed's favor and resulted in a relatively light sentence. In a subsequent appeal to the Supreme Court, Ahmed's lawyers sought to reduce the sentence even more by presenting what they believed to be mitigating factors: (1) Ahmed had no criminal past; (2) Ahmed's mother had forgiven him [!]; and (3) relations between mother and son had strongly improved since he expressed regret. The state, however, counter-appealed arguing that the sentence was too light given the severe nature of the crime. Justices Eliahu Mazza, Tova Strasberg-Cohen, and Zvi Tal agreed and Ahmed's sentence was increased by four years. The Supreme Court stated that "this phenomenon of family-honor crime must be combated" *(Jerusalem Post*, August 3, 1994:3). Yet despite the four-year addition and the proclamations of the Supreme Court, the lower court had handed out a very soft sentence for this serious crime, and although the higher court raised the sentence substantially, Barkat's appeal was based on the belief that he could get off with an even lighter sentence than eight years for attempted sharaf murder.

Glazer and Abu Ras (1994) point out that in most cases the State appears to parallel the anthropologist's concern for cultural relativity and respect for a minority's "tradition" by meting out lighter punishments for sharaf killers, by not investigating "suicides" closely, and by handing runaway girls back to their families.[33] But this "cultural relativism" displayed by state authorities is highly selective. When it is in the state or Jewish interest, officials have no compunction about stamping out the traditional ways of the indigenous Arab population. Cultural relativism was not a concern for Jewish authorities when they relocated Negev Bedouin in order to build a military base. The nomadic practices of the Bedouin have been virtually eradicated. Bedouin have been settled as tax-paying wage laborers dependent on the Jewish economic sector.

In face of a situation where family sharaf killings have renewed rather than diminishing relevance for Israeli Arab and Jewish men, what is the possibility for future change or eradication of the practice? A small number of indigenous activists attempted to challenge family sharaf killings and the logic of sharaf and 'ard on which they are constructed. This challenge began with the organization of a reading group among a small gathering of friends in 1991. Privately they called their group *Al-Fanar*; or "The Lighthouse," because as one member said, "We had big dreams about being a beacon for women in trouble" (Fahilya, cited in Brooks

1995:52). In June 1991, a woman was murdered in Iksal village and the Al-Fanar group boldly decided to protest publicly. This was the first anti-family sharaf killing demonstration ever held in Israel. The women made placards that read: “Father, brother, support me, don’t slaughter me!”

Other Palestinian women’s groups declined to join the protest. West Bank Palestinian activists and media did not address the issue of sharaf killings or even cover the demonstration. They did not want to criticize Arab society or deal with controversial issues that highlight negative Arab stereotypes. When Al-Fanar itself advertised in Israeli-Arab newspapers, the group members’ phones were flooded with threats. “They said if the demonstration went ahead we would all end up like the girl from Iksal” (Brooks 1995:52). When Al-Fanar proceeded with the protest in Nazareth, people jeered them openly calling them *sblucky* (“slut”). As challengers to the patriarchal order, many cast them in the same mold as the family sharaf victims. Only a few men and women in the vicinity supported the demonstrators. After this action, Al-Fanar published and circulated information against family sharaf killings and other practices oppressive to women. They held their second demonstration in Ramie in November of 1991, after Amal Musarati was murdered.[34]

Despite the efforts of this group, little appears to have changed. One week after Ichlas Bassam was murdered in July 1994, Nawal Assis, then the head of Al-Fanar, organized a demonstration in Ichlas’s home village of Rama. She called on religious and community leaders to participate in the protest against family sharaf killings. Again they refused. Assis and other organizers received the usual telephone threats from anonymous Arab men. They were told that if they came to demonstrate there would be a massacre. Not a single woman from Rama village attended the protest, according to Assis, because they were threatened by their families. “There were weapons there and people were afraid. Only one Druze woman came and she was from another village.” During the demonstration, according to the feminists, “the men from the village literally fell upon us and were hitting us.” The police did not attempt to protect the demonstrators. One woman, Janan Abdu Machol, said she personally asked a policeman for help. “I spoke to him in Fiebrew and he told me to go away in Arabic, using very nasty language. Then I knew what I was dealing with” *(Jerusalem Post,* August 1994).

Despite the hostile reactions against feminist protests of sharaf killings, these activists have succeeded in breaking the taboo on discussing domestic violence. In the late 1990s articles on violence against women began to appear in the Arab press, including anonymous accounts written by victimized women. Active feminists set up a support network for battered and abused women with the aid of volunteers. More women started to respond to their advertisements. They received assistance from Jewish-run shelters for battered women in Israel. Al-Fanar held several more protests against sharaf killings including one in Taibe after a woman was killed by her husband and brother because she allegedly had left her home and moved in with a Jewish man.

There is now wider public debate regarding these events after they occur. Activists have successfully managed to raise the subject for popular discussion with the assistance of the media. For the first time, the question of police accountability was openly raised: Can police be held accountable for taking a passive stance when they know that a woman is in danger? A documentary aired on Israeli television (Channel 2, March 12, 1996) in which there was much discussion about police accountability.

While there is now limited indigenous and scholarly debate, the future of family sharaf killings remains uncertain. Some social scientists, journalists, and members of the Knesset have stated publicly that they believe the practice should disappear and that the rate of incidence is in fact declining. The terms that they frame their case in, however, are dominated by assumptions of modernization theory, evolutionary conceptions of society, and enlightenment dichotomies that oppose "barbarism" to "civilization." They hold honor killings as barbaric, but view the rise of Arab civilization as dependent on increasing commercialization of social relations and the penetration of western education.

The concrete effects that will result from any new discourse on sharaf killings are less than certain. For each moment of resistance, one can point to tremendous forces of counter resistance. The hostility that reformers encounter when trying to halt the practice of family sharaf killing is symptomatic of the fact that sharaf and 'ard are fundamentally bound up with the Israeli-Palestinian male sense of self. In this chapter, I have tried to show how closely tied the cultural system of sharaf and 'ard are to the construction of male identity and personhood, even if individuals experience these categories in private, various, and personal ways. Family sharaf murder, rather than disappearing, has solidified as a cultural and patriarchal defense against westernization, as fathers seek to maintain control over their children, and as Palestinian men seek to maintain a sense of dignity in Israel. Activist efforts to halt sharaf killings continue but there is a sense of despair and futility. As one founder of the Al-Fanar group stated, "We thought we knew our culture but really we only knew our own small circle of friends…. If you go to the Arab village and ask the people what they think of al-Fanar they will laugh. We became a joke: *the whores who thought they could change the way the world works*" (italics added, Brooks 1995:53).

Arab Leaders and Family Sharaf Killings

The Arab leadership—notables, sheikhs, mayors, councilors, Arab Members of the Knesset (MKs)—have fared rather poorly overall against the charges of patriarchal complicity in family sharaf killings. These leaders proclaim that sharia, tribal, and traditional laws require witnesses and proof of sexual transgression before women may be legally penalized. In practice, however,

the killers rarely if ever abide by these dictates, and yet no retributive actions are taken by the Arab leadership, no voices are raised in condemnation. Their passivity and silence are condemned by Fahiliya of al-Fanar: “Before every one of our demonstrations we have called on Arab political parties and mayors to join us in our protest against ‘family-honor’ murders. Until now not one has stood up and publicly condemned this phenomenon.”[35] The girl is forgotten upon her death and the communal leaders’ focus quickly shifts to empathy for the boy’s action and saving him from undue legal punishment. Arab leaders reason, “What good would it do to put him in jail?” After Amir Flassoun murdered Iptihaj, the vice-chair of the local council, Akram Flassoun, who is from the same hamula as the murderer and victim, arrived on the scene and was quick to speak on behalf of the killer rather than the deceased sister. Akram stated, “We are dealing here with a positive man with no criminal record. On principle I am against killing, but I understand Amir and his action. We are living in Druze society, here there is gossip-mongering, and everyone knows everyone else. Amir lived with this shame all his life and this can make one explode. For how long can one stand something like this?”[36]

Even when postmortem virginity tests indicate that a victim had not engaged in sexual activity, this is not enough to draw censure from Arab notables, sheikhs, mukhtars, and other political leaders. Instead, in cases of this sort, the Arab leadership may declare publicly that the girl was innocent but this admission is calculated, not to reprove the killers, but to support the family for if the girl was innocent, the family sharaf is fully intact. “Any disapproval of the wrongful killing or redemption of the dead woman’s sharaf that may result from a sheikh’s proclamation of her innocence is incidental,” Jeanette remarked with anger. A postmortem virginity test was done on a girl from Yirka that proved, contrary to the accusations, she was a virgin. Janette, an informant who strongly opposes sharaf killings, explained to me that these tests are routinely done, “the Arab society *must* know if she was a virgin.” After the determinations, the mukhtar of Yirka declared to the villagers, “Mussarrah died as a white bird.” Janette recalled:

> He said that she was not dirty, that she was not a bad girl and some things like that. It is so stupid, this girl who didn’t do anything, after she is killed then they say, “It was nothing,” and that is it. This, of course, implies that it was a mistake and that she should not have been killed but they do not say this. They try to convince the people who think that she had been killed because she was a slut, otherwise. This is to help the family when actually she was killed because her family was very violent!

The relative inaction on the part of the Arab leadership in cases of violence against women is explained in part by the fact that this class of homicides in Arab society does not call for their

active involvement in any public process. This is the case for three related reasons: First, there is no need for leaders to act because there are no ruptured social relations to repair—if a father or brother kills their own daughter or sister, no surviving parties are publicly incensed or virulently acting out (other than the small feminist protests). Secondly, the process of conflict resolution that engages Arab leadership, restores sharaf, and ensures communal peace is irrelevant because sharaf has already been restored to the family as a result of the death of this female kin. Family sharaf is thought to be largely reinstated or even strengthened by eliminating the source or cause of lost sharaf—the girl. Finally (and most cynically), there is no mediation in such cases because leaders of the Arab sector—elders, mukhtars, local councilors—have little to gain from involvement. The power of notable elders depends on the way they are perceived by the public; to criticize sharaf killings vociferously is likely to affect the way the public views the former negatively. They are guardians of the moral order, the same moral order that justifies family sharaf killings. They can hardly both subvert and articulate that moral order. Thus, their silence on the issue is not wholly to be viewed as indifference or as "respect" for the family's right to deal with their own internal matters.

In many instances, however, if a notable elder feels that he can usefully intervene in a case of family sharaf before a killing has been carried out but where a woman's life may be threatened by her male agnates, he may do so. These interventions were referred to by leaders as "sulha over a cup of coffee." This phrase indicates that these interventions are not the full-fledged process of extensive sulha negotiations between notables and extended families to be discussed in detail in the upcoming chapter. These cases rather are kept very quiet and short. Great effort is made to confine the number of people who know of the indiscretions to a minimum. A single elder might simply talk to the girl's father or brothers. This mediator may try to reduce the stress and passion of the situation. Fie will try to find an acceptable way to resolve the problem that will not entail murder. For example, as one such elder said, "If they (i.e., the involved boy and girl) are both of the same faith, take them to the church." Of course such interventions can only take place if a respected outsider knows about the problem or is called in to assist. Leaders say they are not informed of these problems most of the time though, as the family is not advertising the source of their humiliation.

If Arab leaders maintain a distant, neutral, or passive stance where sharaf killings are concerned, the same is not true of their attitude toward outspoken groups like Al-Fanar. According to activists against sharaf killings, they have been virulently denounced by local Arab politicians and political parties for taking an independent initiative. The Islamic Movement, according to Al-Fanar, has been the most severe in voicing disapproval of the women's group. In language that illustrates the inseparability of politics and social practice, Fahiliya states, "In my opinion, anyone who stays silent [about sharaf killings] is a collaborator…. [I]n the next election,

Arab women should not vote for candidates who will not take a strong stand [against this practice].” Feminists mark those who allow subjugation of and violence against women “collaborators.” This term is typically used to designate a political traitor, a Palestinian who has assisted the Israelis and thereby betrayed the Nationalist movement.[37] Likewise, anti-sharaf killing activists are labeled “collaborators” by those who oppose their stance. The latter regard these activists as playing into Israeli and western colonialism by criticizing and attempting to change Arab traditions. About practices of female subjugation, Fahiliya states, “[T]hese phenomena are not condemned by our leaders and politicians, nor have they been studied systematically and documented by local Arab researchers.” The picture is very different when it comes to the murder of men.

Turning to Issues of Sulha and the Arab Leadership, Men of Sharaf

The focus of this chapter has been to look at sharaf and the construction of gendered identity through the practice of family sharaf killings. In the cases of murder of women within the family, frequently there are no further actions taken by involved actors, no subsequent reconciliation process—simply, she is removed by her own family. By contrast, cases of murder among men are generally interfamilial events, and as such necessitate formal reconciliation, lest the murders continue and become full-blown feuds across generations. Certainly cases of murder of men and women cannot always be so easily separated—often men fight over women and multiple people may get killed. In the case of Iptihaj Fiassoun, her son has turned to supportive groups for help in taking legal action against Amir. Pending the outcome of the case, Iptihaj’s son has vowed to take revenge against those who murdered his mother. This could mark the beginning of a feud among men, in the name of family sharaf, and may eventually lead to a sulha.

Until this point, manhood has been seen as the display of a certain character: he who fights, defends, and kills for his family’s (incorporating his own) sharaf. The morality upholder is outwardly celebrated. Ginat describes the supportive attitude of Arab prisoners toward fellow inmates who carried out family sharaf murders: “Those who murdered a daughter or sister for dishonoring the family, as well as those who have revenged the murder of a relative, are treated differently by the Arab prisoners. They are given respect. They are not seen as having committed any kind of crime, but are considered ‘men’ who have fulfilled their duty and are thus entitled to admiration” (1997:16). This type of distinguished manhood, however, may entail ambivalence in this society, and certainly it is not the only form manhood takes.

In the next chapter, sharaf is again shown to be a dominant underlying theme in society and in the construction of manhood but I focus here on a practice very different from family sharaf killings. The subject of Chapter Three is the traditional form of peacemaking or conflict

resolution known as *sulba.* Sulha practice among Arab men is animated by sharaf. I will show how the value of sharaf pervades the sulha conflict resolution process and then, in Chapter Four, I will elaborate on the construction of distinguished Arab manhood, not through murder, but rather through leading the processes of conflict resolution.

Chapter Three
Sulha Politics and Peacemaking

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Nobody can carry blood—it is so heavy.

—Sulha leader

Reconciliation Instead of Revenge

Throughout the Galilee, as in many parts of the Middle East, the Arab population has traditionally practiced a ritualized process of conflict resolution known as *sulh,* a term glossed by informants as "reconciliation," "cooperation," or "forgiveness." Any specific case of sulh is referred to as a *sulha*, as is the formal public ceremony that marks the culmination of peacemaking negotiations. Mediation is employed widely to resolve disputes, however trivial or serious, between (and sometimes within) families, but this chapter deals with only one type of sulha, the lengthy reconciliation process mediated by notables that follows the murder of a man. In the immediate aftermath of a killing, the offenders, victim's relatives, and local leaders follow certain set patterns of action that will eventuate in the resumption of peaceful social relations. Murder *always* entails immediate and active sulha responses on the part of interested parties—offenders, victims, and the notable elders and local leaders acting as mediators—setting in motion a resolution process that aims to restore peaceful social relations in the community. In the case of a murder, anywhere from six months to several years is typically required before the final peace agreement is sealed.

Certainly, in Israel, as elsewhere in the Middle East, crimes today are regulated by law and the state. Yet, rather than being replaced by the state, sulha has proven to be a tradition that works in tandem with the civil and state justice system.[1] And while informants claim that sulha is in rapid decline, especially in urban areas, major sulhas involving hundreds and even thousands of men continue to occur each year in Arab villages among Bedouin, Druze, Muslims, and Christians; participants even keep written and audiovisual records of sulhas. Although sulha is often seen by the young as being out of step with modern life in Israel, most informants consider this pre-Islamic custom a positive tradition that bolsters Palestinian identity in Israel by unifying and

incorporating Arabs of various religious backgrounds and ethnicities.

In what follows I offer an analysis and interpretation of sulha based on participant observation and interviews carried out in northern Israeli-Palestinian communities (sixteen towns and villages in the Galilee region) from September 1992 to April 1996. I present my analysis with the intention of complicating and contesting negative representations of Israeli-Palestinian and Arab village politics prevalent in social scientific discourse. Instead of emphasizing the centrality of violence and conflict to the construction and maintenance of political order, I focus on the underlying ideals of cooperation, negotiation, honor, and compromise—the indigenous representation of sociopolitical interaction—so evident in the sulha process. These ideals structure much of Arab sociopolitical life.[2] As in any social or political system, conflict, competition, and even violence play a part in Israeli-Palestinian politics, but the importance of their role has been consistently overemphasized in ethnographic and other academic accounts. A corrective to this pathologization of Arab political and social life is overdue.

To clarify, I am not offering a functionalist presentation per se. My point is not that while others claim this political culture to be dysfunctional, I will show through the practice of sulha that it is indeed functional and harmonious. Indeed sulha does not always succeed, and Arab politics, like all forms of politics, is ridden with contradictions and conflicts. Sulha works in many instances, and does not in others. My aim is to explain this largely overlooked by scholars but highly significant process of conflict resolution and show how it is predicated on sharaf logic.[3] I will discuss the tradition of ethnographic writing that has placed violence and feud at the heart of Arab village sociopolitical order, focusing on the sharaf principle of revenge rather than the sharaf principle of forgiveness. Much of the previous literature has either ignored or misconstrued the significance of sulha mediation processes. A more adequate conceptualization of indigenous law and order opens a window on a quite different sociopolitical landscape than that presented in previous accounts. The central difference between the interpretation that I outline and that typical of anthropological discourse from the mid to late 20th century, is that I focus on indigenous reflections on social order by turning to the actors' rituals and words. My goal, however, is not to accept uncritically the "official representation" of politics and social life produced by certain members of Israeli-Palestinian society but rather to present an analysis that is sensitive to the disjunction between actual social practice and idealized models elaborated by interested social actors.

Feud as Social Order

In the foreword to Joseph Ginat's *Blood Disputes among Bedouin and Rural Arabs in Israel* (1987), Philip Carl Salzman writes: "Living is a risky business. We each and all face threats from

many quarters, not least from our fellow men. In consequence, much of our societal organization is oriented toward regulating relations so that the risks are restricted and reduced" (1987:1). Salzman notes that the particular arrangements adopted for security vary radically across space and time, but notwithstanding the variety of human social organization, all societies can be placed along a spectrum according to the extent that the "means of coercion" are either concentrated in the form of a state or widely distributed among individuals or social groups.

Salzman and other anthropologists represent traditional Middle Eastern and Arab societies as epitomizing the stateless form of sociopolitical order. Attempting to understand how violence is checked and political order maintained in the absence of state structures, anthropologists focused on the institutions of feud and segmentary opposition. Segmentary opposition is the organization of men into groups (e.g., descent groups, tribes, clans) such that every man is responsible for every other man in his group. If a man in group A attacks a man in group B then every man in group B is required to avenge his fellow group member and every man in group A is a potential target. The fact that any attack will lead to a reprisal not just by an individual but by his entire lineage group creates a deterrent to the initial outbreak of violence. Anthropologists suggest that "balanced opposition" between segmentary lineage groups produces a kind of "dynamic equilibrium" in acephalous societies.[4]

The notion of balanced opposition was first elaborated by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Meyer Fortes, and other British structural-functionalist anthropologists back in the 1940s.[5] Although initially articulated to understand African tribal organization, structural-functionalist approaches were appropriated and employed in studying Middle Eastern and Mediterranean societies where feud and vendetta appeared to be central social practices.[6] Anthropologists such as Ernest Gellner[7] (1969:41-44) and Emrys Peters (1967) sought the sources of social cohesion in the very practices where fission appeared to have the upper hand over fusion. These analysts claimed that feud, ostensibly a source of social disunity, was in fact the wellspring of social order. Conflict was the arena in which the segmentation principle displayed itself—at whatever level the rupture, groups cohered internally and were pitted against each other in a balanced opposition. Feud and vendetta, paradoxically, were accorded a eufunctional status. Far from introducing *anomie*, these practices were regarded by scholars as the institutions that stood between these societies and absolute anarchy.

The anthropological literature of Arab society in the Middle East has long privileged feud and violence as the key to understanding Arab village politics, with scholars claiming that, in the absence of centralized state structures, the threat of feud traditionally served to prevent unbridled violence and maintain political order. This type of analysis reached its apotheosis in the work of Jacob Black-Michaud (1975). In Middle Eastern societies where feud exists, Black-Michaud argued, the institution of feud provides *the* mechanism of social ordering, the "cohesive force" of

society. According to Black-Michaud:

> Fear of aggression promotes egalitarian alliance to create a balance of forces in the face of potential anarchy. If fear of aggression were removed in societies of this type, organization into a series of evenly matched "segmentary" coalitions would no longer be necessary and the system would fall apart. If, on the other hand, aggression knew no limits and no alliances were formed to check the spread of violence, total anarchy or, better, Durkheimian *anomie* would reign. Seen in this light, feud constitutes the main organizational principle of all the societies in the Mediterranean and the Middle East that I have mentioned. Feud or the threat of feud … provides a mechanism whereby some semblance of social structure and legal norms is necessarily maintained (1975:87-88).

It is important to challenge the interpretation of Middle Eastern society associated with Black-Michaud and his fellow functionalists not least because their arguments tend to perpetuate stereotypes of brutality in the social life of the region, both as a reality and as deterrent, and hence the pathology of Arab politics. Of course it would be grossly unfair to label as Orientalist the scholarship of Black-Michaud and other functionalists given the pains they took to show that any practice—no matter how apparently violent and unsavory—could serve a crucial function in its particular social context. Although functionalist analyses and similar recent interpretations of Middle Eastern society aim to show the *rationality* behind political order, their primary thrust tends to ignore the indigenous ideologies, values, and practices of peace and to overestimate feud and violence.

Although it may seem that I am raising old issues, the fact is that structural-functional assumptions concerning the centrality of violence and blood feud persist in contemporary studies of rural Arab and Bedouin sociopolitics in Israel; for example, they undergird Joseph Ginat's entire approach to the understanding Arab conflicts. As is clear from the foreword to Ginat's book, quoted in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, structural-functionalist analyses centered on blood disputes and the centrality of violence remain prevalent in discussions of Palestinian society.[8] Ginat (1996; 1987) argues that blood disputes persist despite the facts of "modernization" and Israeli state structures. Although the indigenous violence is no longer viewed as an untouched, isolated system, it is still held as closed, coherent, and unchanging. Analyses in which blood disputes are equated with Arab sociopolitical order imply that Arabs are essentially violent. Such an implication maintains an "us versus them" dichotomy and fixes the Arabs in the inferior position in a hierarchical opposition with Israeli Jews.

Another prominent scholar writing on feud and blood disputes among Israeli-Palestinians, Gideon Kressel (1996), emphasizes the structuring quality of segmentary opposition to an even

greater extent. Blood feuds are, according to Kressel, the central structuring mechanism, albeit not the only system of law, for the Israeli Bedouin community. Although Kressel provides a detailed ethnographic and historical account, his approach to understanding politics remains at the structural level, focused on the competition of lineage segments. He argues that sociopolitical order in the Bedouin town of Ramla is constituted by agnatic groups in a "size-ordered hierarchy" that "has immense influence on social relationships and every aspect of day-to-day life" (1996:17). The basic rule, according to Kressel, is: "the more male agnates a lineage [has], the higher its hierarchical ranking" (1996:25). Blood feuds or interfamily conflicts occur because agnatic groups close in numerical size compete for a higher position in the sociopolitical structure. These conflicts are "a means of changing the hierarchical 'pecking order'" (1996:17) or social status of a group vis-à-vis the other groups in the community. Blood feuds, the combative form of segmentary opposition, create and maintain relations that are balanced or in a tense equilibrium but, nonetheless, a patrilineal-based hierarchical order is constructed and reconstructed through this violent competition.[9]

There are at least two problems with structural-functionalist theories of balanced opposition as they apply to Israeli Palestinians. First, for the fear of feud to be efficacious in deterring any initial attack, the likelihood that a feud will follow an initial killing must be reasonably high. But in the village society of the Galilee, feud rarely follows an initial murder.[10] Virtually every case of murder results in mediation and sulha rather than revenge killing. Second, the theory is premised on the Hobbesian assumption that without some coercive apparatus in society, be it a centralized state or a decentralized system of opposed descent groups, a state of anarchy would exist pitting all against all. This view presumes that human actors are competitive, acquisitive, and individualistic, an assumption that is highly problematic in the cultural context of Israeli-Palestinian society. Israeli Palestinians do not exist in a state of nature but in a moral universe that valorizes peaceful relations, cooperation, and conciliation.[11] These structural-functionalist conceptions of sociopolitical order in Middle Eastern society completely ignore indigenous ideologies, values, and practices.

My interpretation of Arab village politics breaks with perspectives that privilege feud, balanced opposition, and the threat of physical force as the key to the constitution of sociopolitical order. I offer instead an alternative vision of order and power in Israeli-Palestinian society, a view that foregrounds the role of mediation and persuasion as found in the conflict resolution practice of sulha. This material on sulha, I hope, will go some way toward de-emphasizing the overstated significance of violence for Arab social and political order by de-centering the feud and highlighting the crucial importance of reconciliation rituals to political players, both at the level of practice and that of representation.

The Poetics of Sulha

If the structural-functionalist perspective proves incoherent as a way to conceptualize the practice of sulha, an alternative approach to understanding Middle Eastern politics focusing on the importance of persuasion seems much more promising. Steven Caton (1987) points out that the inadequacy of these prior approaches was precisely their "failure to realize that persuasion is at least as important as force in comprehending political action" (1987:98). Political anthropologists must not neglect rhetoric and oratory. Caton argues that language is the primary vehicle to power in the Middle East; he who would lead must be able to persuade with words rather than coerce with physical might. Caton contends that scholars should focus on the way language is used in political life, recording precisely what is said and how these utterances are articulated.[12]

Caton's redirection of political anthropology in the Middle East is salutary, but he perhaps overemphasizes the power of political rhetoric and its skillful manipulation to the neglect of other dimensions of persuasion, especially non-verbal practices of persuasion. Here I have in mind the notion of a "political poetics"—use of meaning-laden gesture and social performance to persuade others to follow a particular course.[13] It is such a poetics, rather than rhetoric or oratory alone that is central to the process whereby notable mediators persuade an aggrieved family or lineage group to forego vengeance *(akhad ithaar)* and be reconciled with the group that has attacked them.[14] Carefully contrived symbolic actions, filled with meaning, may "speak" more powerfully to the wounded dignity of a family than could words alone; and words, in any case, have a certain potential to be disastrous. In such emotionally freighted situations, mediators often emphasized the point that the less that is said the better.

Indeed, language itself, and specifically the political language of sulha, can fruitfully be treated under the rubric of poetics. The contrast between poetics and rhetoric is not simply one of bodily performance to discursive articulation for central to the notion of poetics in sulha is the idea that it is not what is said so much as the *way* it is said that is important. Language use in the sulha process can more aptly be regarded as a branch of symbolic performance than as an "argument," a rhetorical attempt to persuade. Sharaf is created and viewed within the social experience of the sulha. The sulha mediation process and ceremony is a social drama that allows for certain men to make moral self-presentations, as the sharaf killing did for the perpetrator. The leaders of the sulha tradition must be adept in performing their roles as dignitaries and mediators (a theme that will be fully explored in the next chapter).

The Mechanisms of Sulha

> So it is like the sharaf of the family demands, in Arab culture, in Arab society, demands that you restore sharaf. This man has killed your father … this would be a dishonor if you do not take revenge it, if you leave your father's killing to be passed by….
>
> —Anonymous informant

Sharaf in Palestinian Israeli society follows the biblical "eye for an eye" logic, expressed by Bedouin as, "One grave lies next to another." To avenge the murder of a close kinsman is honorable; to fail to do so is dishonorable. Given these basic social norms, powerful pressures push the injured family toward murderous action. Indeed the values of the sharaf system dictate that an attacked family should take revenge. But in fact, the vast majority of killings do not lead to counter killings among Arabs in the Galilee. Instead, most injured families eventually agree to reconcile with the killer of their son, father, brother or cousin.[15]

The instrument through which sulha is effected is the *jaha,* a delegation of notables with personal prestige and experience managing these conflicts. Through the jaha's offices, families can be persuaded that it is possible to "wipe away the stain" on their sharaf with sulha rather than the blood of the killer or one of his kinsmen.[16] The aggressors approach the jaha, which then implores the victims to engage in sulha. The process of negotiation between the family of the victim, the family of the attacker, and the jaha may be seen as a central instance of the politics of persuasion, and one in which the jaha, the injured family, and the relatives of the attacker all walk a delicate tightrope. The mediators (Muslim, Christian, and Druze notables) regularly persuade an aggrieved family or clan to forego vengeance and be reconciled with the group that has attacked them. Persuasion to engage in peace negotiations and to offer compensation is effected not only through oratory or rhetoric but also, and especially, through a skillful manipulation of the logic of sharaf that proceeds primarily in the realm of honor-laden gestures.

In what follows, I present an analysis and description that includes three heuristically distinct views of the sulha process: first, the indigenous theory of sulha, that is, the official version articulated by jaha notables and other knowledgeable native observers and participants; second, the way actual social practice diverges from this represented and often idealized version; and third, a formal ethnographic model of how the practice works to effect peace. The underlying complexities of sulha mechanics always diverge somewhat from the straightforward narrative of the official version. The refractory quality of social reality, however, must be overcome or masked if the sulha is to be carried out. The sulha will be potentially successful, that is, it may forge a real peace accord between warring parties, only to the extent that it appears to the actors to adhere to the proper form. The function of the official version is to force lived experience into a narrative where it can do the work of reconciliation. Adherence to the official discourse does not of course guarantee a lasting tranquility but it is a precondition and makes it much more

likely.

My own model of sulha, the third aspect I will cover, tries to navigate between the official version and the complicated actuality of sulha-related behaviors. I regard this model as an effort in translation, an attempt to produce a map that will render intelligible a social reality that is foreign to most readers. Like any map, mine will be somewhat distorting. Indigenous actors do not need charts; they know how to face social life without the need of formal representations. For outside observers, however, some kind of model is indispensable if they are to gain an understanding of the common sense of another society.

Based on my observations and research into sulha as practiced, three basic mechanisms are necessary for the damaged sharaf of the injured family to be repaired, thus making reconciliation possible. These are (1) "poetics of humiliation" or shows of remorse, (2) reverse *musayara*, [17] and (3) magnanimity. In terms of the first mechanism, every murder is experienced as a personal affront; the victim's family asks not only, "Why have you done this?" but also, "Why have you done this *to me?"* An immediate psychological consequence of a killing is that the family of the victim feels a deep sense of "humiliation." The family of the attacker may in turn feel inclined to swagger—or at least this is how the family of the victim perceives the matter. To counter the injured feelings of the victims, the family of the attacker must perform certain humbling gestures or what I have called a "poetics of humiliation." Far from strutting, as they are perceived by the aggrieved family to be doing in the wake of a murder, they must act out a stylized form of debasement. Although this performance does not automatically restore the sharaf of the injured family, it "lowers the temperature" and creates the necessary psychological conditions for them to contemplate reconciliation.

"Reverse *musayara*" refers to the practice whereby the notables constituting the jaha, while negotiating and ritually enacting a sulha, act toward the injured family from beginning to end with the elaborate respect and consideration normally reserved for persons of high status. This process may usefully be regarded as a performative reversal of the standard patron-client relationship prevalent Arab society. In relationships of patronage (*wasta*), the client's request for a favor is flattering for the patron. The client is expected to show gratitude and respect to the patron when the favor is being requested and granted. Each wasta favor can be seen as a transaction wherein sharaf flows from the client to the patron. The jaha—the most reputable men in the community—symbolically turn this relationship on its head (reverse musayara) by beseeching an ordinary family (currently reeling under the humiliation of a killing) to be so kind as to grant them a favor— to make peace rather than to avenge themselves. This reverse positioning is extraordinarily flattering for the injured family; the weakened party is placed in a (temporary) position of "patronage" over society's most esteemed men. Such treatment helps to assuage feelings of humiliation further and to effect a partial restoration of lost sharaf.

With respect to magnanimity, the injured family is encouraged to identify the action of reconciling with their attackers as a manifestation of magnanimity *(shahama*)—one of the highest expressions of sharaf in indigenous Middle Eastern cultures. A man shows magnanimity when, from a position of overwhelming strength, he "forgives" a person who has wronged him and on whom he could legitimately have taken revenge. Jaha men represent this act of forgiveness as the most venerable thing a man can do. According to one leader:

> If it is an act of sharaf to avenge, it is more honor not to revenge; that is why we call him [who forgives] a great person. If he takes revenge, then he is like any other normal person, but when he says, "I could have killed the killer, but I chose not to," that is a great man. In Arab culture there is nothing bigger than forgiveness. This is the highest point, the height of sharaf. Some people forgive because they do not have any choice, but when you have a choice and you forgive, this is the highest rank of sharaf.

If the injured family is able to perform magnanimity successfully, they may be able to convert their humiliation into sharaf, but as is suggested in the above quote, the feat may be difficult. Those who would forgive must convince others that they do so not out of weakness but through a supererogatory act of magnanimity, a greatness of spirit.

An Analytical Description of Sulha: Theory and Reality

Keeping in mind the three main manifestations of sharaf that make sulha possible, I now turn to the official version of the sulha process as expressed by jaha notables and other knowledgeable informants. As this narrative unfolds, I will indicate points of departure where actual sulhas stray from the idealized representation. According to the jaha, within twenty-four hours after a killing, close male relatives of the aggressor go to the homes of influential notables in the village and surroundings to ask them—even plead with them—to form a committee of mediators to calm the aggrieved and enraged family and induce them to engage in the sulha process instead of taking revenge. The initiative is supposed to come from the aggressors who, whatever their reasons for wanting to end the conflict, voluntarily approach the *rijal kibar* ("big men") and, shedding their pride, stand before them '*ara'ya*' ("naked"), *rijal sighar* ("small men"). These humbled aggressors, according to the traditional account, employ set phrases, such as, "I am in your house and you must help me; I am in serious trouble and I am in your hands."[18]

There is always a certain disjunction between actual social practice and the idealized models elaborated by interested social actors. Thus, the repentant gesture described above may amount

to little more than a phone call from the patriarch of one family to a leading notable. Indeed, in some instances the jaha assembles spontaneously, without the aggressor's request, though it is important for the sulha's success that such divergences from the official narrative be elided. In one case, when it became known that the jaha had acted on its own accord and that the accused family had not begged or even phoned for assistance, the revelation proved embarrassing for the jaha. This led to a complete breakdown of the sulha process for the symbolic gesture of supplication by which the aggressor's family begins ritually to express remorse is necessary to set in motion the process of mending social relations.

In the hours after a killing has taken place, notables visit the home of the bereaved family. The purpose beyond offering condolences is to secure *hudna,* a promise of cease-fire. Hudna checks the potential destruction and violence of *fawrat al-dam* (literally "the eruption of blood"), the period immediately after a killing, when the victim's family may legitimately exact revenge under local custom. During fawrat al-dam, and generally for an extended period thereafter, the male kin of the killer flee their homes to seek refuge with relatives or friends. This departure may be more symbolic than anything else, since often the killer's family simply relocates to another part of the village, where those seeking revenge can easily follow. This "exile" is another gesture to the aggrieved family; attackers show humility and remorse by demonstrably staying out of sight of those they have offended. As an informant explained, "By moving away from the (victim's) family, the killers are saying, 'We are not proud of what we did, and we do not want to hurt your feelings further.'" Through debasing steps such as voluntary exile and requesting a jaha, the family that prior to the sulha process was "on top" is brought down in terms of sharaf and set on par with the subordinate side.[19]

The jaha, made up of the community's most prestigious men, supplicates the victims to agree to a suspension of hostilities and later to accept a *diyyab* (monetary compensation for murder or injury) instead of taking another life. This begging of favors from the family of the victim exemplifies the reverse patron-client strategy, or reverse musayara, described above. Yet hudna is not always attained so easily, and the jaha may have to deploy persuasive powers that test the members' own sharaf abilities. At this point in the sulha, oral performance comes to the fore. The jaha orally perform exaggerated courtesy and respect toward the family they seek to sway. It is not merely who is speaking and what is said, but the *way* the jaha communicates—its skill in playing upon the musayara tradition of "polite speech"— that is crucial. As one jaha member described the process:

> We make every effort to get the victim's family to agree…. We use the beautiful language *(hilwa).* We appeal to their sense of goodness and what is right, and we do not leave until the family agrees. But if they really refuse, we keep trying. We come back day after day.

> We speak to them each time with all the politeness and respect in the Arabic language. We beg them to be so kind, so honorable as to do us the favor, until finally they cannot refuse us.

From first contact until the sulha process is completed, the jaha treats the family of the victim with inordinate respect and consideration, never failing to use the "beautiful" or "sweet" *(hilwah)* language.

The offended side—particularly if they are powerful themselves—may be reluctant to grant a cease-fire. If they are willing to consider entering into the sulha process, they may provide a list of demands that must be met before consenting, stipulations that may well be humiliating to the attacker's side. The attacker's side may have no choice but to cede to the victim's demands if they wish to resolve the conflict. The jaha mediates complicated and private negotiations between the two sides over how much humiliation the victims can rightfully demand and how much the aggressors are willing to suffer.

The persuasive power of the jaha men derives as much from their mere presence as from their words. The very gesture of going to the home of the victim serves to assuage their wounded pride and to bestow sharaf upon them symbolically. If the jaha members said little or nothing to the victim's family they might still succeed in persuading them. Because the jaha notables are viewed as highly prestigious—the very embodiment of sharaf—their presence alone can be the persuasive factor in getting victims to agree to sulha. Aref el-Aref (1934), an Arab from Jerusalem who served as a District Commissioner in southern Palestine during the British Mandate, reports a case when he, as District Commissioner, addressed a man whose son had been killed, and requested of him that he agree to sulha. The man was so flattered that the District Commissioner had approached him that he replied, "Even if all five of my sons were killed, I am so honored by your presence that I agree to make peace."

If the jaha's initial effort is unsuccessful, they return repeatedly and add to their collective weight by bringing additional notables in each successive visit to join the chorus calling for peace. Eventually the disgrace of refusal reaches an intolerable point, and the victim's family cedes. In one case, recounted by one of my jaha informants:

> Several young people were injured in a fight in the central square of town (Nazareth). The families refused, of course politely, all the efforts the jaha was making. It was all in vain. This one family was an especially hard nut to crack. We tried to tackle it from every side but it did not work. Then a strong elder brother of the local council candidate probably could not tolerate it any longer, because there is a sense that it is an insult to the jaha not to yield to its demands. What a good man! He stood up furious—I thought he was going to

> explode—and said, “Enough! I will not let you go on more than that! You have gone too far. These people (the jaha) are respected people in our society. They have spent hours and many times coming, asking us, and begging us. How many times are you going to make them feel so very ashamed?” He banged his fist on the table, and everybody in the room was silent. He said, “I want to tell the jaha, ‘I am for peace,’ and I want to see anyone in this room who dares to say ‘no.’”

Ultimately, it is embarrassing for the victim’s family *not* to acquiesce to the requests of these prestigious men, and elders, including those of a victim’s family, feel that they ought to yield to the jaha’s requests out of respect for them. The entire sulha system is predicated on this hierarchical logic of sharaf.

If the jaha secures a cease-fire, the sulha process goes forward. The next step, according to the official narrative, is for the arbitration committee to make a ruling on the amount of diyyah to be paid by the attacker’s family to the victim’s family. Jaha elders claim that the diyyah in any particular case corresponds in value to the diyyah paid in previous cases involving similar crimes. The figures reported to me were consistently in the range of 100,000 NIS (at the time approximately $30,000) for a murder. Killings that entail disfigurement or any bodily desecration, however, demanded additional payment.[20] This happened in one murder case and the jaha’s negotiations grew lengthy. Apparently impartial diyyah decision making hides a process of haggling and negotiation between the family of the victim and the family of the attacker, mediated by the jaha notables, who themselves have personal interests. The latter covertly moderate how much the victims rightfully can demand and how much the aggressors will suffer. Any public discussion concerning the size of the diyyah or other conditions would undercut the jaha’s image as a wise and unified body that unilaterally makes its ruling in light of custom and precedent.

With the amount of diyyah and other conditions determined, the sulha ceremony is arranged. All men of the village and notables from other villages are sent invitations announcing the formal reconciliation of the two families. Guests are told the time, day, and exact location of the sulha. One person, who may or may not be part of the jaha, is generally designated to send invitations and coordinate the sulha ceremony. It is important that an adequate number of dignitaries attend the sulha ceremony to confer sharaf on the family of the victim and help restore their shattered dignity. The family of the victim will likely discuss these matters privately with the jaha. There have been cases where a family refused to engage in sulha until they were assured that a number of prestigious figures would attend. It is typical for the victim’s family to take photographs or even video record the sulha ceremony to be able to later point out proudly the various prestigious figures in attendance.[21]

The sulha ceremony takes place outdoors, in the village center, in front of the municipal building, or in another central space, as sharaf relies on public view. The jaha initiates proceedings by having an influential member of the offended family, usually the father of the victim, tie a knot in the *ray ah* (a white flag or banner). This symbolic gesture indicates that the victim's family is ready for reconciliation and that it is safe for the sulha to proceed. The members of the jaha then take the white rayah to the killer and his family who are waiting in another part of the village. "The rayah is white and clean," a jaha member explains, "the rayah has no spots—as if to show that the problem has been cleansed." The jaha men surround the killer and his male kin and proceed through the streets to meet with male members of the victim's family who are lined up in the place where the ceremony will be enacted.[22] There may be as many as several thousand men attending the sulha—all watching with solemn anticipation. Women and children's viewing is limited to what can be seen from windows and the sidelines. The jaha surrounds the killer to shield him from any possible attacks of rage against him. "No one, particularly not the attacker and his family, dares to utter a word," explained a jaha member. "Everyone senses that the less people speak the better—one wrong word might ruin everything. So there is a heavy silence." Again it is the enactment of rituals and not the words per se that is efficacious.

This stage of the sulha ritual too is a scene of temporary humiliation, or sharaf-lowering, for the offenders. In Bedouin tradition the attacker was made to wear the *agal* (black headdress rope) around his neck. He was led by the jaha, "as a leashed animal," to the home of the offended family. The assailant would answer the victims' question, "Where is our son?" with the humble admission, "He is in my stomach." With his head bowed down, the fallen aggressor acknowledged his guilt aloud for all the family and the public to hear. In current practice these steps are often still taken, particularly in Bedouin communities.[23] Whatever the genuineness of the humility, the offenders must publicly go through the prescribed steps conveying shame and remorse. If they perform their moves adequately, the victims will feel assuaged and the egalitarian balance of sharaf will be restored.

The waiting family of the victim is lined up in public view outside of the municipality or local council building or in any central public space. The killer and all of his male relatives arrive and move down the line, shaking the hands of each and every member of the victim's family. "When they put their hands together, the tension must ease," explained a jaha informant, who added that this is potentially the most volatile moment of the sulha. In one case, the brother of the victim pulled out a knife that had been hidden in his sock and stabbed the man who had murdered his brother at the very instant when he was expected to shake the killer's hand and forgive the deed. This rupture of the ritual, of course, meant that the jaha members' musayara efforts and the killer's humbling gestures had failed to assuage the victims. In the vast majority of cases that

arrive to ceremonial proceedings, however, the tense moment passes without incident, and once this point has been crossed the rest of the peacemaking process continues without difficulty.

After the shaking of hands, the diyyah is passed from the family of the attacker to the family of the victim. According to jaha informants, it is crucial that these monetary exchanges take place in front of many witnesses (for this reason the diyyah is now commonly placed in a transparent plastic bag), since promises made before the tribunal of the community are likely to be kept. The most powerful and wealthy families are reluctant to keep the final payment of diyyah. They may take the money during the ceremony and return it afterwards in a calculated display of magnanimity. In one not untypical case, the patriarch of the victim's family took the diyyah in his hands during the ceremony, raised it above his head and declared, "I return this money. I do not need this payment to forgive."[24]

Magnanimity—the third significant mechanic of the sulha model—is not a virtue that jaha men invented for their own purposes, nor one that they must draw on religious precept to uphold. There is evidence to suggest that in traditional Middle Eastern society magnanimity was figured among the most truly admired dispositions. A story related by el-Aref, while it may be apocryphal, suggests that forgiveness from a position of strength was a quality traditionally valorized in this society. As el-Aref relates it, a man from Alamat, Abu Shunnar, killed a man from Kdeirat (Alamat and Kdeirat are two tribes of the Beersheba district). One of the victim's relatives set out to avenge the killing but found the murderer asleep. Instead of waking the man and killing him (the social rules require that the man to be killed be awake), the would-be killer traced the symbol of his tribe, in gunpowder, on the pillow of the sleeping man, and lay his dagger alongside it. When Abu Shunnar awakened and realized that his life could have been taken he went immediately to the avenger, made peace, and gave diyyah. According to el-Aref, the two men made a pact that still existed at the time he was writing.

Magnanimity on the part of more modest families is a dangerous option, however, as the gesture could be interpreted by the community as weakness. Forgiveness may just be the option of him who has no other choice. It is important for the injured family to make the public believe that they are forgiving for the right reasons and out of a position of strength. Of course, the stronger the family (measured by the size of the hamula, counting male members only) that has been injured and the weaker their attackers, the more plausible is the basis for magnanimity. Such magnanimous gestures as returning the diyyah are also easier for powerful families (for whom the enhancement of sharaf would be of greater benefit than the money) than for poorer families, who need the money to provide for the victim's children. It is fortunate that powerful families can claim to be magnanimous with relative ease. Indeed, without this cultural "resource" of magnanimity, it would be almost impossible for the powerful families to make peace. Generally the jaha finds it far more difficult to practice the strategy of reverse patron-client

relations when large and respected families have been attacked by smaller clans, since supplication and visits by important men have far less effect on them than on ordinary families. The former are not so impressed that important men have come to their home. They are therefore less embarrassed to refuse the requests of the jaha.

Similarly, when the powerful family is the aggressor, it is more difficult for the jaha to persuade them to pay the diyyah. Powerful families are supposed to feel more indignation from an affront, and it is potentially more damaging for them to back down into a conciliatory position. These families are more politically invested; their sharaf is more brittle. Fuad, a senior member of perhaps the wealthiest, largest, and most prestigious Muslim family in Israel declared, “We never make peace! A rich and powerful family does not make peace—it is a matter of sharaf.” According to him, a sense of indignation and outrage, the feeling of “how dare they touch us,” follows an attack on a big family by a less prominent one. One sulha leader compared such an attack to the assassination of the Kennedys. Fie took it that the horror with which the Kennedy assassinations were experienced in the United States was not only a consequence of the fact that the victims were from a rich, powerful, and respected family but also that they had been killed by nonentities. In the logic of the village, this status differential adds immense insult to the murder.

Even so, pronouncements of intransigence such as Fuad’s should not be taken literally; leaders of strong families desire sulha as much as anyone else. Despite the social pressures against accepting humiliation and belittlement, and regardless of status, any cycle of revenge that is not halted will result in the deaths of family members. The strong man resolves his dilemma by maintaining an uncompromising stance, and when he finally does acquiesce and agree to sulha, he plays heavily on the magnanimity of his action. Fuad himself went on to tell me about a number of sulha “exceptions” that his family had agreed to in recent decades.

The sulha ceremony ends with the signing of an official peace agreement by leaders from the two warring families, members of the jaha, and some of the other dignitaries present. The signatures of notables give the accord a weight it would not have if only the two families signed it. To break such an agreement is not only to go back on one’s publicly given pledge; it is also a direct insult to the jaha. When a sulha fails and hostilities resume between the two sides, this is a major blow to the prestige and sharaf of the men who brokered and signed the agreement. It is important not to have too many dignitaries sign the sulha agreement. If everyone’s sharaf is at risk then, in effect, no one’s is: breaking an agreement that a very large number of people has signed is not a direct affront to any one person’s sharaf. If, on the other hand, only a few select notables have signed, then breaking the contract would be a clear insult to them. With these high stakes, the two sides are under greater pressure not to disrupt the peace.

When the ceremony is over, certain actions are still required before villagers consider that

relations have “returned to normal.” The penultimate step is that the killer and his kin are taken to the home of the victim to drink bitter coffee, traditionally offered to guests as a symbol of hospitality. It is significant that the attackers go to the home of the victim for coffee because this places the victim’s family in the superior position of playing host. Being hospitable is always sharaf heightening for the host.[25] By placing the two sides in the positions of host and guest, the victims’ sharaf is raised, and the aggressors’ decreased one last time.

The family of the killer then invites the victim’s family to share in a feast at their home. If it is considered an honor to be the host, it is a still greater mark of prestige to have a costly and substantial meal arranged solely on one’s behalf. Thus, after sipping the bitter coffee, a respected elder of the aggressor’s family will say, “In the name of God, I invite you to eat with us today.” The men of the entire extended family of the victim and all the invited notables—a number that runs to hundreds, sometimes even thousands, of people—will go directly to the killer’s home and eat a meal that usually consists of rice and lamb. Each man tends to eat only a few bites of food as a symbolic gesture before he gives his place to one of the many others who are waiting. This feast completes the peacemaking ritual; it is the final sharaf transfer. The members of the victim’s family are shown respect as guests for whom this lavish feast was prepared and the aggressors, though forced to pay for this costly affair, are compensated somewhat by having what is considered the honor of preparing the meal.

Mending Social Bonds

Reconciliation rituals such as sulha are key moments in the constitution, reconstitution, and representation of a sociopolitical order broader and more general than those structures of alliance reinforced by feud. Sulha not only mends the social bonds between feuding families in a village, it articulates a solidarity extending to the entire community that takes seriously the goals and ideals represented by the ritual. Notables, witnesses, conflicting factions, and, indeed, the “public” at large—all are drawn into a network of social relations focused on perpetuating the peace made in the sulha. Feud “order” is factional; the order embodied in sulha is properly “social.” Indeed, one informant described the sulha practice as “an unwritten social contract.” Only through a sovereign disregard for the self-consciousness of social actors—that violence represents a breakdown of order and that order can and must be restored through rituals like sulha—can the structural-functionalist thesis be sustained.[26]

Consistent with this attitude toward peace and its disruption rooted in the social imaginary is the jaha’s[27] notion of a “pending sulha” *(sulha muallaqa).* A jaha member will never say that a case is irreconcilable or, as would structural-functionalists such as Black-Michaud, that it is an interminable clash. Rather, a reconciliation case will be deemed “pending” even if it has been

indeterminate for decades. A jaha notable told me that “1-2 percent of the murder cases still await closure,” but he held that eventually even these incidents will be concluded and order restored.[28] By the jaha elder’s definition, there is no such thing as an irresolvable murder case. One jaha leader puzzled over what he felt was a ridiculous American obsession with factual minutiae during the O.J. Simpson murder trial. For the jaha, murder cases are not about identifying, convicting, and suitably punishing killers per se; rather they are about bringing disputing sides back into “normal” peaceful relations.

Sulha then is about redressing an imbalance through a formalized routine to mark a new state of affairs; it creates and maintains peaceful relations. It is impossible to understand the practice of sulha without reference to the complex of assumptions, rules, and values associated with sharaf. Sulha is inextricably connected to sharaf, and in many ways is about maintaining, restoring, and negotiating respect and reputation. The logic of sharaf forms a set of assumptions and rules that are constitutive of the social practice of sulha.

Indeed, it is because sulha redresses the imbalance of sharaf created when one individual attacks another that revenge can be foregone. Sulha provides the injured party with another means to restore the family’s reputation through the mediation of local political leaders.[29] Sulha alleviates emotional and social pressures of a damaged reputation and serves as a valid alternative to retaliation. Yet, although the practice of sulha often serves as a viable alternative to revenge killing, sulha is not reducible to merely a revenge substitute. Revenge and sulha may have an interesting interplay and are not mutually exclusive alternatives; one rendering the other irrelevant. Even if a family opts for revenge, a sulha may subsequently take place. The victim’s family must choose to revenge or to reconcile with its enemies but if a family does take revenge, the fact that a sulha may still take place subsequently to solidify the balance suggests its broader significance. A case that occurred in Makir village, recounted by a jaha member, illustrates this point:

> In 1993, there was a killing of one man by a man from another family. The victim’s family refused to make peace. The jaha knew that the reason they were refusing to make peace was because they wanted to take revenge. And one year later the family of the man who was killed did take revenge. Then the jaha knew there would be sulha.

Rather than revenge rendering the sulha unnecessary or implausible, sulha stood as the obvious next step in finalizing an end to the violence. Because a murder had taken place on both sides, the official routine of the sulha ceremony involving set roles for the victims and killers was altered. A jaha elder explained:

> The family of the first victim wanted diyyah and acted as if the second (revenge) killing did

not require payment. But the jaha ruled that the two killings "canceled each other out." Since there were two killings there would be two diyyahs. They were for the same amount (100,000 NIS each). This was a very balanced sulha ceremony: the two families lined up facing each other and everyone shook hands with everyone from the other family. The flag was carried by the sheikh who was the leading and senior member of the jaha.

In this case, sulha did not act as a ritual alleviating one family from the burden of revenge while restoring their social standing. There did not have to be a show of humiliation on the killer's side, and begging of the jaha to intervene was unnecessary. Neither side had to be magnanimous because they had already proven their "strength." A jaha elder called this sulha "balanced" because the sharaf equation was equal. Still, we are left with the valorization of peace and the return to a "normal" state of affairs provided only by the sulha tradition. Thus, even though the jaha did not succeed in preventing the retaliatory murder, it was still necessary to carry out sulha to mark the end of the cycle. Both sides needed the sulha's persuasive force to forego future feuding.

Sulha more typically is about redressing an imbalance through a formalized routine to mark a new state of affairs. Ideally, the sulha process is effective at two broad levels of signification—the personal and the purely formal. At the personal level, engaging in sulha is, for many, a way of confronting and overcoming personal grief. At the formal level, however, the sulha's success in bringing an end to the conflict does not depend on the actual intentions or feelings of the participants. It does not matter if "their hearts are not clean (*ndiif*)." Where participants go through the motions of sulha begrudgingly, the formal language and gestures of the ritual maintain the appearance of remorse or forgiveness and lessen the chance of either side provoking the other. Sincerity is irrelevant because by participating in the sulha, the actors enmesh themselves in a web of social relations that will constrain them to observe the peace. To resume the conflict after the sulha proceedings are underway would be to disgrace one's family, to offend important regional notables deeply, and to shock public opinion. Occasionally this does occur, but such outbreaks are rare. The formal process of the ritual generally achieves the desired outcome of restored interpersonal and communal relations.

The ruling assumption of sulha is that what is valuable and normal is a state of peace and cooperation rather than a state of violence and conflict. In accordance with this perspective, the jaha espouses a belief in a basic human need to forgive. Informants often expressed the view that conflict is "exhausting" or "depleting" (*nazif)* and cannot be sustained for long. As one sulha leader put it when asked why certain parties wished to make peace, "Nobody can carry blood—it is so heavy." These notions of the weightiness of violence are allied to the sense that peace is natural and orderly and that conflict is unnatural and chaotic. Peace is a state of equilibrium,

disrupted on occasion by violence or conflict. According to the social discourse, things *cannot* remain indefinitely in this state of disequilibrium. Conflict is drawn back towards peace as if by a force of gravitation. The practice of sulha embodies a set of assumptions about the kind of relations that ought to exist between people in village society. These views of the social order are perpetuated with every sulha as they are represented, retold, and reinscribed in the minds of those who participate.

A Deviant Case Study[30]

In Touba, a Bedouin village in the north of Israel, a middle-aged Christian man known throughout the Galilee for his activities as a mediator and peacemaker sits next to an old Bedouin man from the Hujeirat tribe of Palestine as they and hundreds of others anxiously await the arrival of a small delegation from the Lebanese village of Bleedah. The expected party, ironically referred to as "avengers," travel to this border village to shake hands publicly with this old man, accept diyyah, and tell him that he is forgiven.

Forty-seven years earlier, in 1947, the Fiujeirat tribesman had murdered a twenty-two year old villager after a heated fight about who had the right to the last bed in a lodging house. This killer suffered from a guilty conscience throughout his life after this event and sought the advice of others as to how he could find solace. Fie had made the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) twice and given donations to the local mosque, but he was still plagued by nightmares. The murdered man was a relative of the Lebanese villagers now standing before him. Fellow Fiujeirat tribesmen had taken action on behalf of this troubled old man and contacted the victim's surviving relatives in the Lebanese village of Bleedah. Due to visa restrictions only the mukhtar and a few cousins then residing in Beirut were permitted to enter Israel. One peacemaking mediator present at the scene later remarked to me, "I saw a man growing old with fragile health, eyes deep with sadness, presenting himself in almost a begging way, as though to say, 'Please help me and free me from this terrible deed.'" The headlines of *Yediot Achronot* (Israeli newspaper) describing the event proclaimed dramatically: "Reborn at Age Eighty."

The Lebanese group arrives at about noon, January 24, 1994, and stands in the central square of the village. Flanked by notables, the killer is ushered in bearing a white flag as a symbol of surrender and peace. Fie and the hundreds of men with him all shake hands with the "enemies" and then hand over a purse of diyyah that contains approximately $12,000. Speeches are delivered by regional notables praising the Lebanese visitors as well as the elderly man for their willingness to make peace. When the ceremony is over the entire group retires to sip bitter coffee and partake of a meal of meat and rice.

This unique sulha story is instructive in a number of ways. First, it indicates how far an actual

case of reconciliation, though maintaining the sulha form, can deviate from the normative model of the practice. This case took the unusual path it did in part because of political realties. The two parties had no contact after being separated as a result of the 1948 war and finding themselves on opposite sides of the Lebanese-Israeli border. With decades gone by, the emotions of the victim's relatives had long subsided. Many from the younger generation knew only of the story but had never known the deceased personally—and so the sulha agreement itself was easy for the mediators to negotiate. The only difficulty lay in the fact that notables had to seek special permission from the Israeli government to permit the men from Bleedah to cross the border and accept diyyah.

But for all its atypicality, the case suggests how deep-seated is the valorization of peace and reconciliation that underlies the practice of sulha. The murderer paid a considerable sum of money to the family of the victim even though he had nothing to fear from them. He was not motivated by the wish to end a cycle of violence and save his sons but rather by a need to restore an internal equilibrium that had been "pending" for nearly half a century. Blood, it turned out, had been too heavy for him to carry.

Chapter Four

The Power of the Jaha: Constructing Political Authority in an Egalitarian World

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Part I

Introduction: The (in)equality paradox of sbaraf

Anthropologists have pointed out that Middle Eastern societies often display a tension between an egalitarian discourse that does not allow for overt displays of superiority of one member over the next, and the tangible, real existence of hierarchy, however informal. Dresch, for example, states, “Much of what people say in tribal Arab societies about local politics can seem thoroughly contradictory; on the one hand the values of opposition at every level are extolled and the idea that wrongs be righted only by the temporary coalition of ‘brothers’ against outsiders, but on the other hand the constant squabbles are condemned and someone powerful is looked for to end them …” (1984:31). The fundamental contradiction between an egalitarian discourse and existing inequalities among men is not an anthropological fabrication. In Israeli-Palestinian society, the discrepancy is inherent in, and turns on, two seemingly contradictory aspects of sharaf logic: sharaf serves as the basis for moral equality among men, but sharaf is also a resource that determines status and authority.

The fact that sharaf is important to every man implies a kind of equality among men: each feels that he has a right to and is worthy of such respect and this premise is fundamental to male humanity.[1] Presuming nothing has been done to ruin his sharaf, each man expects from his fellow man to be treated as a moral equivalent.[2] To kill someone then is more than the brute fact of murder, it is an act that challenges the victim and his family’s sharaf or right to respect as a commensurate entity.[3] As noted in the previous chapter, if a man murders another for any reason, the victims’ kinsmen question not only, “Why did you do this?” but, “Why did you do this *to me?* Am I not a man? Do I not deserve respect?”[4] Revenge and sulha are two means of restoring sharaf balance based on the egalitarian premise that all men have sharaf, an immeasurable quality that confers a basic and equal humanity onto the person.[5] Barth’s statement regarding the motivation for revenge among the Swat Pathans applies here: “[E]quality in retaliation is attempted … because such equality expresses a stalemate in power; it brings the feud to a halt by implying no loss of honor to either side, by *implying a basic egalitarianism among men*” (1969: emphasis mine).

The depiction of sharaf as the basis of personhood is a zero-sum concept—either one has it or

one does not. Thus men may speak of sharaf as something like a glass that can be shattered and instantly lost. My host dramatized this view during the first days of my arrival in Kamila when he clasped a *finjan* (coffee cup) in his hand, pounded it on the table, and warned me that any mistake (i.e., any socially inappropriate behavior) on my part would irreparably shatter his reputation. I understood that by allowing me to live in his home he was taking an enormous risk; he was jeopardizing his sharaf.

And yet there is another opposing sense in which sharaf is a scaled quality—one can have more or less of it.[6] This calibrated conception was apparent in statements frequently made by villagers about fellow men they admired, for example, "He is a big man. His sharaf is great." *(Hu rajil kibeer. Sharafbu a'atbeem.).* The deference common men display in the presence of esteemed men[7] attests to the measuring of a man's worth (and likewise larger entities such as his hamula and village) by the *quantity* of sharaf he is thought to possess.[8] Indeed although men worried about a complete loss of their sharaf, the process was not so total in actuality—I met and heard of men whose reputation had been damaged by suspect behavior but I never met a man who was disregarded by all members of society because of his complete loss of sharaf.[9] Likewise I knew men who were widely admired, but this too varied in degree and according to the different evaluating perspectives. Superiority, however, was constantly measured and judged in terms of perceived quantity of sharaf and this was the primary basis on which to claim status.

Bold status claims, however, are risky in this Arab society where men do not readily allow one man to take the lead over the next. Outstanding displays are affronts to other men, challenges to their rights and identity. For many men, particularly younger men, displays of machismo are common and significant because such shows are battles of strength and serve to define a young man and how he is distinguished from others. The man who, intentionally or not, stands above his fellow men puts himself in danger because he will be resented by competing and insulted others. As a symbol of "being in the lead," the strong man may become the victim in a larger power struggle between families or communities. Men kill each other for various reasons but underlying the particular problem of each case is the ambivalent notion of sharaf, a value that serves as the basis of both status and personhood.

Particularly in light of the zero-sum perspective on sharaf, a person's claim to high ranking entails a grave insult and challenge to all other men. When a man projects an air of superiority it is tantamount to him stating that other men around him have no sharaf; it is a denial of their humanity. Any boastful, proud, or antagonistic action may be understood by others as a challenge to their sharaf, and therefore to their fundamental legitimacy as men or human beings.[10] Kemal Ferris recounted the origins of an ongoing feud in the village of Abu Lisan in a story that typified the provocative power of arrogance. While on his way to work in Naharia many years ago, Kemal's uncle, Ahmed, was ambushed by a man named Na'if. According to

Kemal, the only reason why Na'if attacked Ahmed was that the latter appeared

> too manly. He looked too strong and too proud. He had a mustache like this (he indicates a long curling mustache) and he walked with pride. It was something purely physical, animal-like. "Why do you walk like this?" Na'if jeered. They wrestled and Na'if killed Sa'id just for the sake of "putting his nose to the ground" (bringing him down from his proud position).[11]

Kemal added, "Na'if had bragged that he would waylay Ahmed and 'bring him home tied up like a bull.' He actually took a rope with him that morning. And you know the outcome of that wrestling match."

Kemal's recollection illustrates that perceived arrogance, here symbolized by the mustache, proud walk, and physical strength of Ahmed,[12] is not easily tolerated by other men. The egalitarian discourse is so strong in this society that people who claim superiority or are thought to do so are often targeted by insulted others; the resentment Ahmed inspired was great enough to drive one man to attack and kill him. Ahmed's projection of conceit fundamentally threatened Na'if's own sense of self. To prove his own manliness, and consequently regulate the egalitarian ethos, Na'if reduced the "superior" man's status, or as my informant put it, "put his nose to the ground," showing that no one's sharaf is greater than his own.[13] It is ironic that men respond to violations of egalitarianism, that is, displays of arrogance they perceive in others, with equally virulent displays of their own male strength and power. Violations of the egalitarian ethos are met with like challenges of strength and goals of domination.

The Jaba:[14] An Exception to the Rule

Each man's sharaf entitles him to the same respect as every other man and yet there is one category of men who are generally accepted to have greater sharaf, status, and power than others. The striking exception to the intolerance for explicit inequality among adult men is the existence of jaha men. There are about a dozen men in the Galilee region who are routinely called upon to settle serious conflicts between families, especially those sparked by murder or physical injury.[15] These men comprise the *lajneb sulbiya* (arbitration committee), otherwise known as the "high jaha men," as they term themselves, or the "standing sulha committee," as Ginat terms them (1997:67). In addition, there are one or two men in every village who are consulted locally on more trivial matters of sulha or arbitration and who may serve from time to time on a jaha dealing with serious cases.[16] For the more weighty conflicts or if there has been an inter-village episode, notables from various villages of the region and even from distant regions may be called in to serve.

The jaha men are the established local leadership and power structure of this society and the elders who serve on the jaha are the primary power holders.[17] One elderly informant who regularly served on jaha committees explained, "Men of honor and authority make up a jaha. The word means 'delegation' and connotes 'respect.'" In the words of an informant outside the jaha circle, "The jaha are very strong; they are the most famous people in this area, much more so than the police or anyone else." The jaha's words and deeds are those of men confident in their powerful position. They make demands and do so in a forceful tone, for example, once when a delegation was arbitrating a case that split the village of Kufar Manda into two factions, an indignant jaha elder sought out the only non-partisan man of the village, a recent immigrant, and demanded, "Go and open your house! Must we sit down in the street?" "They have the right to do this," another notable present explained, "otherwise people would tell them, 'Thank you, I do not know you' and close their doors." Jaha men are not entirely set apart from other men, but like the sheikh figure of tribal societies, it is they who are socially sanctioned, more valued and esteemed than the rest. The jaha men are said to be "wise" *(aqaliyye);* they are considered to be society's most "famous" *(mashour)* and "great" *(kabir)* men.[18] Publicly these men command respect (*ikraam*), prestige *(sharaf),* and power *(quwah).*

As men of power it is not surprising that jaha leaders also tend to hold positions in the state's local government. Holding an official post is a useful tool and symbol of power and status. Yet the prestige and power of these publicly active men derives ultimately from their participation in sulha activity above all else. The evidence suggests that jaha mediation is an even more significant source of political authority than service in local government; the position of sulha mediator takes precedence over the mayorality. One of my informants, Ishmael, a young university-educated man with political ambitions, for example, told me matter-of-factly that "Ibrahim Nimr [Muhammed] is famous for his work as a jaha elder, for doing sulha, not because he is the mayor," and he was surprised that I would think otherwise. The relationship between Arab local government and sulha politics will be more fully explored in the next chapter but the point here is that jaha elders are generally considered to have a greater quantity of sharaf than other men, and that this fact is publicly acknowledged and accepted without difficulty.

Jaha men sire themselves as leaders through sulhas. Sulhas are public performances that may redress the sharaf imbalance between rival parties but they are also arenas where the highly esteemed male creates his persona; they are key acts of political self-fashioning. The question of public prestige is a fully male-centered one, for women are said to be too "important" to the group to be brought into sulhas, feuds, and politics in general (see Lancaster 1981:58 for similar sentiments among Bedouin). Everyone, however, in the community is involved in sulha to some extent, not just the two feuding parties. Virtually every adult male of the village observes the final sulha ceremonies. They listen as the jaha leaders make speeches; the former watch as the

latter stand before the others, tying knots and signing contracts. The physical focal point of the sulha, notably, is not the two clashing parties but rather the jaha leaders themselves.[19] The members of the disputing families sit in the audience among the other men while the jaha leaders sit or stand apart from the others, at the front of the room or public setting. The jaha men are given the floor to recite grandiose speeches into microphones about the ideals and necessities of communal peace, reinforcing a connection between social morality and the speaker's dedication to these ideals. Listeners remember the man who served on the jaha as one who is morally outstanding, who spends his time laboring to bring disputing parties to reconciliation; he becomes known throughout the region for his sharaf and competence in handling disputes.

At a certain point in the sulha proceedings it is clear that the jaha's "assistance in calming, comforting, and protecting" the family members, as leaders describe it, is more accurately depicted as an exertion of power. While they have no weapons or brute force to coerce people and no judicial office from which to impose rulings necessarily, people succumb to the pressure of the jaha leaders' sharaf. It is difficult for a man to refuse the request of a more prestigious man. If the sharaf of one elder is not powerful enough to attain a sulha agreement, the collective force is hard to resist. The weight of the requests made by prestigious men seeking sulha, and the sheer number of times they come to the home builds up to the point where the family feels it cannot decline their wishes. Ultimately, it becomes a social embarrassment to not do what the jaha wants. It is more difficult for one to refuse men with sharaf than to not take revenge. Furthermore, the family that agrees to begin sulha proceedings cannot easily break their agreement. "Breaking one's promise to the jaha is disgraceful; in 99% of the cases men will respect their 'word of honor.'" Jaha leaders are powerful.

Sulha processes, including the jaha's actions, may previously have been discounted as politically significant by scholars because these practices are not officially incorporated into state structures. The state does not give any formal recognition to the indigenous practices either at the national or local level.[20] The sulha system and the actions on the part of jaha leaders, however, must be incorporated into any anthropological study of local politics because they above all else comprise real power and relations of power on the ground.[21] Jaha men's activity in sulha is the key means by which authority is constituted and status built in this society.

Power, defined here as the ability to influence others and persuade them to settle their disputes through sulha, is invested in men with idealized leadership qualities: being wise, generous, benevolent, socially-engaged peacemakers. In this post-liberal definition of politics there is no presumed split between state and society; as feminist literature has argued the personal is political. Political relations, in this sense, are found within domestic, local, and national arenas. Furthermore the public-private distinction that still inflects much western understanding of Arab politics is irrelevant in this society where sharaf is a central inter-subjective value informing both

public politics and a personal sense of self.

Comparative Analyses

Before delving further into the discussion of jaha elders and the way they mediate sociopolitical contradictions, I will briefly discuss and comment on Abu-Lughod's exposition of parallel issues and what she puts forward as social resolutions of the egalitarian-hierarchy contradiction. Abu-Lughod states that for the Awlad 'Ali tribesmen of northern Egypt there is a tension between the hierarchy and autonomy exhibited in social relations and the rhetoric of egalitarianism: "Although this social system is often touted as highly egalitarian, and is indeed more egalitarian than many, the realities of power differences are inescapable, especially within the family and lineage" (1986:78).[22] Women, referred to as *wliyya* ("under the protection"), are always dependents of men (1988:80-81). The contradictory relationship between autonomy and hierarchy is likewise manifest in the social division between the Sa'adi and Mrabtin tribes. Until recently the latter "tied" tribes paid tribute to the former "free" ones, had no territorial ownership rights, and depended on their patrons for usufruct. Presently the hierarchical distinction remains based on ancestry. Hierarchical structures are also apparent within tribes, primarily between seniors and juniors, and this is likewise linked to control of resources (e.g., wells, land). Senior men make decisions and arrange marriages for juniors; they control all gatherings and youth defer to them.

The contradiction of egalitarianism-hierarchy among men is reconciled by tribal members, according to Abu-Lughod, through the employment of two overlapping ideological complexes: the kinship idiom, and notions of honor and morality. First, all relations of inequality are phrased and conceived of in terms of a kinship model that emphasizes protection, care, and responsibility (cf. Lancaster 1981:119-123, for a similar analysis among the Rwala). Through analogy with the family, the qualities believed to inhere in family relations are rhetorically or metaphorically transferred to those outside the family (1986:81). As Abu-Lughod explains:

> The familial idiom downplays the potential conflict in relations of inequality by suggesting something other than simple domination versus subordination. It replaces opposition with complementarity, with the forceful notions of unity and identity, emphasizing the bonds between family members: love and identity. Even more important, the familial idiom suggests that the powerful have obligations and responsibilities to protect and care for the weak. The weaker members are epitomized by the helpless infant, and by extension all children, and dependents of the strong. This responsibility of the strong is, in the familial idiom, motivated not only by a sense of duty but also by concern and affection. Thus, inherent in the division between weak and strong is a unity of affection and mutual concern.

> The key terms of this rationale legitimizing inequality are dependency and responsibility, embedded within a moral order (1986:82).

At first glance it may appear implausible that in a society where autonomy is such a central value, the metaphor of familial dependency could structure relations between adult men of different families. On reflection, however, the point Abu-Lughod makes is valid if one considers that the only form of dependency that is unproblematic and even obligatory is that of relations within the family. Therefore in order to legitimize relations of dependency that occur across families, it makes sense to couch the inequalities in terms of kinship relations.[23] Furthermore, the relationship of fathers and sons and even more so that of elder and younger brothers, although it does suggest a fixed hierarchical relation, also highlights moral duty and mutuality and deemphasizes aspects of dominance (1986:82). All relations of inequality in Arab societies—Abu-Lughod focuses on male-female and secondarily on patron-client lineages—are expressed in these kinship terms (1986:82-83).

Second, the hierarchy-egalitarianism tension is further mediated, according to Abu-Lughod, through notions of morality. Virtue forms a basis for hierarchical social divisions: "… [A]uthority derives neither from the use of force nor from ascribed position, but from moral worthiness. Hierarchy is legitimated through beliefs about the disparate possession of certain virtues or moral attributes" (1986:85). Awlad ʻAli men of high social status are viewed as self-controlled, even-tempered, patient, dispassionate, and fair, embodying (*agl* or wisdom (collectively they are known as ʻ*awaagil*). They display apparent impartiality being set off from the social entanglements of the engaged conflicting and reconciling parties. The fact that persons who are so distinguished are universally of advanced age, substantial wealth, and male gender does not contradict the fact that their status must still be personally achieved; these are the necessary conditions for status distinction but they do not guarantee precedence. "Individuals must earn the respect on which their positions rest through the embodiment of their society's moral ideals … [they must] demonstrate these virtues, and that they are entitled to the respect that validates and establishes their social precedence" (1986:86).

Abu-Lughod subsumes all moral qualities under the umbrella concept of "honor" and contends that honor is the sum of all moral virtues that give a man a right to higher social status. I suggest, however, that "honor" or sharaf is a more complex concept and should not so readily be conflated with the possession of certain virtues. Abu-Lughod's argument that notions of honor *mediate* the egalitarianism-hierarchy tension is circular because "honor" or sharaf is the very basis for the tension itself. As I have outlined, there is a contradiction at the heart of the category with sharaf as a right to respect possessed by all adult males, sharaf as a zero-sum quality, and sharaf as the basis for a graded social status. At one pole of meaning, the possession of sharaf

demands that the possessor feel insulted at the claim of any other man to social superiority over him. At the other pole, sharaf is precisely a kind of social superiority recognized and legitimated by all adult males. Abu-Lughod's view that a notable man's possession of sharaf legitimizes his superiority, and thereby mediates the contradiction between egalitarianism and hierarchy, begs the question of the basis for this tension. Furthermore, while Abu-Lughod shows that virtuous qualities must be ascribed to a man in order to justify his high status, she does not explain what precisely a man must do to attract such a reputation initially—she does not explore the actual politics of becoming a high-status male. Flow does a man achieve this notable reputation? Through what actions in the world does a man come to be seen by others as one who possesses 'agi, sharaf, and other moral virtues? Abu-Lughod mentions that arbitrators are the most respected men of society (1986:91) but she does not explore the issue further.

Shryock (1990) argues that the apparent contradiction of, or at least complication posed by, Muradi sheikhs being prestigious and powerful, higher up in the informally existing hierarchy, and the indigenous conception of men being autonomous equals already ordered through segmentation "dissolves" once analysts turn to indigenous accounts and practices. The "enigma," he says, arises only as a product of reductionist theories that view political order in crude, simplified structural terms. I agree with much of Shryock's critique as well as his prescription. Yet I would argue that the tension itself does not "dissolve" or disappear so much as it is rendered intelligible because it is located in indigenous conceptual tensions of egalitarianism and hierarchy. The contradiction still exists; the point is not to show that people live in a world free of dissonant views. Rather they manage with their contradictions through the manipulations of ambiguous concepts, and these tensions become sensible to analysts only by turning to the indigenous discourses and viewing how the actors themselves negotiate the holding of conflicting views.

Part II

Mediating the Contradiction: A Closer Inspection of Sulha and its Leadership

So how do Israeli-Palestinian men of the jaha get away with exhibiting more sharaf than other men? Why are they, at least outwardly, revered for their high status rather than resented for it? Why is their privileged social ranking permissible rather than being considered an affront to others? Why is it unpalatable for men to counter jaha leaders publicly and unthinkable to harm them. The answers are found in a closer inspection of the creation, character, and image of the jaha leader and the procedures of sulha.

To begin, jaha men create their image against a gendered other, most obviously, these men invent themselves against the female other; the negotiations and ceremonies of sulha are fully a male arena. Only men are involved in the socially active business of disputing and reconciling; woman do not serve on any jaha and do not participate in sulha ceremonies directly, except perhaps as spectators during the public processions. Informants, both male and female, expressed the view that women generally do not have as much wisdom or political intelligence as men, though people tended to qualify their statements by pointing to exceptional women. The patriarch of one of my host family puzzled over my request to meet with more women (in addition to those in his extended family) because he knew I was interested in political matters. “Why waste your time with women? What do they know about politics?”

The high status men of the jaha also create their persona in opposition to the other “common men” of society—those they reconcile and the ceremonial witnesses. As it does with young aggressive men who may exact revenge on enemies, the construction of the prestigious peacemaking male fully relies on sharaf. Nevertheless sharaf manifests and plays out quite differently in these alternative formations of male identity. The jaha leader’s character is not that of the burly male; he cannot afford to swagger, exhibit pride, or do any of the things that young men do that get them in trouble. Politics of sulha rather is an extension of the idea of gravitas. Gravitas is about aggrandizing ones’ sharaf without making explicit claims to be doing so; it is the archetype of ideal behavior for older men after they have matured beyond the explicit posturing of young ruffians.

Furthermore, there is an interdependent relationship between the construction of the youthful strong man (who makes risky claims to greater sharaf) and the creation of the wise and controlled jaha elder. Indeed the structure and process for crafting elder men of distinction fully relies on the institutions of feud and violent behaviors of young men that create problems for the

jaha men to solve. Many of the jaha leaders themselves were involved in disputes when they were younger before their temperament and values shifted to the antithetical sharaf paradigm as they aged. Sheikh Kasem, a prestigious Druze sheikh and jaha elder, took revenge on the man who killed his father when he (Sheikh Kasem) was a child. This subsequent murder led to sulha reconciliation eventually. This kind of story was all too common; another prestigious Muslim elder, Abu Saleh, recounted a gripping tale of how at age eighteen he took revenge and killed the man who had murdered his father when he (Abu Saleh) was a young boy.[24]

The sulha provides the men of the jaha with a legitimate framework in which to increase their sharaf and wield power. The kind of power that Israeli-Palestinian society can best tolerate is that of the "neutral" arbitrator because it accords with the egalitarian premise, or at least it does not jarringly challenge it. These local leaders lack any formal recognition, the reigns of their power are not readily visible, and this allows social actors to hold on to a façade of equality of men. Elderly men have a politics of sulha because any other kind of political institution would not be socially acceptable. In sulha, the inequality between individuals that gets created is not fully apparent; it gets hidden behind the dominant discourse of the ceremony that expresses social values of peace, equality, and balance between disputing parties. The first line of sulha is that it creates equals among men. The raising of the jaha's status is conveniently overlooked by participants as a circumstantial or unintended side effect. Popular discourse can hold that there are no superiors in daily life situations, each man can feel himself to be autonomous and independent, and that it is only in these exceptional moments of sulha one finds certain men above the rest.

Yet in these temporary and carefully constructed contexts of sulha, jaha men do achieve power and authority. They exhibit substantial powers to command other men to their will, and the prestige and authority they create in moments of sulha does in fact endure beyond the given moment. In this section, I revisit a central question that has been raised by anthropologists: How can political authority, defined here as legitimate power of one man over another, exist in a society of equals? I turn primarily to discourses of indigenous leaders—their actions, attitudes, and words—and the indigenous politics of sulha for answers. Based on the premise that the key arena in which a man can legitimately construct a persona of leadership is in performing sulha mediations, I examine the making and functioning of jaha elders as society's political authorities. Specifically, I look at the rhetoric of disinterestedness and impartiality that is expressed by men when they discuss the route to becoming and the act of being a jaha notable, as well as the discourse of equality and voluntarism that pervades the sulha process itself. I contrast claims of disinterestedness with evidence of the jaha elder's vested interest in performing sulha and the imposing rather than apparently pacific nature of their power. My decision to focus on the construction of jaha personhood is not a random one for the primary route to becoming a notable

man in Israeli-Palestinian life is through sulha activities. By exploring how the jaha leader's power operates, I address not only the question of how these men construct their authority with sharaf, but also how their quest for high rank comes to be acceptable to others. In short, I seek to explain how this particular form of sharaf power makes social sense and mediates the egalitarian-hierarchy contradiction in Israeli-Palestinian society.

Part II

The Route to Becoming a Powerful Jaha Elder

When I asked jaha men how they came to find themselves in their notable role they emphasized that they had not actively sought the position, dissociating themselves from any illegitimate quest for power on their part. One of my informants claimed that "any respectable and notable member of the community may be invited to join the jaha if he appears to have an aptitude for the task." The accent here must be on "respectable" and "notable" for as I argued in this and the previous chapter, it is only the possession of a large amount of sharaf that permits the jaha man to effect mediations. In highlighting men's equal access to jaha activity, my informant neglected to mention that there is not equal opportunity to attain a respected reputation. Jaha men, in fact, are generally recruited from the "most respectable" families of the community, which means that jaha notables commonly inherit their role as mediators from their fathers who were respected before them for performing similar roles.

Some notables claimed that this heavy responsibility was "pushed on them by fate," by factors over which they had little if any control. One of my hosts, a high jaha man, offered a personal and moving account of how he came to be involved in jaha activity by stepping into his father's shoes:

> I was not interested [in sulha] at that time [when he was a child]. It was boring … but the development of sulha in my mind was a growing process. All the time my father was alive, I would go to the sulhas but much more as a witness or apprentice, learning. You cannot just decide to go as a sulha person, it must be passed to you and it requires experience and natural wisdom. It was like this until my father passed away, or just a little before. I would go on his behalf, not on my own, as long as my father was still alive. And I liked it that way because there was less responsibility, and it is a heavy responsibility. So as long as my father was there I felt easy and comfortable, even if it really was just me going.
> My father passed away in 1989, and since that time I have really been "in the chair." I did not think that I would carry all this on, I did not think so and every one is different, but in my case I feel like I was fated, this was my destiny that I could not escape or run from. The minute my father passed away I felt all the millions of eyes on me, because you know people came to offer condolences 40-50-60 days, delegations from all over the country, and I could hear in their words: "This is your role." I felt that I could not escape it, even if I wanted to. I could not take out an advertisement in the paper saying "Thank you for the great honor but please no…." My wife received hundreds of phone calls from people we did

> not know, and I could not say "no," unless I escaped the country. And now I cannot even leave for a few months. When I told my colleagues that I am going to the United States for 25 days they jumped and said "that's too long!"

My informant claimed to have had little or no desire to become a jaha elder but nevertheless was drawn into it over time; popular pressure almost forced him to follow in his father's footsteps. He may have felt that he had little choice or control over his life, but the fact of the matter is that most men will not have this option or opportunity. Although there are no hard rules for how one can become a member of this exclusive club, men frequently become jaha elders when they are repeatedly exposed to the process as an insider, the community associates them with it, and they have the role passed to them by their fathers.

Several jaha men told me that they came to serve in this position as a matter of "inclination." This implies that becoming a jaha elder is a matter of choice; that any man who feels he is a good mediator and able to deal with all the burdens can become a jaha elder. Reality differs from representation, however, for this is simply not the case. Men are usually willing and even anxious to become jaha members and to mediate conflicts in a show of benevolent service. As one jaha elder pointed out, "Many people ask to join the jaha…. They think that this is the way to lift their status, that this is a place to achieve personal status or benefits…." Not all who are so "inclined," however, are permitted to participate precisely because it *is* a place to lift one's status. Indeed the existing jaha men are extremely selective in who they will co-opt in any given case for jaha involvement.

"We Do This in the Service of God": The motives and qualities of jaha men

Jaha members do not flaunt their superiority. Indeed they avoid the claim to permanent status differentiation that wealth and especially the display of it might imply. Conspicuous consumption marks someone as a person who is claiming distinction and the jaha is anxious to avoid association with that kind of claim. To express a distinction from others through shows of wealth may be perceived as displaying a sentiment that one is superior to other men and this runs against the assertion of equality among men that ironically the jaha too must maintain. Thus wealth is far from an automatic entry ticket into the jaha circle of prestige and in fact is generally a hindrance. For the jaha leaders to admit and foreground their elite status as exemplified so concretely through monetary displays would be to open the door to suspicions that they personally gain from their prestigious position and that their beneficent actions are motivated by personal gain.

One established jaha leader recounted his hesitations about the participation of a particular

wealthy man in the jaha activities of a case. The wealthy individual's sincerity was questioned and his participation in any respect on the jaha was barred:

> One day we were involved in a Bedouin case. We were supposed to go to this remote Bedouin settlement in my old VW, which was a strong car but the Bedouins were living on the top of the mountains on a rocky, hilly place and I was not sure if we would make it. And a man there said he wanted to help. He was not part of the jaha but wanted to be a part of it. These rich people, these nouveau riche who have a lot of money, their bank account is very thick, and their cars are new. I looked at his beautiful clothes and outside at his beautiful new car, a new Pontiac, and I thought, "No way."

Established jaha leaders are wary of these conspicuous status-seekers because the status a man gains from sulha is not supposed to be a concern to him.

While jaha men express distrust of wealthy men and the corruption of the latter's motives, and generally downplay the connection between possession of wealth and being a mediator, the obvious contradiction is that the jaha consists of men who enjoy financial comfort. Though the status that comes with being viewed as a jaha man is certainly not coterminous with possession and displays of material wealth, there is, however, the fact that this work requires considerable material means. One cannot spend one's time engaging in sulha if one has other work or if one is without a source of income; one needs time and money to travel constantly, to receive visitors daily and provide food and hospitality for them. To serve as a regular jaha elder requires that one does not hold another time-consuming career; serving on the "standing committee" is a full-time commitment and leaves little room for other work in the jaha man's life.

Every jaha leader I knew claimed that his sulha involvement was religiously inspired, and that religious faith continues to be a significant factor in why he carries out sulha work. These men—be they Christian, Muslim, or Druze—uniformly expressed a religious sensibility about their role. Certainly sulha leaders do not have to be religious clergy and those involved in religious institutions are not necessarily serving on jahas or in local councils. Yet each member of the jaha ties his sulha endeavors to conceptions of performing good works, carrying out God's wishes, and seeking favor in God's eyes. As one of my informants told me, "Jaha men are doing this for God's sake." Sheikh Muhammed, a Muslim jaha elder, explained to me at length that he and the others carry out this work solely in the service of God and for the good of the community, while underscoring the point that these leaders themselves receive no benefit whatever. In his following statement the connection between religion and sulha is apparent:

> I have been doing sulha for about forty years. All the time there are many problems, and every time there must be reconciliation—there is no year that passes without a sulha. There

> are many problems, and because people trust me they ask me to intervene and so I do my best. We do as much as God makes it possible for us to do *(b'amal illi allah biqarderni alay)* Even though we can do many things, we are subordinate to God, our power is only from God, all depends on God.

One Greek Orthodox jaha elder made frequent references in his public speeches to the wisdom and power of God. Privately he explained that he does not believe in Church, a Christian God, or any organized religion, and that his spiritual beliefs were personal, between himself and a higher power.

I am not concerned here to make assessments as to whether or not any jaha elder is sincere when he states that he is driven solely by a sense of ethical or religious duty—he may or may not be. The point is that in a society that is suspicious of political hierarchy, the fact that jaha elders promote themselves and are considered religious men makes them more tolerable leaders—to the extent that their morality or religiosity is the basis of what makes them outstanding, their power is less threatening to others' sense of equality. Their power is founded on a quality to which all men are supposed to aspire. Religion shrouds them from being perceived as status seekers; it makes them "natural" leaders, closer to God, and less likely to be perceived as having a vested interest in aggrandizing personal sharaf. Thus, religious affinity is a necessary part of the public discourse of disinterestedness.

The Rhetoric of Sacrifice

Altruistic image-building was continually displayed in the jaha's efforts to impress on me, and more subtlety on others, the burdensome and sacrificial nature of their undertakings. The selfless man taking on weighty humanitarian projects at cost to him is not likely to be labeled a man attempting to climb the political ranks. Many of my jaha informants complained that they have no private life. One leader told me that he frequently uses his car to travel distances that required no more than a five minute walk. If he went on foot it might take him hours to travel even a very short distance, for he would have to stop, greet, and chat politely with everyone he met along the way. He would receive dozens of invitations to come into neighbor's homes, to sit, eat, and drink coffee. The following excerpt from a conversation with this jaha man illustrates that he construes his life as given over to the public and the frustrations that this entails:

> I am not free, I have no privacy, people spot me even at midnight, and it is not just in this town, also in the other villages: "We saw Abu Wasim at 12 am, here, at this point…." It is not my life. My life is not my own, it is owned by all people. Believe me it is difficult, it is tough. You think I do not want to go to the beach? I like to drink. I'd like to be on my own

> or go to a party—but how can I do it? "Abu Wasim is drunk" will be the comments. The Jatt people will say, "No, no, no, not this man. …[25]

According to jaha men, their self sacrifice may entail humiliation, injury, or in one extreme case, death.[26] I was told that jaha elders, who routinely place themselves in the middle of volatile situations, frequently become the targets of displaced anger: "By going to the victim's home immediately after the crime has been committed, the jaha members recognize and are fully aware of the dangerous position they are putting themselves in."[27] As one leader recollected:

> Many years ago in a case in Shefa 'Amr, the women of the victim's family ran to the roof of their home and poured ashes on the approaching jaha. They were upset because of the loss of their family member, and they wanted nothing to do with some group coming to reconcile them with the enemy.

This conception of burden and sacrifice is both a statement of fact and an ideological justification for the greater respect and authority these men enjoy in a society with a deeply egalitarian self-conception. Undoubtedly it is true that serving on the jaha is a demanding role—leaders reported to me that they had to make between 25 and 30 trips over the course of half a year in order to resolve one case, and that this time-investment was by no means exceptional. But the point is further that the jaha members *must* construe their role as self sacrificing, onerous, demanding, and unrewarding. It is part of the way they maintain to themselves and to their community that they engage in this work only because it is morally correct and God's will and not because they have anything worldly to gain. They cannot themselves believe nor have others see their involvement as self-serving at all. This martyrdom quality aids in constructing an altruistic image. If their character is viewed as selfless, the possibility that the jaha elders are doing sulha for some other, individualistic reasons, such as to advance their own power, remains unap-parent and unexpressed.

Although sulha leaders with whom I had become friendly frequently shared their complaints with me in private quarters and construed their role as a burdensome one requiring a high measure of self sacrifice and discipline, they rarely voiced these sentiments to members of their community, other than very close kin or friends.[28] Discontentment from the continual self-sacrifice was not voiced in public and emerged only in the context of confidential conversations for the following reasons: First, stoicism is a major part of their notion of what it is to be a "wise" man. Complaining to other villagers would conflict with the gravitas ideal central to their own legitimacy: one who whines cannot be seen as a great man. Thus jaha men do not complain, at least not loudly, even if they feel encumbered because it would damage their sharaf and hence threaten their prestigious position. Second, if the jaha elders heavily protested the onus of sulha,

people might dwell on the reasons why they continue to carry out this drudgery. One possible answer, "Fie does burdensome, philanthropic deeds because he is a morally superior man," leads to an ambiguous reaction—sometimes moral superiority is admired, and other times it is considered threatening. Another thought too might arise: that these men must be gaining something from performing sulhas. The implications of either response are to be avoided. By "suffering" without complaint, jaha elders further gain moral superiority and are seen as the selfless souls that they projected to me.

The Rhetoric of Morality and Disinterestedness

The role of the jaha elder is not that of a presiding judge. Such a vocation with abilities of overt and definitive rule would render hierarchy explicit and therefore could not be tolerated by those subject to judgment. Though in certain respects these men serve in a judicial capacity—jaha men profess to listen to all sides, scrutinize and discuss the details of the case, and then formulate final and binding decisions—the elders do not judge others or their deeds per se. From their perspective, jaha elders aim simply to formulate a solution to the problem, and one that will satisfy both parties. Based on customary law, they decide the amount of compensation to be paid from the attacking party to the victimized family in order that the conflict may be resolved. They maintain firmly that they do not determine guilt or innocence. Such facts are rarely in question and for those cases where the actions of a given man or group of men are uncertain, this still is not the focus of the jaha's proceedings or concerns. Neither is the jaha overly interested in motives or causes of the crime. One jaha member equated the search for factual details with "gossip" and "speculation."[29] The jaha's stated aim and focus is solely conflict resolution and the easiest means whereby this may be accomplished.[30]

One means by which Israeli Palestinians create jaha elders as acceptable authority figures is to downplay the superiority of these local leaders. The notables are not considered to be of a different type, set apart or demarcated with title, office, or baraka. Nor are these men viewed as radically different from other men in terms of character traits. Rather than extraordinary, the notable man is said merely to have more of the same, ordinary qualities that every other man possesses. While jaha men are outstanding, they are also just extreme forms of everyman.[31] Similarly the qualities of the Muradi tribal sheikh, according to Shryock, are the same qualities aspired to and expected of all men, yet no one, including successful leaders, fully achieves these goals. Sheikhs, like ordinary men, approximate the ideals only imperfectly (1990:153).

When speaking of himself and his role, a jaha elder deemphasizes that which springs from his individuality as a charismatic leader. Any unique, personal qualities he may feel he possesses are denied in a self-effacing show of modesty. One leader, for example, represented his mediation

skills as the ability "to speak to the natural laws of justice and equality, to elicit the goodness in every person," thereby crediting others with the qualities for success rather than himself. Jaha notables are not self aggrandizing in any way; they do not loudly proclaim their power, leadership, or superiority over others. This is important if their high status is to be accepted in society at large and not viewed as an illegitimate challenge to the value of egalitarianism.

On the other hand, in a somewhat contradictory fashion, the equation of the jaha with certain forms of superiority, namely moral worthiness, is a basis for constructing power and distinctive position in a manner that does not offend other men. By performing these mediations, the jaha leaders construct themselves as men who embody moral virtue and are thus almost beyond reproof. The ethical measure is more permissible than if power were based on other formal markers (which may or may not entail a moral dimension). As Black-Michaud (1977) suggested, political authority is closely associated with "honor," but contrary to Black-Michaud's emphasis, this "honor" for Israeli Palestinians is derived as much from "moral" qualities as from the ability to command force. The jaha men legitimate their political authority by pursuing a moral course similar to the high men of the Awlad ʻAli Bedouin of the Western Desert of Egypt who must act in accordance with "the moral virtues of the honor code" to achieve, legitimize, or maintain a high place in the social hierarchy. For Awlad ʻAli Bedouin, authority derives "neither from the use of force nor from ascribed position, but from moral worthiness." One's reputation is based on the display of Bedouin virtues, and not merely on wealth or the control of resources alone (Abu-Lughod 1986:97). Ultimately one cannot make a clear distinction between moral authority and political authority because the latter is founded by apparent pursuit of a moral course.

The fact that jaha elders are outwardly touted and treated as exceptionally virtuous men does not imply that privately they are always held as such. In confined circles people do sometimes express negative sentiments regarding these "respected" men. For example, with respect to one rather articulate and loquacious jaha leader, an informant stated with a touch of spite, "Fie thinks he is Shakespeare." In another situation regarding a highly notable leader, several members of the community shockingly told me, "No one really respects him," and, "Fie is not an honest man." One young Muslim man mocked these elders as "ancient," indicative of how "backwards" Arabs are, and yet, all of these very same critics socially interacted with jaha elders as if they considered the latter to be great men, showering them with respect and speaking to them with humility. When one young man who frequently made critical remarks about jaha elders was reproached by a jaha elder for driving in the town late at night, he bowed his head, apologized, and asked the elder for forgiveness showing him nothing but unmitigated respect.

Most members of society publicly uphold an idealized conception of the jaha elder as the embodiment of a moral, virtuous, and altruistic public servant, even if they privately do not believe this to be true. There is a consensus to perpetuate this image of morality, to "respect"

jaha men, and allow this reputable character portrayal to legitimate their higher status even if some social actors recognize that these elders do in fact have political motivations or lack ethical concern altogether. Members of the community conspire in the covering up of any apparent concerns of power that the jaha notables may have, and maintain the latter's image as fair-minded public servants, men of impeccable sharaf.[32] All bow to social pressures and respect these men. The willingness of others to go along with this image of the disinterested jaha leader makes sense because all are invested in mediating the egalitarian-hierarchy contradiction by eliding realities of power. By creating this nonaligned persona, the community ignores the possibilities of personal investment, maintains the egalitarian standard, and softens the realities of hierarchy.

As discussed above, sulha involvement is projected by jaha leaders as religiously inspired altruistic service when they depict their work to social analysts, others in the community, and themselves. Jaha notables do not openly acknowledge that participation in peacemaking augments their prestige and power in the community and certainly would disavow any interest in seeking such personal gains. They may react defensively if it is implied that they are motivated at all by egoistic considerations. When I asked a respected elder from Nahef village who is known for his sulha activity, why he carries out this type of work, I expected him to reply dispassionately that his motivations were personal, religious, social, or some combination thereof. Instead he responded heatedly: "Jaha members get *nothing* from doing this work!" He misunderstood my question as an accusation of personal gain.

Although these men disavow any interest in power, and are careful that their actions are not represented as a quest for status and authority, the question of self-interest is raised by the fact that they do gain in sharaf and power with every sulha settlement. When jaha notables make sacrifices and assume obviously heavy responsibilities, these burdens also work to their personal advantage. The jaha members are being examined during these instances and have an opportunity to demonstrate great sharaf and (*aql* (intelligence, wisdom) by the way they are judged to handle volatile situations. A calm response in the face of crisis, for example, garners admiration:

> When the women poured ashes on the jaha, the members did not respond with like anger. Rather they said, "We take the anger on ourselves," illustrating the true patience and tolerance required on the part of the jaha. The wisdom of this response induced shame *(ar)* in the family of the victim and they changed their minds.

By serving on the jaha, the already high status of these men is affirmed and increased because the public recognizes them as upstanding, honest, and wise men—men of sharaf. With every

sulha in which they participate, their fame is spread, their status reinforced. So strong and extensive are regional networks of communication that, within the Galilee, there would be a high degree of consensus as to which men are, or have the reputation of being, straightforward, honest, and decent.

Exposed Contradictions: Unveiling the Vested Interest in Sulha

Ethnographic evidence indicates that jaha members pursue sulhas for reasons beyond their stated aims of maintaining peace, namely, because they themselves have a vested political interest, at least some of the time. Furthermore, the power that they gain from sulha activity often is more than an unintended result of reconciliation activity. Jaha elders are acutely aware of and interested in this highly sought benefit. Their concerns and sensitivity regarding their own sharaf may in some moments even be primary, despite the fact that certain discourses—those of morality, religiosity, and disinterestedness—are ardently and uniformly maintained.

On rare occasions, the jaha elder's desire to increase and maintain his own power becomes exposed, allowing one to capture the discrepancy between the image of public service and disinterestedness, and the reality of personal investment. In one such instance a prestigious leader had long been laboring to convince the victim's family to agree to a sulha. After years of unsuccessful efforts, the attacker's side directly appealed to a more important sheikh from abroad for additional assistance. The foreign sheikh visited the home of the victims personally and "begged" them to cooperate. His appearance made a strong impression on the victim's family and immediately thereafter they agreed to the sulha proceedings. When the head of the jaha delegation heard that the family was now ready to make peace, he was furious. He had not worked for years to obtain the sulha agreement only to have his prize and glory usurped by this more important sheikh. He demanded that the victims postpone any public announcement of their agreement to sulha, at least for a short while, in order that their decision not appear so obviously connected with the other sheikh's involvement. When the victims were uncooperative the infuriated jaha elder exploded: "What! Perhaps you will invite me to eat meat!"[33] This rhetorical question voiced the elder's fury at being publicly humiliated—juxtaposed with the other man's superior strength, everyone would see that he (the former) was ineffectual and powerless. The jaha leader's angry outburst at being upstaged and reduced to the role of guest, if that, was a rarely captured exposure of a jaha elder's emotional and egoistic concerns of self-aggrandizement. Peace could wait, it was more important to the notable that the sulha agreement appear to the wider audience as the result of his sharaf.

Indeed, public morality may tie into corruption often; one may be the flip side of the other. Ginat (1997) narrates several case studies of sulhas that expose or at least strongly imply the

political-personal motivation behind a jaha member's moves. In one case Ginat reports that the mediator postponed a sulha intentionally allowing the situation to remain unsolved and dangerous for the family of the killer in order to serve his own electoral objectives. The perpetuation of the dispute at hand was a means of keeping the killer's family in debt to the mediator, and ensuring the continuing political (i.e., patronage, electoral) support of its members until the upcoming local elections took place (1997:64). In another case Ginat argues that a Muslim mediator who arranged a sulha in a record time of fifteen days, did so primarily out of his own personal and political expediency (1997:66-67). This jaha man was head of a unified Bedouin party running for national office. By affecting a speedy sulha he would strengthen his reputation and have a better chance at success in the approaching Knesset elections.

The well-known and highly dramatic conflict between Abu-Rabi'a and Gaber Mu'adi, Bedouin and Druze Members of the Knesset (MKs) respectively, offers another example of the dubious neutrality and disinterestedness of jaha mediators. In this particular clash, the jaha mediators secretly and intentionally played one disputing side against the other, perpetuating rather than directly solving the conflict to the best of their abilities. The mediators' motive: because the disputants were both such powerful and high status men, it certainly would be beneficial to keep them both grateful and hence indebted to the sulha mediators; and the longer and greater the conflict, the more substantial the debt (cf. Ginat 1987:82). The jaha "peace" efforts in this case were disrupted, however, when Mu'adi had his sons assassinated Abu-Rabi'a.

My aim here is not to speculate on and expose the underlying selfish motivations of these men, and thereby discredit their efforts toward peace. While some jaha leaders are undoubtedly invested in the dynamics of power and personal gain, others may not be concerned with the power they achieve through sulha at all; it may well be an insignificant by-product to them. In addition, an elder may be a self-serving broker *and* truly an idealistic peacekeeper; these are compatible characters. What is significant here is that, although many leaders clearly do have an investment in personal gain, all jaha elders and the general public rigorously and adamantly decry a uniform discourse of total disinterestedness while covering up the political realities of sulha and particularly the fact that jaha leaders enjoy a powerful position in society as a result of their participation.

The insistent homogeneous claim made by jaha members that they receive nothing for their efforts and that their actions are entirely selfless is, I contend, part of a *necessary* discourse that these politicians publicly uphold. In a society that does not allow for outright status-seeking, the politics of serving on the jaha, which result in marked status differentials, must be masked and exhibited in more acceptable forms. Hence, jaha elders project the public image of men who are ever ready to sacrifice for the good of society, for the persistence of peaceful social relations among men and families. The representation of a jaha elder's motivation by himself and by the

public, except in rare moments like the one described above, takes a simple and unadulterated form: his behaviors are guided by nothing other than devotion to God and the public welfare. This rhetoric of disinterestedness, however, is less an indication that these are exceptionally generous and selfless men than an expression and means of negotiating the egalitarian-hierarchy contradiction in this society. The jaha leaders are able to hold power only by eliding it, by covering it up and pushing it to the background.

When admissions of personal interest do surface, as in the sheikh's outburst described above, they are immediately contained within private confines and not permitted to circulate beyond the immediate group. After my informant reported to me the story of sheikh's incriminating words, he immediately followed the disclosure with a plea not to repeat the incident in any way that would bring this sheikh into disrepute. He retreated from his earlier comments in which he called the sheikh a corrupt, self-interested power seeker. My informant's backpedaling did not derive from any fear of retribution by the sheikh—professionally he was in a secure and respected position, and personally he had no direct ties to this leader. His urgent retracting of some of the harsh commentary he had previously made, I believe, came from a general sense that it had been somehow wrong to taint the leader's public image and that there could be negative ramifications from shattering or even hurting this man's reputation and hence disrupting proper societal order. Ironically it was by maintaining the hierarchical structure, that is, the greatness of this leader, that my informant furthered the basic egalitarian social discourse.

Before reaching any final decisions on a sulha case, the jaha may require numerous meetings described by participants as being "difficult, long, and tiresome." Jaha members state that they must discuss the dictates of tribal law and decide for each specific case how the law should be applied. Yet if they always rule based on precedent it is interesting to contemplate what it is that actually takes so long to figure out. I would contend that in addition to reckoning proclamations that are fair, it is the political negotiations between members that are also time consuming. Only when the men are gathered in their private and nonpartisan space can the process of negotiation within the jaha begin. This contention is speculative because the secrecy of jaha meetings is highly guarded.[34] If everyone knew what went on in these smoke-filled rooms it would not necessarily bolster the jaha elders' perceived quality of 'aql. The public cannot know about interpersonal bickering because the jaha wishes to appear as an authoritative and uniform ruling body. To expose the internal politicking would be to shatter the illusion of altruism that these men cultivate. The public power of the jaha depends on this privacy, this concealed space of negotiation that claims not to be a negotiation.

To summarize my argument thus far, jaha elders deny, mask, or downplay their power because the society does not readily accept explicit displays of power and ruling men. For this reason, notables portray their involvement in sulha as neutral. If a man's actions are not read as driven

by selfgain, he is not likely to be viewed as an offensive status seeker. If power is of no concern to him, then an elder is not, intentionally and boldly, violating egalitarian principles. The fact of his superior power can be overlooked because others do not view him as actively seeking or flaunting his power.

Part III

The Discourse of Voluntary Engagement

A jaha elder explained to me that he and the others have no authority or ability to make binding decisions and that all depends on the voluntary compliance of the participants. Jaha members state that they as individuals or as a delegation do not take the initiative and intervene in any case of murder but rather wait until the aggressors approach them and request their assistance. They proclaim that they must be asked and even "begged" before they will get involved in any conflict: "Without this clear and formal request by the aggressors, we notables would never take on the role of peacemakers." The given explanation for this rule of voluntarism was straightforward: If the killers come to the elders willingly and thereby initiate the peacemaking, such voluntarism serves as a signature on a contract that will later bind them to the ruling of the jaha. There is no other basis for enforcement. In an elder's own words:

> A part of the sulha is that you *must* be asked by the killers' family to plead for them. If you go by yourself then you will face a situation in which the killed person's immediate family will ask you [the jaha], "Were you asked by the other family to talk about sulha?" If not, this is a difficult situation. The victim's family will be polite and thank you but as long as the killers did not ask you, you cannot take any decision on their behalf.

As for the injured party's willingness to engage in sulha, these men may be persuaded to participate, but, according to jaha elders, they too are never coerced. It is true that the jaha elders have no recourse to physical force and truly that would go against the spirit and rhetoric of peace, conciliation, and cooperation. Yet, despite the insistence by notables that they may "rule" only because others come to them willingly and choose to invest them with this ability, the degree of pure voluntarism on either the aggressors' or victims' side is questionable. Certainly considerable social pressures or pragmatic concerns about a revenge attack make the decision to engage in sulha a highly compelling one. By no means is it always pure goodwill or a sense of forgiveness that causes disputants to turn to sulha. The parties may indeed feel forced into sulha by the direct pressures of elders within and outside of the family and others in the community. The jaha, however, presents the sulha process in the official discourse as a purely voluntary one wherein the jaha elders are merely enablers, allowing the disputing parties to carry out their wishes of ending conflict.

The proclamation of voluntarism—whether it accurately reflects the sentiments of the families or not—serves to portray a picture of sulha as a desired choice, a course not imposed by jaha

leaders but requested by involved parties. It is important that sulha is never depicted as a mandatory legal structure or procedure but imagined as an entirely voluntary enterprise. By characterizing entry into the sulha process as the willing actions of the parties to place themselves in the hands of the jaha, the power of the notable men is once again elided. Jaha men thus legitimate their leadership ironically by couching power in a framework that downplays their authoritative position and furthers the construction of the "disinterested jaha man." The picture of voluntarism confirms the egalitarian discourse and hence, ultimately, the jaha's legitimacy. This insistence on voluntarism is an important element in the mediation of the egalitarian-hierarchy contradiction and maintenance of the principle of social egalitarianism in the Israeli-Palestinian village.

After a murder took place in September 1995 and the body of a man from Dashem village was found in Jenin on the West Bank, I was discussing the case with a member of the involved jaha. He explained to me that the victim was murdered by four men, two from Dashem and two from Jenin. All five of the men (the four killers and their victim) were related, the men from Dashem were brothers, as were the men from Jenin. The Dashem brothers were patrilateral-parallel cousins of the brothers from Jenin, and all were distant cousins of the Dashem victim himself. The factors that motivated this case of murder gradually unfolded to the jaha men: it appeared that the victim had been having an affair with the sister of the men from Dashem. Her brothers repeatedly warned him to end this relationship and when he did not they conspired with their close cousins on the West Bank to murder him. One of Jenin brothers also had interest in marrying this woman and, as he was her patrilateral-parallel cousin, he was angry and felt that this more distant cousin had usurped his rights.

Some time after the killing occurred, my informant was asked to serve on the sulha committee. When I asked him how he came to serve on this case (as he was not from Dashem, Jenin, or even a nearby city), his response was telling; it related more about the official sulha procedures presumed to have taken place than actual events:

> Yes, the families in Jenin went and contacted their notables, this is what I suppose. Otherwise they [the Jenin notables] would not come [to request us in Israel to form a jaha]. Because the rule is that the people [notables] from Jenin will not come on their own. They would come on their own to offer condolences, but how could they come if they were not asked and begged by the family of the people of Jenin who are suspected of doing the killing? Going to their homes and saying, "Please do this for us, go to the families of Dashem, and tell them that we are sorry for what our people did, whatever they did. We want peace and we repent…." That is preliminary.

The jaha elder never told me specifically who called him to serve on the case or any details about definitive actions he knew to have taken place. He was insistent in his claim, however, that events had followed this proper sequence and style. The families of the killers from Jenin, I was told, went to their local leaders who then turned to the Israeli notables to form a joint-jaha. In the notable's formulaic words:

> The notables of Jenin will listen to the Jenin families and begin to think of whom to contact in Israel to carry out their plea. It is a beautiful process; in order for the whole sulha to proceed the process must be according to all the rules of the game in the most beautiful sense. Oh, if it were done in a blunt way, it would just explode, destroy everything.[35]

Somewhat later on during the proceedings of the Dashem-Jenin case the process did explode. The family of the killers from Jenin published a curious announcement in the Arab press stating that they did not condone the murder and that they were not connected to it in any way. Jaha leaders were unclear as to what the intention of their message here was: some interpreted this pronouncement as an apology to the victim's family, a statement of conciliation and regret. Other elders were dubious, suspecting that the proclamation was intended as an effort by these family members to "wash their hands of any responsibility" of paying the retribution fines. Through a series of discussions and meetings to clarify matters the jaha determined, disturbingly, that the latter view was correct.

Yet during this sorting out period, something even more startling became clear to all participants: the jaha had made a serious blunder—it had not in fact been authorized through a willing gesture of commitment made by the Jenin killers' family. A jaha elder explained the situation at that point to me:

> So we faced a new problem: While we were in the victim's house, we found out that the relatives of the two killers [from Jenin] did not ask the jaha to plead for them! The complication arose because we thought that since they [the four killers and victim] are from one hamula [patrician] they would probably like to arrange things as an internal matter but it was just the opposite. The family of the killed person was very angry and it was a delicate situation. Probably we should have waited until we got a plea from the family, from all sides to act as one group. There were a lot of severe arguments at this meeting.

Of the four killers involved, only the immediate families of two of them, the two from Dashem, within Israel's borders, had turned to the jaha for assistance; the other two killers and their immediate families were publicly denying guilt and responsibility. Apparently they had never appealed to their elders with an admission of wrongdoing and a request for intervention at any

point, as my informant above and others of the jaha had assumed. The elders of Jenin had clearly acted on their own accord.

When the victim's family publicly asked the jaha members if they in fact had been "authorized" by all the families of the killers and it turned out that they certainly had not been, the reconciliation process abruptly became paralyzed. With the narrative of the sulha ritual so disrupted, the process simply could not proceed as before. This was the state of affairs toward the end of my fieldwork period in April 1996. The moment was a crisis with potentially severe repercussions that not only left a murderous situation open-ended but also jeopardized the jaha's sharaf. Israeli jaha notables (and perhaps West Bank notables too but I had no access to them) appeared incompetent and weak for blatantly mishandling the case. Not only had they clearly failed to follow proper sulha procedure, now they were openly disputing with each other on how to push forward. At the meetings in which the injured party's family members were present, jaha members argued among each other for they were not in agreement over how to cut their losses, lessen their embarrassment, and proceed.

The main insight illustrated by this blunder was not that the jaha had taken the reigns of power without being asked to do so, for in fact these leaders frequently initiate the sulha process, take an active, self-appointed role, and ultimately impose their will without ever being requested. Rather, the reason that the Dashem-Jenin error was so devastating was because it became so clear that they had done so. The rupture highlighted the fact that the official sulha narrative of voluntarism is a façade—everyone could now plainly see that this had not been a voluntary engagement at all and that the jaha had indeed acted entirely on its own initiative. Their power of jaha men had been shown as such, brute power. When the jaha's intrusive force becomes too obvious, the myth of egalitarianism is exposed. The jaha men are unmasked as a political force rather than the elicited mediators they claim to be. Thus, the appearance of voluntarism is crucial to the jaha's representation of its own authority and its acceptance by others, lest the sulha be uncovered as the assertion of control of some men over others, and not as a voluntary process among equals that the fiction maintains. This latter image must be maintained or the ethos of egalitarianism cannot be reconciled with the reality of the jaha's power, and crisis will ensue.

The Condolence Initiative

Condolence practices enable jaha men to take an active role in initiating the sulha process in a manner that hides the fact. Notable men labor to attain an initial armistice during the mourning period *regardless* of whether or not the killer's family ever seeks their assistance in the capacity of a jaha. This contradicts the jaha's claim that the first step of sulha is taken by the aggressors. Visiting the home of a recently deceased village member and offering words and gestures of

sympathy to the family is a social duty expected of both women and men.[36] The empathetic act is time consuming. “Everyone must go, we must! I am so tired from this everyday, but there is no choice,” were the exasperated words of a young man who wanted to impress on me the demanding nature of this social duty. The obligation to pay condolence calls to the deceased’s family weighs heavily on men of prominence, in particular the notables who frequently serve on the jaha, because for them the duty extends beyond the village to the entire Galilee region and sometimes even further a field. During the initial hours after any serious conflict breaks out, and especially in cases of murder, individual notables pay a condolence call to the home of the deceased or injured victim as soon as possible. As one jaha notable put it, “This is the first condition; this is a duty about which there is no question whatsoever. Everybody [that is, every jaha man] goes to every death in every family.” Their absence would be conspicuous, it could become the subject of gossip, and repeated absence without legitimate reason would cast doubts cast on the notable’s sharaf—his virtue and morality.[37]

The fact that notables make “condolence” visits within a region more wide-reaching than the common villager, and that they do so at any hour of the night, suggests that these appearances are about more than just expressing sympathy. The immediacy of the visit in fact serves multiple purposes beyond comforting the family—it reinforces the elder’s importance as a leader, it allows the notable to assess the situation and perhaps find out more about the circumstances of the killing, and it is often the point at which he seeks to attain an armistice *(hudneh).* One leader admitted to me that directly after hearing about the Dashem-Jenin case, and before being contacted by any notables on behalf of the killers’ families, he went to “investigate” the situation. I pointed out to him that this contradicted the official narrative of non-intervention prior to voluntary authorization and asked him to elaborate on what he actually did while at the home of the victim’s family. He responded:

> Maybe the word “investigate” is not quite right, it has the wrong kind of meaning…. On the issue of the immediate action of the jaha, at least we are entitled to ask for the wisdom and the patience of the bereaved family. This is not connected to whether people ask you to plead on their behalf or not. It is normal to express our sympathy and sorrow, denounce and renounce the killing whatever the reasons were because human beings should not kill each other. We always state things generally, and of course we plead to their nobility (‘*asloo*), to their hearts *(‘alboo*), their wisdom *(‘aqloo).* And what we have the right to ask for at least if not to take immediate steps on the road to sulha, at least we ask for a noble, an honorable promise from the family not to take any unwise action, or reaction more correctly, against the people of the other family. Or even we demand from them to not touch their [the aggressors’] property if the case is of immediate or close neighbors, between two families

> that are living near each other. In general, the family of the killer will leave their houses by mass exodus, the whole family, well, women and children are allowed to stay, but not the men. So we ask that they do not touch the property when the members of the killer's family have left their houses.

He spoke of the great sense of relief he experiences once he attains hudneh: "This means we have stopped the killing, we have prevented more bloodshed. As the Arab proverb states, 'talking about peace is already peace.'"

Statements made by jaha elders when discussing the formal logic of sulha emphasize emphatically that they do not instigate any of the sulha proceedings but in fact after every occurrence of murder they go to the victim's home to seek hudneh, and during the period of ceasefire, they attempt to persuade the relevant parties of the merits of sulha. One could argue that such stopgap actions do not count as part of the sulha proper, that they are prior, and that ultimately the jaha can go no further than the ceasefire until the aggressors submit themselves. As the jaha elder contended, "securing hudneh is not initiating sulha but merely preventing subsequent clashes and bloodshed." Yet these are actions taken on by a jaha man's own initiative and they engage him in the affair. Although they may be restricted without the cooperation of the parties, the jaha elders do initiate the sulha process. These steps, if not contradictory to the jaha's "no-initiative claim," certainly make it less definitively so, and cause one to question the significance of the formal discourse.

When I expressed confusion over the matter to jaha elders and suggested that by taking this initiative rather than waiting for the aggressors to beg for their intervention, they may be contradicting their previous statements, they provided further arguments to maintain the discourse that jaha men are merely respondents to others' expressed needs. Finally I was told that the jaha men do indeed take initial steps to try to diffuse the immediate dangers of the situation and that they *must* try to calm the victims and convince them not to take the revenge they are entitled to by customary law. These initiating actions of the jaha, however, were posed as moral imperatives. One jaha man put it, "I as a concerned individual must be thinking and speaking about peace efforts prior to any formal request for my services." Another jaha elder, who had previously insisted that the jaha group takes no actions on its own, now reconciled the contradiction between active initiative and the stated norm that jaha notables wait for authorization as follows:

> Now in sulha, the conditions of peacemaking, you can, I mean … there is no rule that prevents the jaha from talking about sulha, even at the same visit [the condolence call], the same time. It is not necessarily that you have to wait, no, on the contrary, some "hot" issues

> demand, require, your immediate intervention, your immediate pleading for peace, like cases of killing. And especially with a killing case within the same village, where the families live close to each other, you cannot wait; you cannot tell what is going to happen if you do not plead.

Another continued along the same line:

> Sometimes a jaha must plead for sulha, in order to calm the situation and prevent another killing. So the immediate action could be the only way to stop the whole sad cycle of killing and revenge and prevent the case from being complicated by extra unnecessary, foolish acts from someone of the bereaved family. So it is your *duty* to immediately be in the picture.

Not only do jaha elders take initiative by "pleading" for sulha or at least a temporary ceasefire that will later lead to sulha regardless of whether or not the prerequisite norm of supplication has been satisfied, they are morally obligated to do so. When there is a clear and present danger, notables told me, they will rush to the scene, use the weight of their sharaf to prevent further fatalities, and not hesitate to intervene. They cannot wait for the sanction of the combating families to pressure would-be avengers into at least offering the hudneh. Jaha men say they insist (*lazim)* on securing hudneh from their first involvement in the dispute, that is, from the day they go to offer condolences, if there is an immediate danger:

> Some big people from these families [in the Dashem-Jenin case] would know if something was going to happen and they would notify us immediately, they would tell us. And in this case, we would act, even in the middle of the night; we would go not to plead for peace but just to stop the situation. We would use all our influence to stop any intention of wrongdoing.

The ethical duty to take an active role in the prevention of revenge attacks is a moral imperative that takes precedence over the principle of waiting for a request to get involved. This contradiction between sulha formal structure and actual proceedings is reconciled by jaha elders who view each particular case as an exception to the rule: it is only the unusually "hot" circumstances of this case that altered the typical unfolding of events in which the jaha would wait for its services to be requested. In fact, however, all cases of murder are "hot," requiring the jaha's intervention every time. The point I am arguing is not that these men have a false consciousness but that they construe the facts in a particular way because of the contradictions inherent in the system. The jaha men depict their own authority as a moral imperative—the exceptional reasons for their decisively intervening role are always depicted as ethical

injunctions to prevent bloodshed.

It is also a fact though that these men, morally driven or not, are the leaders of society. The jaha's insistence on securing hudneh may well be motivated by more than a concern for peace and safety alone. Securing the hudneh is a key political moment for the jaha—if the victim's family agrees to a ceasefire, the jaha man has achieved his first victory. He demonstrates his sharaf through his ability to persuade. Failing to secure hudneh will reflect poorly on him and show his lack of influence. The sharaf of this notable will be exposed as feeble—not great enough to achieve even the victim's acquiescence of hudneh. Furthermore, the attainment of hudneh is a crucial point because without it the peace process is precluded, the jaha elder will not have the chance to mediate between the two families and bring the dispute to an end. Hence there will be no opportunity for the further aggrandizement of his sharaf. Jaha men disavow the political rhetoric but this is precisely the basis of their power—that they can depict themselves as being entirely disinterested in private gain. Thus the jaha cajoles promises from the victim's family to take no immediate revenge through tactics of "influential demands." That is, they extract the promise of the hudneh as a personal favor from the injured family to them, the most important and respected men in the community. The tone and words they use may be important. A jaha man's description gives insight into the process:

> Now we have to negotiate this promise. Sometimes it takes hours until we extract (the promise of ceasefire) by convincing, influential demands, appealing to their sharaf and to the laws of God. We say, "This is against any religion; God ordered us not to kill." We argue, "Will a vengeful reaction bring anyone back? Would it bring the dead back?" In this way we continue to plead.

And so while the murderer's family is fleeing its home, seeking refuge elsewhere, and begging notables to take on the official jaha role and make peace between it and the victim's family, the potential jaha men may already be busy quelling the anger and impulses of revenge, appealing to other distant relatives for assistance, and all in a delicate and sensitive manner.

The jaha's shuttle diplomacy is an initiating move that conflicts with its insistent claim that the sulha is entirely voluntary and that they take no initiative whatever despite evidence to the contrary. The seeking of hudneh as a jaha initiative had not been mentioned to me until it became apparent during an actual case because it was important to jaha elders to uphold the official line and present the sulha process as an unforced one initiated solely by the aggressor's family. Rather than display their forthright role in peacemaking the jaha notables gloss over and downplay the points where they do take a leading role.

The Mandatory Nature of Sulha, the Preeminent Power of Jaha: Ethnographic Illustrations

The jaha's actual triumph in gaining power is hinted at in the fact that notables, rather that the disputants, are the primary focus of the sulha ceremony. Looking at videotapes of sulhas, this is plain to see. Jaha elders are the ones on stage or at the front table facing the audience, jaha leaders make focal speeches, and the families involved recede into the general crowd. Jaha men recite their speeches in the grave manner required by this solemn affair. The segment of reciting sulha speeches is an extended period of glory or sharaf for the jaha. According to a jaha elder, many would-be notables request to speak during the sulha because such public opportunities would enhance their prestige. But most are turned away by the highest jaha notables of the delegation who feel that the ritual loses its potency if too many notables tie knots and make speeches. The point at which all other men watch the jaha physically bring enemies together to shake hands is a moment of sharaf-building for the jaha members.

The following cases testify to the considerable, unchallengeable, and tangible power of the jaha elders, once "authorized" by both the murderer's and the victim's families. The cases further illustrate the fact that the voluntarism in the sulha process is hardly voluntary; once any public indication of the desire for sulha exists, the offending parties are often locked in to the process.

A Murder in Ilbihs

A killing that occurred in July, 1995, involved a man from Biroudi, an Arab village, and six men from Ilbihs, a Bedouin village, and displays the jaha's considerable power over common men. A young electrician from Biroudi was installing wire inside a house in Ilbihs when he was attacked by six men of the village between the ages of 18 and 20. After a verbal quarrel the Ilbihs men beat and killed the Biroudi electrician. According to those who later served on the jaha, the cause of the aggression was a work-related rivalry; several of the attackers, themselves electricians, were angry that this outsider was stealing business from them. They had gone to the place where the Biroudi man was working with knives intent on letting this man know how they felt. Whether or not they planned to murder him is unclear but the volatile situation resulted in this outcome.

After the killing, the families of all six men involved in the murder turned to the jaha for assistance. The jaha secured the hudneh from the victim's family and the family members of the six attackers paid the ʻatwa. In the meanwhile the Israeli police detained all six of the men involved and carried out an investigation aimed at determining who was the actual killer, that is, who had fired guns and delivered the fatal blow. After two months of police investigations, officials were uncertain of all the details but nevertheless released five of the men and charged one of them, the "actual killer," for the murder. According to villagers, by taking one as the

scapegoat and releasing the other five men, free of all charges, the police were trying to manipulate people in order to get a confession.

The relatives of these five men involved in the murder had initially turned to the jaha for assistance and protection, but now wished to withdraw from the sulha proceedings. According to one member of the jaha, "Once the court ruled to release the five men who were determined not to have dealt the deadly blow, the relatives of these five tried to absolve themselves of responsibility and avoid paying the diyyah…. When they [the police] released the five, the families came to us and said, 'See we are innocent; look the police released us and said go home.'" The jaha elders, however, refused to allow the families to withdraw from the sulha process. "We said six participated and so all six are responsible." One jaha elder continued:

> We know and are convinced because everyone spoke about six people. They went together [with bad intentions] and we are sure because the house where this young man was working was far from the center of town. So why did these people walk there? Were they just going for a promenade? Not one of these six men had second thoughts. If one had said, "I am going back," then we could say, "Okay, you are innocent." But all six men continued and it does not matter that they were released by the police as innocent.

The five "innocent" families argued that they had paid the 'atwa only because they were sure that their sons were going to be accused. This reasoning did not convince the jaha members who held that if these sons were not involved in the murder, the families would never have paid the 'atwa. "It is an admission of guilt."

According to the jaha's reckoning of justice, everybody who participated in the case "must carry a part of the burden of the killing. Six young people took part in the killing whether they witnessed it, or were a part of it, or did the actual killing." The jaha men state that is not their job to go into all these "tricks" (*biyal*) of the police whom they think are "misguided for looking at the petty points: Who attacked first? Who attacked second? Which was the deadly blow?" On September 17,1995, the jaha held a meeting and formulated a final ruling on the case. They determined that the family of the detained killer was to pay one-third of the diyyah while the second extended family—to which all the other five men belonged—was to pay two-thirds of the diyyah. The diyyah was set at 110,000 shekels (approximately $36,667).[38]

In this case, initial "voluntary" steps of sulha were taken by both sides—the attacker's side, which included the families of the six men (involving two large extended families), requested the jaha to intervene and paid an 'atwa, and the victim's side agreed to hudneh and accepted the 'atwa money. Paying the 'atwa was an admission of guilt and a binding pledge to abide by the jaha's ruling. After the release of the five men, only the detained killer's family wanted to

continue with the sulha process but the jaha did not allow the others to relinquish their duties. These families' efforts to extract themselves were in vain; the jaha ruled that they had a share in the crime and therefore they were to pay a part of the diyyah in the reconciliation. A jaha elder stated, "The five released now do not admit any guilt, so we have to impose our authority." The punishment was imposed on them and, having no choice, they paid. I do not know what may have occurred should they have refused to pay; it was, however, an inconceivable thought to them. I asked a family member this question, and he simply replied, "We had no choice." That the families were forced to pay the diyyah and were unable to withdraw from the sulha proceedings is testimony to the power of the jaha. The delegation is a prestigious and authoritative judicial body, after the initial voluntarism is established.

Wedding in Sherame

According to Abu Muhammed of Sherame village, a man named Ali from his village fell in love with Nura, a woman from a village outside of Nazareth but when the couple turned to her father for permission to marry, the suitor was refused. The father had already promised to "give" his daughter to her *ibn* (*amm* (father's brother's son), according to the preferential marriage pattern found in the Middle East. Before the arranged marriage was carried out, however, Nura and her boyfriend Ali eloped, took refuge with his family in Sherame, and turned to the police for protection, fearing that her family might try to harm them. After taking the report, the police approached Nura's father and informed him of his daughter's whereabouts and told him that if he wanted any interaction with her he would have to consult the men of the Ali's hamula in Sherame for she was now under their protection.[39]

The relatives of Ali wanted to help the couple; they gathered a jaha— in this case the jaha was entirely Bedouin as both families involved were Bedouin—to make a sulha between the two parties. The jaha group, which included the mayor of Sherame, went to Nura's family and told them, "We want to make a marriage between these two." Nura's father, having already been told by the police that his daughter was under this family's trust, felt that he did not have leverage to contest the jaha and so he agreed. The father said that after his daughter was returned he would allow her to marry the one she loved in a "regular marriage" *(zuwajja aadi).* As the jaha left one member stated, "The subject is finished" *(il moudua muddeh)* and shortly after this meeting the jaha brought Nura back to her father's home.

Nura's father was not finished with the subject however, and he broke the agreement he had made with the jaha—he did not permit the marriage between his daughter and her boyfriend to be carried out. When it became apparent that this man had intentionally lied to the jaha in order to get his daughter back, and that he intended to carry out his original plans, the enraged jaha

council returned and confronted him. “What are you doing?” they demanded. “Now you have made the situation very difficult. You were lying to us.”[40] They exchanged heated words but to no resolve. One week later, Ali returned to Nura’s village clandestinely with the tacit support of the jaha and his own hamula, according to my informants. In the middle of the night, once again the couple ran off together.

Abu Muhammed and explained the situation, “This family [Nura’s] can no longer go and tell a jaha from his area that they want intervention. The jaha from Sharame told Nura’s father, ‘Now you cannot do anything. If you even say that you want to take her back again, you will be taken to the police. We tried our best to make the situation suitable for you. And we brought your daughter back to you. But you lied to us. If you want to make a marriage for your daughter now, you must come to our village to make the wedding!”’ Another informant reinforced the point and made it explicit: “The jaha is much stronger than the police. They decide what to do. They went to her father and told him, ‘We will make the marriage there [in the bridegroom’s village]. If you want to come, you can come to our village, if you do not want to then do not, but in any case, we will make the marriage there.’ And so it was the jaha who invited the girl’s father (to the wedding)!”

The marriage took place in 1994. It marked a direct denial of the normal paternal rights of a man; a father nearly always has custody and authority over his children, even upon divorce of the children’s mother. The jaha, however, was able to intervene, refuse Nura’s father his paternal rights, and control the situation entirely. “In this case the girl and her boyfriend were able to do what they did entirely due to the power of the jaha men, it was their doing, and their decision. They are very influential,” explained my informant. In the face of the jaha’s power and knowing the social repercussions that any further action would have, the father had no choice but to let his daughter go. I asked my informants if he could have effectively sought assistance from the police as he had legal rights. They replied, “The police? They could not do anything.”

In this case the jaha had decided to mediate on behalf of a woman who had eloped and broken conventional practice. They were not in a strong enough position initially to demand anything; however, they went to reason and argue with the father. They did not expect their agreement to be broken. The jaha members were angry because by not respecting his pledge, the father had challenged their sharaf. After the woman was physically brought into Sharame village the second time, the jaha leaders needed to make a show of force to regain their sharaf. At that point they were able to take full control from the father. The father’s power, as well as the police’s power, was no match for that of the jaha; the father was incapable of reclaiming his own daughter and returning her to her original home.

Under certain circumstances, the jaha holds considerable authority over men. In the above case this was true because the father had put himself “into their hands.” He had publicly agreed

to the jaha's authority when he accepted the initial settlement. Only after the father reneged on his agreement with the jaha did the latter assume the authority or the right to keep the daughter from him. These events highlight the point that the jaha must present a process to the community that indicates participants are engaged in the reconciliation process of their own free will. The "voluntary" moment in this case was when the jaha requested that the father allow his daughter to marry the man of her choice and he agreed. Of course, the father's agreement in this case was no more than a tactical judgment that this would be the simplest and quickest way to get his daughter back under his control. Likely he felt he had no sure alternative, if he wanted to get his daughter back. Nonetheless, the jaha was able to seize power entirely once the structure of voluntary relations had been entered into.

Limits of Jaha Power

In this section I will more fully explore the parameters of the jaha's power, for it is clear that the jaha's power is not limitless. In order for people to take these leaders seriously, jaha members are constrained to act in close conformity to the ideals of the moral code they claim to represent. Sulha leaders, as discussed, are considered religious and moral exemplars. Jaha elders cannot be seen to sin or act in an undignified, irrational manner; they must always be on guard, checking their emotive expression and projecting an air of respectability.[41] The requirement of social propriety applies to every aspect of social behavior no matter how trivial. Jaha men, for example, do not chew gum while their wives, less engaged in the honor play, do so without problem. The jaha elder is always properly dressed either in "elegant," "traditional," or "religious" clothes. He is never casually or immodestly clad. As one leader told me, "All the jaha people are the same; they cannot be jaha if they violate the rules." Well, not too much anyhow. Another notable stated, "You can not go gambling or then you will be known as a gambler rather than a jaha elder … although I did go to Las Vegas and Atlantic City once. I told the people here about it. It was quite an experience, playing the slots, seeing millions of dollars before my eyes! I spent 10 dollars, will you forgive me?" He smiles and laughs easily. The "rules" are somewhat flexible, even for jaha men.

Power is based, not on some a priori ability to mobilize force, but entirely on the public perception that these leaders are what they project themselves to be—their power is co-extensive with this legitimacy. As soon as they lose the public confidence, they cease to be jaha men.[42] Thus notables are highly constrained by the tenets of the moral code of which they are the recognized guardians. Persons in high positions have a greater responsibility to uphold cultural ideals, and this embodiment of ideals in turn serves to justify their responsibility for and control over others. The fact that jaha men are subject to social constraints more than ordinary villagers

parallels the situation for men of distinction among the Kabyle where greater control entails more stringent conformity rather than a greater license to break the rules (Bourdieu 1977:193).

And even this constrained power founded on moral worthiness is not unproblematic. Being the embodiment of moral virtue is still a mark of superiority in conflict with the notion that all men are morally equal. A man's private belief that the jaha elder's morality is not in fact superior to his own, that the jaha elder is not flawless, offsets an otherwise problematic inequality and allows the egalitarian ethos to continue. One leader admitted to me outright that people are not so naive as to think that the men of the jaha are actually more morally virtuous than the rest, that they never step out of line and always conform to social propriety. In expressing the jaha's human or imperfect side, he reinforced the basic premise of egalitarianism among men—the leader is not pretending to be superhuman, or to stand above other men:

> Of course we all make mistakes and have our own sins. We do not pretend to be perfect or to be gods. There is not such thing as "Jaha-God." No you find God upstairs only, of course. People will understand that he (the jaha man) is human; he must enjoy life like everyone else.

Next, it should also be clear that in no sense is the jaha an independent power. The members are reliant first of all on the male youth who continue to have feuds. Secondly, they depend on extended and neighboring families to help convince those who are caught up in the emotionally charged situation to calm down and not act upon their passion. Jaha leaders count on reputable local men to persuade families to engage in sulha. These "assistants" are usually not men at the heart of the family but peripheral people, perhaps distant relatives, who are more removed from the immediate crisis. This cooperative effort is often crucial to the jaha's leverage. One jaha leader spoke of his methods in trying to attain a sulha agreement:

> In this case where a Christian man from Kfar Yasif had killed a Druze man from Yirka village, the situation was very difficult. We appealed to distant relatives of the victim's immediate family. They are related and happened to be wise and generous people. We exerted some social pressure by finding an old, notable person from the family, whose words would be well heard and we appealed to him. Sometimes these relatives can participate on a local jaha if there is an element of goodness in them.

Without the assistance of these relatives the jaha leaders could not successfully negotiate as many sulhas as they do. Finally, the jaha men are obviously dependent on the general society to recognize and sanction their legitimacy, without which they are, of course, powerless.

The jaha notables may suffer from moments of public incredulity— they as individuals and as

a collectivity are not an unquestioned force. One glimpse into the power of the jaha and it limitations then, comes from instances when its power is challenged. An example of this occurred when during a sulha meeting between the jaha and an offending family, an explicit objection was made to one of the elders on the council; the integrity and neutrality of one of the jaha's members was questioned. The accused youth from the family stated that he did not trust Abu Atef, that Abu Atef was biased and made unfair statements. The boy had never met Abu Atef in person and was not even certain that he was present at the time when he leveled these charges. A jaha member explained that most likely this boy had heard some questionable things from others but had not himself ever met Abu Atef. He stated, "He did not really know anything about what he claimed. Abu Atef, a quiet Bedouin man, stood up and calmly asked the accuser to prove his claims: 'Please tell me on what basis do you say this?' The latter was embarrassed to have unwittingly made a face-to-face challenge of this man's sharaf." Apparently, the flustered boy claimed that Abu Atef had made inappropriate comments, but when pressed, according to jaha informants present at the time, the boy could not produce details. The jaha deemed these accusations as unsubstantiated hearsay. When the accuser could not manufacture satisfactory proof against Abu Atef, the jaha insisted that the entire family apologize publicly to all of them, and threatened to withdraw their assistance if they refused. The family apologized.

The moment of challenge had to be rectified publicly in this way because the accusation that this jaha member was not fair-minded threatened to break the illusion that all jaha elders are neutral players with nothing to gain by their sulha involvement. To outsiders the jaha must be one for all and all for one. The sharaf of one reflects on the sharaf of the others. As one jaha member explained, "They [the accused's family] were in this moment also challenging our sharaf. How could you respect yourselves and have such a [corrupt] colleague?" The other members insisted that they were "sure of their colleague's integrity, otherwise they would not have accepted him on the committee." "We cannot allow anyone to insult our friend. This man is beyond reproach, or else we would not consider him to be with us." "We feel 100% about each other," another concurred. The jaha's strength is as a unified body, not a collection of individuals with personal interests. When Abu Atef's reputation was openly challenged, this was perceived as a challenge to the sharaf of all the jaha men of the group, for how could they be reputable if they work with someone who is not. To claim that one of them was dishonest was to question all. Thus in this public forum the other members had to stand up for their colleague. They quickly re-established their unified neutrality and sharaf through a forceful countermove. Faced with the jaha's threat to withdraw from the mediation and leave the family in the dangerous situation of being revenge targets, the family had little choice by to succumb to the jaha's will.

The fact that challenges to the jaha's authority can be made, however, is an indication that the power of its constituents is not absolute or unlimited. Either party in the dispute—particularly if

they are powerful themselves (determined generally by the number of males in the hamula)—can be highly reluctant to give or accept ‘atwa on any terms. Powerful families sometimes provide a list of demands they require to be met before consenting to sulha, stipulations that may well be humiliating and unacceptable to the other side. In a case that occurred between two villages (one mixed Christian-Druze village that was predominantly Christian and the other an entirely Druze village) in the northern Galilee, the offended Christian side demanded a conditional ‘atwa. The most stringent of their terms was that no Druze would be allowed to enter the mixed village where the murder took place until after the sulha ceremony was completed. This degrading proposal placed the Druze member of the jaha in an uncomfortable position. Fie would appear weak bringing such a strong demand to the other side, his own people. Concerned about his reputation, he tried to convince the other jaha members to hide in the bushes for a while, not deliver this demand to the Druze side, and then simply return to the Christian victims pretending that the Druze had refused these conditions (personal interviews; cf. Ginat 1987:76-77). The other jaha members opposed the Druze’s plan vehemently and refused; the condition was served. The power of any individual jaha member is limited, and the collective power may be challenged and matched by that of a powerful family (see Chapter Three).

The jaha is not always successful in fostering peace. Despite the reported remarkable success of the sulha process, certainly conflicts do sometimes re-emerge and erupt into new episodes either involving the same players or others from the families. There have been rare instances where the sulha ceremony itself fails and the limitations of the jaha’s power become all too apparent. Ginat reports of one case in the early 1970s when during the sulha ceremony the young brother of a victim pulled out a *shibriyya* (sickle-shaped dagger) and killed the brother of the murderer (1987:81). On such an occasion where the formalities of the ceremony have been fully disrupted, the spell of the ritual’s healing power is profoundly broken. When this occurred the jaha elders were severely embarrassed as if they themselves have been exposed as frauds. Their failure to see the sulha successfully through to its end hurt their own political standing in the eyes of their community. Their sharaf had been damaged by this display of disrespect—the family member placed his own sense of rage over his respect for the elder. One might think that this should only reflect poorly upon the disrespectful kin of the victim, or that these things happen when people are so hurt and enraged. But the effects of this disruption do spill over to the jaha elders. The leader’s power had been shown to be ineffectual and weak. He was severely embarrassed and felt that people will be less willing to employ him in the next sulha process for, “What good would it do, he is unable to provide enough moral weight to keep the parties in line?” Even though perhaps no fault of his own, this jaha mediator felt he had been exposed as a fraud, unable to affect the great peace between enemies with the sheer weight of his sharaf power.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have explored how the prestigious male persona or self is fashioned through his association with and involvement in the practice of sulha. I have presented details of how the jaha leaders create their sharaf and manage to be viewed legitimately as superior men. Respect and power go hand-in-hand and are mutually reinforcing. Because an individual is known and respected in the village or region, he is called on to mediate a dispute during which he may exert and exhibit influential power. By demonstrating his power in this way, he is further exalted in the eyes of the community. These sharaf differentials are tolerated when they are not viewed as arrogance or bold projections of superior strength. To the extent that jaha elders are viewed as disinterested public servants, morally or religiously animated, their power can be sustained and accepted for the most part.

My aim in deconstructing the jaha leader's construction of leadership and power was to comprehend how it comes to be an acceptable form of distinction among a male population that does not easily or readily tolerate hierarchical inequality. Thus any recognition that jaha men are gaining sharaf from the sulha and that they have more prestige, power, and authority than others is submerged so that it will not pose a direct challenge to the powerful egalitarian discourse in this society. If the jaha leaders were to acknowledge openly that they themselves gain power in the sulha process, and furthermore that this power is something they seek, the societal contradiction inherent in sharaf would become unmasked—the jaha man's open quest for high status would challenge the moral equality of men and could not be accepted. Ultimately this contradiction between moral egalitarianism and social hierarchy is elided by the fact that sharaf structures the male prestige system as well as the male sense of self worth, which rests on being the next man's moral equivalent or superior. The tension in sharaf derives from it being the basis of both status and personhood.

However unspoken or downplayed the jaha's authority may be within the sulha practice, these men who lead it do execute their power, influence and coerce other men and groups of men, and often manage to reconcile the social relationships between the disputants. Even if muted and hidden, jaha elders do have substantial power based on their role as mediators. If attention is diverted from the jaha man's power during parts of the procedure, their power still exists and is felt by others and the community at large. The proof of jaha men's power is seen in their ability to persuade and sometimes order men to do that which they would not otherwise do, or to not do that which they wish to do. This is the nature of their power.

Chapter Five

Indigenous and Official Politics: Dialectics of a Multi-Faceted Relationship

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Refiguring the Study of Local Politics

Describing and analyzing the relationship between what may at least heuristically be referred to as “unofficial” or “indigenous” politics (i.e., sulha, mediation, feuding, concern with sharaf) and the “official” political institutions set in place by the state (i.e., local councils, municipalities, elections, courts, police, and the IDF) is challenging because the connection is neither straightforward nor fixed. From the actors’ point of view, Israeli practices of local government and sulha politics are sometimes differently functioning and separable systems, relating concordantly, discordantly, or not at all, while at other times they may overlap or even form a seamless reality. In this chapter my main objective will be to elucidate the complex, shifting, and malleable connections between “official” and “unofficial” politics; these relationships cannot be assumed.

In addition, I seek to demonstrate the shortcomings, yet continued relevance, of reigning analytical paradigms pertinent to Israeli-Palestinian sociopolitical analyses, namely, variants of modernization and dependency theories. In order to refigure the study of local politics and move beyond inadequate versions of modernization and dependency theories, one must refrain from engaging in the judgments and predictions often at the heart of these frameworks. Instead I put forward a more nuanced and alternative depiction of ethnographic reality, situating my analysis in the village arena and rooting it in lived political experiences. One cannot rely solely on nation-centered theories that are impersonal and ignore human agency. While recognition of national and nationalist forces is of course vital to any understanding of Israeli-Palestinian politics and identity, it is not by any means the sole determinant of village political life.

In reviewing and critiquing other scholarly approaches, my intention is not to present

caricatures of simplistic frameworks, nor to tread on already worn theoretical territory. I raise prior analyses of Israeli-Palestinian polity to show that these present a rather insufficient view of political action and because these familiar models continue to be advanced by scholars today, particularly by Israeli sociologists. Furthermore, revisiting these perspectives is pertinent because beyond the academic arena, and perhaps due in part to scholarly influence, these frameworks of thought have entered into public discourse and are widely employed by actors for analytical and prescriptive purposes of everyday life. Subjects themselves think with these conceptual tools in a "self-Orientalizing" fashion (Carrier 1992); these paradigms inform the way Israeli Palestinians experience and understand their lives. Thus although some academics, including myself, may now dismiss analyses based on simplistic dichotomies and point to the false predictions of these theories, they nevertheless retain current relevance.

Historical Overview of Local Government in the Arab Sector

Turning to the official forms of local government in the Arab village, Israeli-Palestinians have come to accept and embrace the legal, electoral, and official institutions and systems of the state. While Palestinians citizens may hold the Israeli command suspect for its history of unfair and insensitive policies towards them, Arab subjects nonetheless grant legitimacy, that is, recognize and follow the rules of state institutions and the predominantly-Jewish leadership. This acceptance goes beyond the level of merely tacit acknowledgement; it is clear from everyday actions and attitudes that even admiration for state authorities is common. Kasem proudly bragged that many highly distinguished government dignitaries had attended the funeral of his son, a Druze soldier killed by a suicide bomber in Lebanon. Samira, an educated middle-aged Muslim woman of Lebanese descent commented to me that she much admired and respected Prime Minister Rabin for his strong leadership, even though his views were at odds with her own and she felt he was single-handedly responsible for much of her people's oppression. Israeli Palestinians generally and genuinely expressed sentiments of respect for the state government and its leaders, and even those who were highly critical of policies, processes, and politicians rarely challenged the fundamental political structures or institutions in any overt or radical ways.[1]

To explore the interaction of official and indigenous political practices, and particularly the political behaviors and questions of legitimacy from Arab perspectives, I begin with an overview of the development of official local government in the Israeli-Palestinian villages. My goal in presenting this information is not to provide a comprehensive historical account but rather to show that institutionalized government in this region has increasingly become an accepted and

utilized form of Palestinians' political practices. Although set in place widely by the Israeli-Jewish authorities, and other foreign regimes prior to 1948, official institutions do not comprise merely an imposed and undesired establishment. Forms of government (e.g., elections, local councils, mayoralty, and courts) and figures of law enforcement (i.e., soldiers, police officers, and judges) are affirmed by Israeli Palestinians, most of whom have always lived under the present polity their entire lives. Indeed, many Israeli Palestinians themselves have become primary actors involved in state politics; they hold positions as officials and manage the majority of Israeli Palestinian localities. A significant number of Arab citizens have joined the police force or serve in the army.[2] Again this does not imply that the Israeli-Palestinian sector is completely satisfied with the functioning of their local (or national) government and its legal and armed branches, but certainly the majority of the population accepts the state's political and legal systems as the legitimate regional norms.

In order to gain a more extensive view of how Arab citizens perceive their local government and state structures, I conducted a survey of more than 300 residents of Shefa 'Amr in 1995 with the assistance of several natives of the town. The attitudes of respondents varied widely but the majority said that the Israeli system is a "great improvement over what had been before." Many villagers expressed the perspective that now local governance is about "democracy" and "free elections" and that they wholeheartedly support it. Others, however, highlighted the "corruption of the present so-called democratic system." They complained that town elections were "not fair"; that they were "based on who could garner the most votes by offering favors, making deals, and manipulating family, *bamula* [i.e., network of patrilineal kinship ties; extended family], and religious-community support." The critics spoke of means to improve the system; several argued that old leaders should be replaced by younger, more "academic" people. Not one respondent, however, argued for dismantling the state system of local elections and councils itself.

Background on Local Government in Arab Sectors

The state of Israel adopted and modified the system of local government already set in place and implemented during Mandatory Palestine. The 1948 Law and Administration Ordinance of Israel was an incorporation of the 1934 Municipal Corporations Ordinance and the 1941 Local Councils Ordinance. The functions of the British High Commissioner were now being carried out by the Israeli Minister of the Interior. The country remained divided into six districts (i.e., Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Northern, Central, and Southern), each headed by a District Commissioner *(memunim,* in Hebrew), and these regions were further split into fifteen sub-districts. Despite this segmentation, central authorities consolidated their power by allowing

Israeli Commissioners to deal only with the business of their particular district as dictated to them by the Ministry of Interior. Israeli Commissioners were considerably less potent than the District Commissioners had been during Mandatory times as the latter had held responsibilities in all spheres of government, internal and foreign.

In 1946 there were only eleven established Arab local councils in the country. Most of these governing bodies had its members appointed by Mandate authorities with the exception of a few, including the town of Kamila, which had been established prior to British rule in the Ottoman era.[3] During the early decades of Israeli statehood, the central government itself selected the members of the council in most of the Arab localities. Subsequently in Arab villages where residents did get to elect their own councilmen during the early decades of Israeli statehood, the maximum rate of voter turnout never exceeded ten percent (as compared to Jewish villages and towns that had showings of up to ninety-four percent). This lack of Arab participation in official local government, however, was to change drastically however in upcoming decades.

Beginning in the 1960s, the Israeli Ministry of the Interior widely extended the institution of local government to include a large number of additional towns and villages such that by 1969 the number of Arab local councils had increased to thirty-eight, and by 1989 there were fifty-nine institutions of local government (Al-Haj 1989:211). Arab involvement in local government developed dramatically along with this extension of state institutions across the Arab sector—voter-turnout rates in the Israeli-Palestinian villages rose as high as 87 to 90% in local elections by the late 1970s and 1980s.[4] As of 1992 there were 45 regional bodies in Israel, all of which were headed by Jewish government appointees, 40 municipalities (3 Arab and 37 Jewish) with populations greater than 20,000 people, and 126 local councils, 60 of which were in Arab towns or villages with populations of over 2,000 residents.[5]

What are the reasons for this upward shift in Arab participation in local government? One prevalent explanation offered by informants is that immediately after the war in 1948 and the dispersal of hundreds of thousands of people, Palestinian society was left with virtually no national leadership. In addition the remaining population had little familiarity with centralized government or broadly organized political solidarity. “People were naive about electoral institutions” and processes at both national or local levels and this fact, villagers say, accounts for the initially low voter turnout among Arabs. According to this line of thinking, over the decades, Israeli Palestinians became increasingly well-versed and active in electoral politics and the various political forms and processes of the state.

While there is no doubt truth in this depiction, a fuller explanation incorporates the sentiment that a few villagers expressed to me, namely, the fact that Arabs initially lacked the desire to participate in Israeli elections. Many Arabs citizens, at least at first, did not view the expansion of local government as a measure of autonomy over their own towns and villages, but rather as

the tool of a hostile state, a means by which to discriminate and maintain more effective control over them. Indeed Arab citizens had good reason to feel this way. If residents of a village were having an internal conflict, the central government sometimes appointed a local committee, referred to as a "nominated committee," that imposed its will on the local inhabitants, regardless of the effects on the disputant parties or other villagers (e.g., in Nahef village in the Galilee *[al-Ittibad*, March 8, 1991]; and the threat of doing so in the Hurfeish Druze council *[al-Sinara,* March 8, 1991]). Palestinian villagers had a long living memory of imperialistic outsiders attempting to control local affairs to the latter's own gain. And indeed Israeli state authorities had their particular agenda.

First and foremost state officials sought to prevent the rise of a unified Palestinian nationalist identity among its Arab citizens. To this end, authorities designed and implemented policies that fostered Arab fragmentation (Lustick 1981). The state government, for example, reified categories of social organization and competition through the appointment of certain hamula and religious heads to local council positions.[6] In this way, state authorities successfully heightened intra-Arab disputes and kept the Arab population divided into various competing minorities, at least initially.[7] The state program of creating local councils thus inhibited political representation of and equality for Arabs as a whole by underscoring the existing intra-Arab differences. In addition, state authorities legalized budgetary discrepancies between Arab and Jewish villages and suppressed the Arab sector as a whole by denying them financial support continually for decades; Arab local authorities became paralyzed and bogged down in battles for funding.[8] Other government measures to mollify the perceived threat of a unified Arab population included distinguishing select minorities (i.e., the Druze) with conscription laws and privileges. When all else failed and a manifestation of Palestinian or Arab nationalism appeared, the government simply outlawed it; nationalist parties such as *al-Ard* were declared illegal.

Despite inequitable policies toward the Arab sector and a clear agenda of divide and rule, an increase of Arab acceptance and participation in electoral state politics came about. Local political activity of Israeli Palestinians, and the intensity with which it has been pursued over the decades, are explained, in part, by the developing Arab perception that official government institutions are a useful tool of empowerment. Israeli Palestinians can attempt to reverse the power dynamic or at least gain some power from within the system if they ran their own localities and used local government to their advantage. Many reasoned that although there are inequities, "some government support is better than none." Thus in this setting that was sometimes hostile and antagonistic with Israeli Palestinians being denied expression of nationalistic aspirations, local politics became a popular vehicle of combat, indeed one of the only permissible forms of political expression, and hence the direction or route that many Israeli Palestinians chose to improve their lives (see Rosenfeld and al-Haj 1990). Increased involvement

in local (and national) government by this reading was an attempt by the subgroups of the Arab ethnic minority to confront the inequality and stratification from within the system.

Whether or not local government actually has served as a locus of power, a site where Arabs could voice complaints to Israeli Jewish authorities, gain access to the state leaders, or effect social change is at best ambiguous. The National Committee of Chairmen of Arab Local Authorities (NCCALA), otherwise known as the Council of Arab Mayors,[9] is an umbrella organization of Arab mayors and authorities; the intermediary body through which power battles may be fought between Israeli authorities and Palestinian villagers. It is an ambivalent tool of control for both sides. The central government set up the NCCALA in 1974, ostensibly with the intention of facilitating communication between Arab local councils and the Israeli central government. The central governments' underlying motive, however, was to use this body to counterbalance the growing power of Arab nationalism voiced through the Communist Party.[10]

Until the mid 1970s local government focused almost exclusively on issues of local concern, but mobilizations around Land Day (March 30,1976) marked a turning point for the NCCALA and Palestinian solidarity.[11] The NCCALA transformed in 1976 from being merely a state puppet when, subject to popular pressure, the Arab mayors of this organization supported the Land Day demonstrations publicly.[12] Henceforth the issues dealt with by the NCCALA included those of local and national import such as land confiscation, budget discrimination, Arab education, and the conflict over the Occupied Territories.[13] In 1992 the NCCALA sued the Ministry of the Interior in the High Court of Justice for breach of its agreement to forward all budgets and grants to the Arab councils. The former drafted a report on the distress that Arab municipal councils were facing, sent it to various parliamentary blocs, and presented it in a demonstration held in front of the Knesset and the PM's office. They also criticized the state's Center for Local Governments' inactivity and unsupportive attitude generally toward the Arab municipal and local councils (See fn. 8; *Kul al-Arab,* May 14, 1993).

Some analysts claim that this representative body acquired widespread Arab legitimacy and strength and should be thought of as the "Parliament of the Israeli Arabs" (Rekhess 1983:140). This view is contested by others, however, such as 'Ali Shibli, head of Shibli village, who attacked the NCCALA charging that it did not truly serve the Arab population (*al-Sinara,* November 2, 1990). He and other Bedouin local councilmen in the north held discussions on whether to renounce the NCCALA and establish a separate organization to deal specifically with Bedouin issues *(Saut al-Haq,* April 4, 1991). The efficacy of the NCCALA is questioned by others too who view it as merely a consultative body devoid of substantive power to affect, much less determine, national or even local policies (Zureik 1991:132).

In spite of central government controls, the state's efforts to prevent the rise of a Palestinian nationalist identity among the Arab citizens and its expression through political organization

were proving unsuccessful by the late 1970s. Though Palestinian and Arab nationalist parties remained illegal, the Israeli state did not manage to suppress the development of a national consciousness among its Arab citizens who found alternative routes of political expression. One can trace the development of Palestinian nationalist identity in Israel through the rise of the Israeli Communist Party (ICP), the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE), the banned nationalist movement of *Abna' al-Balad,* and more recently through the Progressive List for Peace (PLP), the Islamic Movement in Israel, and the Arab Democratic Party (ADP). All of these parties are active at both the national and local level except for the Islamic Movement, which as of 1996 only ran for positions in local government.

The relationship between Arab local councils and the central government in the 1990s remained functional but antagonistic, particularly when it came to budgetary issues. Arab local council chairmen announced at a convention in Shefa 'Amr (September 13,1990) that a solution had yet to be found to the problem of deficits of over 93 million NIS (approximately $31 million) and that the Arab local councils, stuck with this financial crisis, were unable to pay their employees. Even Jewish members of the government acknowledged the discrimination against Arabs. Advisor to Prime Minister on Arab Affairs, Eliezer Tzafrir, wrote that the state was not doing enough for its Arab citizens: "It is difficult to counter the claim that a state which is recruiting billions for aliyah cannot allocate 100 million of its budget for the just claims of the Arab sector" (*ba-Academai*, September 1990; *Arabs in Israel*, November 25, 1990). Members of NCCALA warned the Minister of the Interior that if he did not come to their aid immediately, dozens of local councils would cease to function (*Ha'aretz,* November 21, 1991). Arab Member of the Knesset (MK) Mahameed, furious that he was prohibited access to certain knowledge and documents that other Jewish MKs were given, fumed about the tremendous ongoing discrimination against Arabs: "When they speak about coexistence, they mean coexistence between the master and the slave" (*al-Ittibad*, March 12, 1991).

If Arab villagers were initially uninvolved and skeptical toward institutions of local government, by the 1990s it was primarily the central authorities who were at odds with the Arab local councils particularly when its representatives pressed for Arab equality. The Israeli state may have designed local government to be a tool of control,[14] but, nonetheless, local government was embraced by the Israeli Palestinians to suit their own purposes, which include contesting discriminatory practices, and gaining access to the tangible, material benefits supplied by the central government. Local government is not looked upon as a state-imposed institution by Arabs citizens, except in the superficial sense that most local councils were founded by the Israeli State. There are forty "unrecognized villages" that still seek formal acknowledgment by the State and the concomitant infrastructural benefits of funding for water systems, electricity, paved roads, schools, and sewage. A Bedouin man from Arab el-Khawalid told me that for many years his

settlement has been waiting for the State to make good on its promise to give them “village” status and set up a local council.[15]

The above narrative has described a process whereby Israeli Palestinians have come to accept state structures of local government fully and have increasingly become involved in state local politics motivated in part by material benefits (despite the discrepancies and battles to attain all promised funding) and the potential, however limited, of using local government to battle national discrimination. Yet this still does not fully explain Palestinian involvement in official forms of local politics. At another less explored level, Israeli Palestinians embrace the forms of local state government because it is a tangible zone of prestige, a relatively new arena in which to battle sometimes pre-existing, intra-community wars of sharaf. State institutions were not embraced in lieu of previously existing practices of governance and Arab politicians are not merely tools of the state or actors embattled with the state. Institutions of Israeli local government were adopted by Palestinian citizens, in part, as a means of bolstering their own meaningful sociopolitical forms that entail sharaf and sulha mediation processes. Israeli institutions of government have been mapped onto decentralized Arab forms of political order. Notwithstanding issues of political control by the state, Israeli systems and institutions of government have in a sense been incorporated into or subsumed under indigenous values and sociopolitical orders. This central argument will be elaborated on throughout the chapter.

Cultural Change, Resilience, and Adaptation

Given the above narrative on local government, one can ask in more theoretical ways how political practice, ideology, and values among Palestinians have developed, changed and adjusted to official institutions, within the context of the Israeli state? That many drastic cultural transformations have taken place in contemporary Palestinian history is an empirical reality.[16] These changes, however, do not warrant the preconceived ideas and categories derived from modernization theory and evolutionary social thinking that have led some scholars to assume that alterations in certain sectors of social life—the economy and political systems in particular—necessarily lead to revision in others. One faulty level of presumption rests on another.

Ginat (1987, 1997) points out that dispossession of land and subsequent proletarianization have forced Israeli-Palestinian men to spend increasing amounts of time outside of their villages. That pre-1948 Palestinian Arabs derived their primary source of income from peasant agriculture and that this economic structure was swept away by the dispossessions that followed the 1948 war is beyond dispute. Arab male workers, deprived of traditional sources of income, were forced to become wage laborers primarily in the Jewish-controlled sector beyond the borders of their Arab localities. Ginat goes on to reason that because the Arab man is spending a greater

amount of his time outside the village, and because his livelihood is increasingly caught up with Jewish employers and co-workers, and decreasingly dependent on his family or hamula, he is less likely and much more reluctant to be drawn into the duties and obligations of feud and collective responsibility commonly a part of Arab village life. Ginat argues that wage labor has led to a decrease in the desire to engage in feud and an increase in the desire to settle conflicts quickly either with simple diyyah payments or in courtrooms (Ginat 1987:45).

Yet ethnographic reality reveals that the extent of "cultural change" presumed by this theoretical perspective can be, and often has been, exaggerated. First although Arab men are no longer primarily engaged in agricultural labor, it is fallacious to presume that all Arab male workers are spending significant amounts of time in the Jewish areas, away from their families, communities, or villages. In Kamila, for example, 90% of the work force is employed in the immediate surrounding industrial and increasingly commercial Mifratz area. This zone is only a ten to fifteen minute drive from the town and men, for the most part, return home after work on a daily basis. Furthermore, many service industries including automotive shops, gas stations, taxi cab companies, *sherut* (shared cab), restaurants, and car-washes, in the commercial areas around Kamila tend to be family-run businesses. All the workers may be from a single extended family or ethnic-religious group from the same village. In a sense, branches of the service industry have simply replaced the farm as the family-run business. Thus, social norms and values connected to kinship networks that existed before the massive restructuring of the economic bases of Arab village society are not necessarily as disrupted and altered as presumed.

Ginat bypasses such complexities and suggests that Arab workers who have been successful in the Israeli employment sectors, that is, have succeeded in setting up their own businesses or in attaining wage labor positions, may now feel burdened rather than supported by their family affiliations. A Bedouin man named Hasan who found employment in an Israeli hospital, for example, shared his resentment with Ginat over the fact that he was still responsible for his brothers who were in a serious conflict with men from another family. Hasan's position working regular hours in a well-known hospital made him an easy target for men determined to take revenge on male members of their enemy's family. Ginat points out that it would be highly inconvenient for Hasan to have to leave work and go into exile, hiding, or on a revenge raid.

Although this may well be true, the fact of the matter is that Hasan may have no choice and this is the significant point. Even though drastic structural changes have occurred, such empirical modifications do not cause automatic alterations or erasure of indigenous institutions, practices, ideologies, or values. The feud and sulha comprise a cultural system of inter-subjective meaning. This is not just a set of ideas carried about in an individual's head—it is also "out there," embedded in practices. Unless he is prepared to leave his society physically, Hasan cannot liberate himself from this system simply by mentally renouncing its logic. So long as rivals

regard him as affiliated with his family or hamula group, he may be held responsible. He and individuals like him remain bound by the feuding and sulha rules unless and until a significant proportion of their brethren all break with the past simultaneously.

Furthermore, there is no automatic transformation of ideas and ideology resulting from material changes in economic activities. Ginat argues that the Bedouin sedentarization, for example, has led to a decrease in the practice of revenge. This may be true to a certain extent. One can see how living in a house rather than a tent, and going to work in a set location every day would make practices like revenge and exile highly inconvenient. But as practices of revenge killing and feud were never based on utilitarian considerations in the first place, it is hard to see how utilitarian questions would directly affect and even eradicate them now. Inconvenience weighs in rather lightly on the scales against the moral imperatives of revenge or making peace. During the period some informants referred to as "boiling blood," a man is not likely to give much thought to matters of convenience or inconvenience; intensely emotional issues are rarely dealt with in purely rational ways. In any case, settlement has not stopped peasant Arabs from carrying out revenge and sulha. Undoubtedly there are some for whom firmer embedment in the Israeli economy will lead to more "individualistic" thinking, but it is just as likely that those who have successfully adapted to their new situation will not be willing to forego these aspects of their Arab identity.

The evolutionary logic of modernization theory places emphasis on the question of the future existence of the "traditional tribal system." Ginat characterizes revenge practices as an ancient system conducted by Bedouin and peasant Arabs that "has become increasingly strained" due to its being encapsulated within Israeli society. He argues that the survival of this traditional system is threatened as it loses relevance and bows to the imposed national system of western-style courts and legal codes. Interestingly, many Israeli-Palestinians also expressed some version of this scenario of disappearing traditions. The "traditional" systems of sharaf, according to several informants, has lessened in its extent. "People commit revenge acts less frequently, they take into consideration the fact that they likely will have to serve lengthy prison terms" should they do as their value system dictates and "relax their nerves." To the extent that this is true, the Israeli economy, society, politics, moral codes have deeply affected and altered longstanding indigenous ways of life but the nature of this alteration appears to be a more of a shift toward certain Arab forms such as sulha methods (as opposed to revenge forms) rather than a relinquishing of indigenous practices altogether.

Any exploration of the extent to which "modernization" has changed Israeli-Palestinian values, attitudes, or social practices must beware of jumping to conclusions. In a discussion of the presumed decline of sulha mediation practices, Ginat gives the example of a Bedouin man who turned to the police to file a complaint against his own nephew (1987:83). This is presented

as an illustration that Israeli Palestinians are now choosing to utilize the state's law enforcement system rather than the indigenous system of asking elderly notables to mediate.

Yet even this case of an Arab turning to outside authorities is not as clear-cut as Ginat suggests. Ginat's assumption that a man's going to the police represents a breakdown of the old system can be interpreted alternatively as the subject's continued reliance on mediators. Israeli police are generally looked upon as prestigious go-betweens in the same way that mukhtars were in previous times; the former are now simply included in the pool of people expected and deemed notables, capable to perform duties once carried out by only the latter. Police officers are presumed to have precisely those qualities that enable them to be effective sulha mediators, namely, exceptional ability to act as negotiators and verbally diffuse conflicts. Sulha logic and methods of indirect or mediated conflict resolution are still firmly in place, with police or other legal institutions incorporated into native categories and prior structures.

Dependency Theories Respond to Modernization Fallacies

Even after decades of military rule, warfare, dispersion, and protracted ethnic/nationalist tension, the structure and substance of politics within Israeli-Palestinian villages and towns have not been completely obliterated. This endurance of certain loyalties, identifications, and cultural norms has long been recognized even by modernization theorists. Shimon Shamir's (1962) early study on village leadership found a "situational crisis" of "modernizing institutions" with "traditional actors" remaining in power. That this should have been the case was a matter of puzzlement for Shamir; persistence of the traditional suggested some kind of failure of the modernizing institutions. The continued political relevance of traditional Arab structures and leaders, hamula loyalties and identifications, challenged the modernization theorists' initial predictions and created for these social analysts an enigma to be explained.

In response to the false predictions of modernization theories a host of "dependency" suppositions arose that acknowledged the tenacity of traditions throughout village society. The new paradigm set out to explain this perseverance not as a cultural lag but rather as a consequence of the subaltern political status of the Arab minority in Israel. Dependency theorists argued that the inequalities of power inherent in the colonizer vs. colonized (post-colonial state vs. subject people) relationship set a context with determining implications for local political and social structures. While modernization theorists hold that traditional practices are swept away with the introduction of western state systems and economic structures, dependency theorists contend that indigenous traditions, far from being extinguished, are revived and reinvented in the context of these power relations. Sometimes, according to this view, traditions are encouraged by

colonial or post-colonial regimes if they serve to keep the natives divided and powerless. The continued relevance of indigenous structuring principles is a direct reaction of a colonized population to the imposed structures of the dominant group.

Anthropological studies have portrayed the hamula, the network of patrilinial kinship ties, as the determining and key organizing principle of Palestinian village politics (Nakhleh 1977:52). The indigenous political institution that has received the most attention from dependency theorists in the Israeli context therefore has been the hamula. In asking questions such as, "What sense does the hamula system dictate local politics?" and "What accounts for the persistence of hamula as a dominant discourse?" dependency theorists turn to the national context for explanations. Conflicting perspectives regarding the origins and continuing significance of hamula centrality in Israeli-Palestinian village politics, all within the general rubric of dependency analysis, are offered by Cohen, Asad, and Nakhleh.

Cohen asserts that local elections are fought between the headmen of vying notable families rather than on ideological bases or in terms of a competition between national political parties (1965:173). In the foreword of Cohen's text,[17] Gluckman summarizes Cohen's argument: Cohen maintains that through the revitalization of hamula organization and the rejection of party politics, the Israeli-Palestinian local community asserted its separate identity and adjusted to the national setting of Israeli political institutions (1965: viii). The patrilineally-related groups of men had a period of breakup during the Mandate but revived after the establishment of the Israeli state to meet the altered conditions and new uncertainties. People reacted to cataclysmic changes in terms of traditional allegiances, customs, and values in order to accommodate themselves to the new reality.

Asad contests this view for its implication that hamula organization is the essential form of Israeli-Palestinian politics. Rather, he argues, hamula organization was adopted consciously as a mode of control by Arabs because it was their only legal means of political existence (1975:28). Discrediting the façade of anthropological objectivity, Asad exposes the notion of enduring traditional forms of hamula organization as an Orientalist ideological preconception. He faults Cohen for not emphasizing the role of Zionist exploitation and domination in the furthering of family-based local political organization (1975:28-29). The hamula set-up served Zionist ends; it was their answer to the threat of Israeli-Palestinian nationalism: keep the Arabs divided and fighting among themselves.

Nakhleh echoes Asad's critique stating the need to "dismantle widely held assumptions concerning the hamula as the eternal principle for political organization in the Arab village …" (1977:54). Nakhleh's own research addresses the issue of hamula politics and phrases the question thus: Why have inter- and intra-hamula conflicts persisted in village politics despite the presence of political, economic, and cultural threats generated by the Israeli regime? Why has the

Israeli threat not been viewed as the overriding enemy that bridges together the Palestinian hamula factions?[18]

Nakhleh (1975) finds, like Asad, that the Israeli government actively encouraged group conflict and competition in the Arab community by sustaining traditional hamula divisions.[19] By keeping the Israeli Palestinians divided, weak, and "primitive," they hoped to prevent them from uniting into a political collectivity. According to Nakhleh, family-based factions were restored and enhanced but in an altered form post establishment of the state, that is, along with a new individualism. As result of state policy changes in the political and economic environment of villages, local conflict and competition transformed from "corporate" to "faction" based. Corporate groups had been more permanent, with a clearly defined organization and structure based on a common ideology and collective control over resources. Political factions, on the other hand, were more fleeting; participation was based on individual, short-term interest, and members were recruited on diverse and competing bases. The declining corporate and kinship bases of authority, and increased importance of the individual are directly attributed to several Israeli-induced factors: first, the shift from agriculture to wage labor—the head of household used to control all the land but now economic power is more widely spread; second, the change from mukhtarship to chairmanship—any of the competing groups could have a mukhtar (headman) but chairmanship of local councils is a single, elected position sought after largely for prestige reasons; and third, the importance of physical strength or family size—traditionally those who offered the most hospitality and could "protect" their women were the most prestigious but now it is whomever can attain the most votes.

Customs such as hamula organization that were revived and reinstated by subject populations in reaction to the structuring context of imperialism are considered by some analysts as inauthentic and politically crippling configurations. Divine (1979) takes this position regarding the significance of family prestige, religious ties, and the sectarian nature of politics. She criticizes the segmented polity of the Israeli-Palestinian village with its ever-competing and fissuring units because it poses an obstacle to wider solidarity among Palestinian political organizations (1979:214). Like Asad and Nakleh, Divine argues that these pathological patterns of division persist only because they are reinforced by foreign rule: "[P]olitical subordination is … the reason why traditional social networks, amidst radical historical and political changes, have still not lost their thrust" (1979:229). She goes on to state that the segmentary cleavages, now prominent under the state of Israel, had also structured Palestinian politics during the late Ottoman Period and the British Mandate. Thus, according to Divine, the main dialectic throughout history that has determined Palestinian society—politics and all social structures—is that of "the conqueror and the conquered."

Dependency theories continue to dominate the study of Israeli-Palestinian politics (Haidar

1987). Rosenfeld and Al-Haj (1987), for example, published the first and only comprehensive analysis of Arab local government in Israel. In this text they describe how state agencies have implemented discriminatory policies that hinder the abilities of Arab village governments. Although the authors' attention to the national situation is appropriate, their main thesis displays the dependency theorists' tendency to exaggerate the determining force of the colonizer-colonized relationship in shaping local action. They point out that there is high participation in local elections and much less in the national ones. Their primary argument is that because the Israeli Palestinians have not been allowed to form nationalist parties, the frustration and discontent felt by them has been channeled into political activity in the form of local organization rather than national (or anti-establishment) mobilization. Local politics are viewed as a function of national inequality.

Though the perspectives and foci of these analyses differ, they are linked by the common assumption that hamula-based, segmentary organization exists as a central structuring principle of contemporary Israeli-Palestinian local politics, and that full understanding of this complex and shifting pattern and its significance depends, first and foremost, on a close inspection of Israeli state policy. Yet segmentary organization should be understood as one effective tool among others for engaging in local intra-Arab power struggles; a method willingly and usefully embraced by subjects. The individual may have been controlled or limited by his hamula, particularly in the past, but hamula affiliation is equally a positive tool used by individual members for political advancement (cf. Rosenfeld 1980; Rouhanna and Asad 1992; Al-Haj 1993). Hamula and other "traditional" affiliations remain significant in electoral politics along with westernized institutions of primaries, secret-ballot, universal suffrage, and competing parties because they garner votes. Hamula rhetoric and organization are consciously employed by candidates as political vehicles; one of numerous routes to power.

Certainly the hamula has always been a limiting factor for some and a useful vehicle to power for ascribed others. If an individual happens to come from a big hamula, he can employ his position for personal political gain. But if an individual happens to come from a hamula that is not large in number, this need not be a crippling factor in current political contests. A man can run for election by appealing to other communal identities such as his ethnic or religious group, and these too have proven to be successful strategies. Partisan identities are generally not made explicit; many of the so-called independent candidates are informally linked to a political party but rely primarily on their hamula or other affiliations for votes.

As stated, it is not always the hamula or patrilineal corporate group that determines the crucial line of division between competing village factions. In Shefa 'Amr, for example, because three (and prior to the 1920s, four) major religious groups coexist, it is the religious community that serves as the main cleavage or dividing line in electoral battles for local power. In this town,

religious identity is a much more salient issue than other possible divisive factors such as hamula, family, or ideological beliefs. Electoral battles in this town reflect the historical power struggles between the Christian and Muslim communities, with the Druze minority being the determining swing vote. One mayoral candidate for the 1993 Shefa ‘Amr election told me he was a Communist. When the election campaign took place, however, he did not advertise his ideological views. Instead he ran for the mayoralty relying solely on his hamula connections; he came from a large hamula and felt this was the most advantageous approach. The current Muslim mayor of this town came from a very small hamula himself, but managed to garner votes by relying on his affiliation with the Muslim majority of the town over the Christian sector.

Shefa ‘Amr can be contrasted with other villages of a single religious group—homogeneously Muslim or Druze—that still generally do tend to segment fully along hamula lines. In these cases, small families join in coalition with one of the two large, competing families (moieties). Loyalty to one’s religious community thus does not play a role in these electoral political battles. There is no one fixed rule for local election patterns across Arab villages. The segmentary principle that groups hamula or religious communities in village competitions is a structuring principle that makes sense to villagers and often influences their voting choice but it does not fully explain or dictate political culture or even electoral practices. Ultimately, it is too simplistic to claim that kinship comprises Israeli-Palestinian political culture,[20] or that Zionist colonialism dictates inter-Arab fighting in hamula form. Each of these conceptions holds truth, but the picture is more complex.

Israeli Palestinians, active players in determining the form and process of local and national politics, have a “multiplicity of identities” (Wood 1993) that translates into a complex system with competing idioms— hamula, party platforms, nationalism, and religious identity. Hamula is but one of numerous means to power within the village setting. Its resiliency is both a product of Zionist implementation as well as of Palestinian choice.

Individual Agency: Using the System

Modernization and dependency theories discussed above share two structural flaws. First, both treat subject populations as passive material waiting to be molded and shaped by the powerful forces of the colonial state, on the one hand, and the capitalist economy on the other. Neither theoretical paradigm takes seriously the possibility that local political actors are agents with the ability to manipulate, make choices, and maneuver within contexts of the state system. Divine’s monocausal scheme, for example, sets forth this kind of argument that is neither provable nor disprovable. Her main thesis—that Palestinian society is determined by the fact of foreign conquest— is impossible to evaluate because one cannot know how Palestinian society would

have developed had it not been subject to waves of foreign imperialism; had the (Jewish) state of Israel not been founded, causing massive Palestinian dislocation. While she should be commended for her sensitivity to issues of power and colonialism, she gives short shrift to indigenous agency. Local actors and native cultural practices are treated as if they are determined by external sources, as if they are no more than colonialist creations. One should not overestimate the extent to which a colonial state has the ability to shape people's identities, attitudes, beliefs, values, norms— these are all negotiable.

One night I went with Amin, a Bedouin friend, to visit his sister and brother-in-law who lived in a Muslim village near Kamila. When we arrived, several neighbors were hovering over an elderly woman who was ardently telling a story about her son's misdemeanors while serving in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). As a result of the soldier's transgressions, two army officers had come to the village to investigate his family's home, after which they were to make a final determination as to the precise legal punishment. The boy's mother had deftly handled the matter by removing all the food from the house, displaying bottles of medicine, and walking with a cane. By appealing to the mother-son idiom so strong in Israeli Jewish and Arab culture she quickly gained the officers' sympathy—this poor old woman desperately needed her son to care for his feeble mother. She never had to state directly that she wanted her son to be released from the army jail and moved to a base closer to home, but she achieved these results. Israeli Palestinians may be subject to Israeli law, institutions, and authorities, but they do not always play by the rules; they are neither passive nor helpless subjects.

Amin, who had been listening attentively till the end, cleared his throat and proclaimed gallantly to the old storyteller that the next time she had any problems with the officials she should come to him for assistance. He informed the group of his career as a police officer and his connections with high-ranking authorities. The woman appeared pleased by this offer of assistance and responded with an expression of relief and gratitude, although I thought I detected a subtle tinge of sarcasm as she was quite confident of her own capability. After Amin and I departed and were driving back to Haifa, to my surprise he commented with casual certitude that he would never actually help the woman. He was not likely to see her again, and besides he did not really have any powerful connections. He confided that he had said these things just to please her, to give her a sense of self-importance—such a powerful man would offer to assist her, an elderly and insignificant village woman.

Amin no doubt also had other less altruistic motives behind his declarations. By affiliating himself with Israeli authorities, or at least offering the pretense of such a connection, the young man heightened his personal status: now there were several additional people who might think of Amin when they were seeking an influential mediator with state matters. Perhaps the visitors would relate the story to others and Amin's reputation would strengthen. Amin's image of

power, if believed, could come to constitute real prestige and status. He had planted the seeds, and, from this and other such small maneuvers, perhaps large and fruitful plants of sharaf would crop up. This display of reverse musayara, that is, the powerful serving the weak, shows how a man may attempt to build sharaf not only by setting himself off from women and other men, but also by connecting himself to the higher echelons of Israeli legal institutions and law enforcement. For Amin, as for the elderly woman, the state institutions are legitimate and carry weight but they are also exploitable.

From first appearances and a dependency theory perspective, Ibrahim Nimr Fiussein, the Muslim Arab mayor of Shefa ‘Amr for over a quarter of a century and head of the National Committee of Chairmen of Arab Local Authorities (NCCALA) since its inception, might be figured simply as an Arab engaged in Israeli state forms of politics, evidence of official forms replacing indigenous ones of traditional leadership. Furthermore he might be seen by Arabs as an Israeli tool for he is supported in his official capacities by Israeli authorities who view him as a benign leader who will not incite nationalistic trouble. Fiussein initially refused to involve the NCCALA in any kind of mobilization to support the popular Arab protest on Land Day and only later joined the protest tacitly because of immense pressure put on him by the Arab population.

Yet to figure him strictly as an Israeli puppet, I believe, is misrepresentative; certainly it only tells one perspective on his story. Although useful for the Israelis, he too is able to pull strings and manipulate the national system for his own personal benefit. In 1993, when Fiussein publicly hesitated to run again for office, he was contacted not only by Prime Minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin, but also by Chairman Yasir Arafat, both of whom urged him to run again. His own constituents then rallied around him and pushed him to continue on as mayor. Fie relented and won the election. Several informants analyzed Fiussein’s actions as a devious maneuver to ensure political victory in the election. They maintain that Fiussein never had a doubt that he would run again and that he cleverly gained popular backing by using the national leaders’ support. Fie manipulated the national leadership and the electoral process to secure his own high status. Coming from a small hamula, Fiussein could not appeal to traditional hamula backing and instead opted to use national politicians and campaign tactics to raise his sharaf and retain power in his local setting.

Fiussein achieved success in the Israeli state system as mayor, but this end may be seen as a means of raising sharaf within the indigenous system as a sulha mediator for example. Fiussein is renowned as a sulha leader and this is based on the fact that he is mayor, and that he is a proponent of compromise, concession, and the benefits of cooperation with the Israeli authorities. Fiussein is the ultimate politician who has succeeded in both systems, procuring favors from higher authorities for his clients in return for sharaf and electoral support; attaining the necessary local and national support to keep himself in political office for decades.

In another example of the political agency of Israeli-Palestinians to use the state system, an Israeli-Palestinian man disregarded traditional patriarchal rules claiming that he was bound by the state's official army regulations. This man's obligations to the state were conveniently summoned up when they provided a suitable excuse for him as a son to defy his father's will. The father was unable to assert his traditional powers of personal networks, patronage, and wasta because of the invocation of official state structures and their rules. Suleiman appealed to his eldest son Mbada, a lieutenant in the Druze army unit based in Haifa, to grant his younger son, Ramiz, also engaged in mandatory army service, permission to take the weekend off and go home. Mbada refused his father telling him only that he "could not go against official regulations" and that Ramiz should "appeal directly to his own senior officer." Mbada's refusal, however, is not an indication that state forms (i.e., IDF) had replaced indigenous order (i.e., patriarchy). Rather it was a manipulation of official rules to defy traditional patriarchal power. Mbada could have provided this favor easily but did not wish to do so because of existing tensions and power struggles between himself and his father. Suleiman had been exerting pressure on Mbada to marry a Druze village woman, and with every refusal by his son, brought in additional mediators to heap on pressure and persuade him into the marriage. In this request, unrelated to marriage issues, Mbada could refuse his father's wishes and gain a measure of satisfaction and power. Israeli-Arabs (among others) continue to use proteksia or patron-clients relations routinely as a modus operandi, but if one does not wish to provide a requested favor, as the son did not in this case, one can simply pronounce to be bound by official state rules. The state system, of which this Israeli-Palestinian was a part, was invoked as a means of defying traditional orders without suffering consequences. When Mbada reached his thirties he agreed to marry a (virginal) nineteen-year-old Druze village girl, succumbing to patriarchal will and reflecting the fact that traditional values and structures can and do assert their on-going power alongside the reality and force of official state institutions and forms. Individuals have agency to manipulate all kinds of rules and negotiate their power.

US Versus Them?

In addition to ignoring agency, the second major problem with modernization and dependency theories in the Israeli context is they are predicated on a radical "us-them" split of dubious epistemological validity and limited scholarly use. Arab citizens exhibit a wide spectrum of positions on the degree to which they feel committed to and identify with the Israeli state; and individual attitudes depend on the context. Despite clear ethnic stratification and the unrealized quest of a diverse minority that is fighting for equality, there is no simple duality of "conqueror" versus "conquered" within the Israeli state. Divine and others oversimplify and distort the current

political situation of Palestinians in Israel when they presume that Arab identity or social structure cannot embrace or include Israeli identity in any form other than that of subordination and colonization.

A paradigm that views Palestinian identity as multilayered and flexible better enables an understanding of that nebulous area where "cultures" seem to overlap. I am not arguing that there is in fact no real difference between the inter-subjective meanings that underlie a wide variety of Palestinian social practices and those that accord with official structures of Israeli society and polity. Rather, I suggest that the differences lie on a continuum with no clear breaking points. The "overlap" that exists is, at this point, better described as a "hybridization" rather than "westernization" process.[21] Certain institutions found in the Arab villages of Israel may well have had imposed "western" origins, but they have been incorporated into Arab lives and are now arguably as "eastern" or "Arab" as other social forms and political practices.

Analytical separation of Arab political forms into two systems, modern vs. traditional, Israeli vs. Arab, imposed vs. indigenous, is often a function of western, academic, or non-Israeli categories—the "system" that Israeli-Palestinians operate with is in fact a mixture of indigenous practices and meanings—the politics of sharaf and segmentary organization—and other structures initially of foreign provenance. For political actors in the Arab villages of Israel, that is, anyone coming to political awareness after 1948, this is simply seamless political "reality."[22] Both orders have been grafted onto each other; both are embraced by actors and have become inseparably intertwined. Sharaf logic did not get replaced in the Arab village but rather continues to assert itself in novel ways. Most notably, control of local government has become an important—perhaps the central—expression of hamula or clan sharaf and, hence, a man's status and identity.

Israeli-Palestinians themselves, however, do assert a political division between "official" and "unofficial" politics at certain times. The duality becomes prominent when indigenous actors are explaining, analyzing, and representing their political institutions. Like other modernization theorists, Arab informants offer depictions of a traditional system being imposed upon by "modern" (*modernie*), western structures. They describe two bounded systems in interaction and sometimes claim that, for better or worse, traditional social practices such as sulha and feud are dying out and being replaced by the modern processes of the state. These informant-theorists likewise assume that radical changes in the socioeconomic structure of the Arab village must necessarily lead to dramatic political changes. They predict the breakdown of patriarchal hamula order as the predominant structure of village politics because of the increase in formal education brought to Arabs by the Israeli state. Younger and more educated players with connections to the Israeli authorities were now more often in a position to offer patronage, while the ability of the once omnipotent hamula heads to dominate these lines of patronage was declining. Young

educated men, I was told, are increasingly seeking and obtaining office in the local councils rather that ceding precedence to their patriarchal elders as in the past. Many voters, too, are demonstrating a greater willingness to break segmentary ranks and vote according to their personal interest in the local elections.

These emic perspectives are supported by changes that have taken place in village elections and governance. A young group of men in Kufar Yanuh, for example, secretly plotted to break with their hamula in the 1994 local elections and vote for an outside candidate based on his social program and educational initiatives. Increasingly diverse membership on Arab local councils reflects a greater flexibility in voting patterns that challenges hamula affiliation as the sole criterion. Yet the perception that patriarchal hamula order is declining may not conform to the reality of all that is occurring in village politics. Such expressions deserve serious notice, but they cannot stand as proof positive that the attitudes, beliefs, norms, and loyalties of an indigenous order have in fact broken down. While youth gravitate to the new, elderly people in every generation tend to become nostalgic and bemoan the passing of better times and the corruption of contemporary youth. Israeli police, courts, local councils, and government have undoubtedly restructured Arab village politics in profound ways. It is important, however, to understand the precise nature of these changes.

What has happened is that processes such as proletarianization and the widespread introduction of formal state politics have given actors in village political arenas possibilities and choices that they did not have a generation or two ago. Young men may not be as financially dependent on their fathers as they once were. This does not mean, however, that they are going to rebel automatically. As often as not, the old loyalties and segmentary identifications are surviving the social and economic changes that villages are undergoing. What is innovative is the choice and ever-present possibility of change—with all the stresses and strains that this brings. There are new bases from which to vie for political prestige and people select from all the available tools that can best work for them at any given moment.

Local Council and Morality in Arab el-Jeeb

In some ethnographic instances a situation may appear to be confirming theoretical views that “western” forms have or will replace “traditional” ones, but on closer inspection this appearance turns out to be illusory. In the following case, I describe how local elections became the battleground for a competition between brothers, a situation that would have been unthinkable in the past. Until recently, the Bedouin tribe, Arab el-Jeeb in the Galilee was linked into a regional council under the same jurisdiction as several nearby Jewish settlements and kibbutzim (socialist-style communities). The head of this regional council was a Jewish man who,

according to the complaints of the el-Jeeb Bedouin, favored his Jewish constituency. Frustrated by the situation, the council representative from the el-Jeeb tribe, Abu Yosef, appealed to national authorities who finally agreed to set up a separate local council. Government authorities proclaimed that beginning in March 1996 they would appoint a new local council in Bet Zarzir village solely for the Arab el-Jeeb tribe. Abu Yosef was the obvious choice to head the local council but he declined saying that he had had enough of politics and preferred instead to spend his time tending to his cattle. During the months preceding the final government appointment Abu Yosef backed his son, Yosef, for the position of head of the future local council. Unforeseen to all, however, another strong contender emerged. Fiasan el-Jeeb, the brother of Abu Yosef and uncle of Yosef, let it be known that he too desired the position. This announcement sparked a heated conflict between the brothers.

A colleague of mine witnessed this unfolding affair and deemed it a good illustration of how Israeli institutions and processes have eradicated Arab traditions. Indeed an initial reading of this story does suggest this to be true. Fiere were Israeli-Arab men in an intense competition to run a local council of the state. Traditionally it would have been highly unusual that a Bedouin man, Fiasan, would set himself up as a political competitor against his own brother and brother's son. Under feud and sulha rules such an action would have been impossible and unthinkable. It was also exceptional that brothers—Abu Yosef and Fiasan—would express feelings of disdain for one another so publicly.

Yet, after delving deeper into the background details of this conflict, one might interpret the situation alternatively rather than as a representation of systemic alteration. Abu Yosef had indeed charged that his brother Fiasan was unfit to serve as a local leader, and loudly expressed sentiments of resentment toward him. This antipathy though had a family history. Fiasan, a career army officer, had served in the Lebanese operations in 1982. While in service, he fell in love with a Lebanese woman. He returned to Israel with her after the war and promptly divorced his first wife. Abu Yosef condemned Hasan for such "insensitive and dishonest actions toward his (first) wife and children."

Abu Yosef was not alone in this opinion. Many "neutral" Bedouin— those not of the el-Jeeb tribe—discussed the situation and similarly felt that at least Hasan should have kept his first wife and treated her with respect. One Bedouin man told me, "Hasan was unable to show responsibility when it came to relations with his first wife. If he betrayed his family, he betrays Arab values completely. How could he possibly be a good guide or leader for his community?" Another man explained, "The situation here is not like in the United States. There Bill Clinton can sleep with Genifer Flowers and whomever else and no one cares. Here any leader has to be good and honest to his family first and foremost. Otherwise he could never be good to his larger family." The fact that in the US the affair with Genifer Flowers (among others) caused a scandal

of such proportions and a major threat to Clinton's re-election hopes, his ability to finish his term, and his long-term reputation indicates that the US and the Bedouin tribe are perhaps not as far apart as this man believed. But the point—that political actors must be regarded as morally upright, protectors of women, children, family, and hence Arab traditions—is significant.

Hasan was considered unfit as a politician because he was not morally upright, and hence not in line with Arab values. He was deemed a man lacking in sharaf. Local politics remain predicated on the same moral qualities and sharaf logic that sustain the traditional family structures. One's personal or family life is not at all separable from one's political reputation or perceived political capabilities. The qualities that people say make local political leaders suitable and effective are the moral qualities of honesty and responsibility toward ones' family and neighbors. Politicians must continue to legitimate themselves in terms of the traditional moral codes of sharaf. Thus, despite the unusual appearance of this brotherly clash, and the relatively new battle zone of the local council, the values of the political system have not been dramatically altered.

Governmental Recognition of Palestinian Political Practices and Values

Palestinian political practices now fully incorporate state institutions of electoral-style government as the earlier part of this chapter set out. Yet, as I have stated, the fact that Palestinian citizens view the Israeli institutions as legitimate political structures and work within these confines to the best of their ability does not mean that these practices have replaced or eradicated indigenous systems or values that are more distinctly recognized as Arab. Indeed, one of the indications that Palestinians accept the Israeli authorities is, in fact, the formers' incorporation of the latter's systems into their own political forms and categories. Palestinians routinely invite Israeli government officials, Arab and Jew, to attend sulhas and sign peace contracts. With a joint display of power during the sulha ceremony, local and state leaders mutually bolster each other's status in the eyes of the Arab population and reinforce the blending of Arab and Israeli forms of authority.

In this section I wish to emphasize the fact that not only has a thriving Palestinian polity altered to embrace local government, the state government too has, willingly or reluctantly, acknowledged sulha and other political practices and values of the indigenous people. Although all citizens are legally bound only to abide by state law, in reality, Palestinian citizens along with Israeli authorities also act according to norms and values of the indigenous Arab population. Furthermore, state officials do not participate in sulhas out of benevolence so much as mutual dependence; they need the cooperation of the Arab leaders as much as the other way around.

Law enforcement officers have developed close working relationships with jaha elders based on mutual respect and goals. Neither political processes nor set of political actors have replaced the other. Furthermore, these are not closed or mutually exclusive systems but rather structures that overlap and generally work in a cooperative fashion.

Regular attendance of state officials at sulhas confirms their recognition of traditional Arab forms of peacemaking and law keeping. Mayors and state government officials come to final sulha ceremonies at the request of jaha elders. Senior government and authority figures—often Jewish—add sharaf weight to the occasion. These men are perceived as extremely reputable; their presence and influence added to the peace agreement make it inviolable, or at least extremely difficult for either side to renege. According to Ginat, the offended party is bound by the important signatories, who have a "psychological effect" on the participants that keeps them under control. What this "psychological effect" is really, is the depth of the embedded sharaf value.

In one sulha that took place in Rama, a Muslim-Druze village in the Galilee, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of the Police, the Chair of the Knesset, and the Director to the Prime Minister's office all attended and took part in the sulha ceremony. This was necessary because the conflict threatened to expand into a colossal civil war between Christians and Druze. Government authorities signed a written agreement that had been worked out previously by the active jaha men. The father of one of the main perpetrators spoke with extreme pride of the high-ranking officials who had attended his son's sulha ceremony; he kept a video recording of the event locked up with other valuables. He exhibited no visible signs of disturbance from the reason for the occasion—his son had killed and injured others, but prominently displayed a framed picture of his son along with an invitation to the sulha on his living room wall. When he showed me photographs of the ceremony he emphasized only the fact that numerous important men had attended and that this, he felt, was a reflection of his own sharaf.

I might note that although governmental presence plays an important role in creating the gravity of a sulha ceremony, Arab leaders remain fully in control of their political processes. Being in local government is never an automatic ticket to being allowed into the inner circle of jaha negotiations and Israeli Jews are always excluded from this part of the sulha process. But just as serving on the jaha can sometimes be an avenue to political office, service in political office may enhance one's chances of being selected to serve on the jaha. One informant told me, "Of course, the Mayor, As'ad Araybe (of Mghar village) is part of all the sulhas in the area." When I asked an informant about a recent conflict in Daliet el-Carmel, he answered, "Well, the Mayor worked with Sheikh Saleh (a reputable jaha elder) and the police to make sulha. Together they all went to the house of the family and tried to solidify the sulha." Sulha leaders often select mayors, local notables, state officials, and police to partake in the mediation process in order to

facilitate and guarantee sulha agreements.

Another indication that the Israeli government recognizes the indigenous structure is its reliance on the power of indigenous leaders to implement certain policies. When Israeli authorities perceive that a certain man holds sway over his village or region, they turn to him as a facilitator, hoping that this tactic will allow for easy acceptance among villagers and reduce the possibility of rebellion. While state authorities are clearly manipulating Arab notables to their own ends, they nonetheless are forced to appeal to them and thus at least tacitly admit the limits of their own coercive power and legitimate authority.[23] Despite Israeli power to design and set up state institutions, their effectiveness in implementing policies affecting the Arab population often falls short of the Arab elder's influence.

One dramatic example of Israeli authorities utilizing the power of the Arab leadership was in the implementation of the Bedouin sedentarization policy in the Negev. The government felt it necessary to appeal to the power and status of Bedouin leaders. Fearful of how their policy would be received, authorities courted the respect of Bedouin dignitaries; no doubt to the latter's financial and prestigious benefit. It was necessary to gain their support and influence to carry out this drastic and massive restructuring plan. Only backed by this indigenous source of legitimacy, could Israeli national authorities ensure that the public would follow their directives.

The state's de facto recognition of Palestinian traditions and leadership, however, remains unofficial in Israel and is only detectable in practice.[24] There is no written acknowledgement of these customs but in practice there is allowance, participation and even promotion by the state. Many Jewish police officers know jaha men personally and have worked together with them for years, sometimes obtaining information from them, other times supplying it. In certain cases the chief of police might appeal to the jaha elder to make a sulha, or put pressure on the members of the jaha to accomplish these ends if they wish to limit police involvement (Kressel 1996). Judges recognize the significance of the sulha system and will give lesser sentences to perpetrators in situations where sulha has been carried out. And under certain circumstances the police will abide by the determinations of the jaha elders.

Jewish authorities recognize Arab leadership and are invested in keeping this a functioning relationship. In one conflict, the police had arrested eight teenage boys who had been out in the streets "causing trouble" though no serious violence had occurred. Several jaha men spoke with the boys' families and felt that the matter was not dangerous and that it should simply be dismissed without consequence to the boys. Jaha elders turned to the involved officers and personally requested the release of the boys. According to my informant, the officer responded with a smile, "You ask me to do something that is impossible. But what is more impossible is to say 'no' to you!" The boys were sent home that day.

In numerous instances, convicted criminals are discharged from jail temporarily (typically for

twenty-four hours) in order to participate in sulhas, a clear indication that the state recognizes the significance of carrying out sulha procedures. In the case from Rama village, the father told me that his son was convicted of throwing a petrol bomb at a group of Christians in the village and killing one child. This occurred during a time when the ongoing fights between the religious groups had flared up. The police agreed to release the jailed man to participate in sulha with the provision that he remain handcuffed. When the jaha elders protested, stating that the man had to be a fully free participant or the sulha message would be destroyed, the police rescinded. The convict participated in sulha, and though escorted by police officers, he was not physically restrained in any way. Only if a killer attends the peace process as an unfettered man, which implies that his actions are of his own volition, and with the ability to shake hands, can a sulha be carried out successfully. Finally, moving far beyond mere recognition, facilitation, minimal participation, and cooperation, there was at least one case in which the government itself paid the diyyah, dramatically illustrating the indigenous system's hold over the state (Ginat 1987:25).

Kufar Manda Feud: Police Rely on Local Leaders

The feud in Kufar Manda village offers an illustration of several key points. First, this case furthers my argument that there is an interpenetration or overlap of indigenous politics and local government such that police and other government officials cooperate with jaha leaders for peaceful reconciliation among disputants. Second, members of the official Israeli system depend on the indigenous sulha leaders to maintain order as much as the other way around; this constitutes a reversal of power from the official discourse that only recognizes the authority and ability of the state to maintain law and order. Finally, this data highlights a significant point in the discussion of indigenous and official politics—sharaf politics, interpersonal disputes, and subsequent sulhas often revolve around local elections and inter-family rivalries or competitions to win elections. Indigenous politics and local government come together at the site of the local council, around the mayoralty, and particularly during periods of elections because these are the places where and moments when dominant symbols of power are tangible. Local government, more than just a vehicle to combat ethnic inequality on the national scale, has offered the indigenous population a new arena in which to negotiate and contest for sharaf.

During 1989 there was a series of physical confrontations in Kufar Manda between the rival hamulas Halim and Zaidan. The feud had divided the entire population into two opposing clans or moieties: the Zaidans and their main allies, the Morads, versus the Abdel Halim clan in coalition with numerous smaller families. This thorough division of the village was even apparent in the schoolyard where children disassociated themselves from those of the opposing group. On April 8, 1989, *Ha'aretz* reported that four houses were damaged by petrol bombs and

scores of people were injured by stones and bottles being thrown in a confrontation between members of the opposing groups. Two days later police arrested twenty-five men after violence had again broken out. Police Commander Albert Mosasia, the chief officer in the northern district, set up an on-going patrol in the village's central square to discourage further eruptions and ensure the safety of the villagers. Mosasia proclaimed in a press conference, "We will stay until they stop fighting." Police presence in the center of the village may have discouraged a few men who wished to avoid arrest but this kind of pressure alone was not enough to contain the conflict. Despite Mosasia's preventative efforts, the inter-hamula clash resumed and even worsened; an additional fifty-five men were arrested the following day. The police force had proven ineffectual; the extent and nature of the strife was beyond their understanding or ability to contain.

These two hamulas had been embroiled in a feud for thirteen years, not coincidentally, since the first elections for local council took place.[25] Zaidan had been appointed leader at the council's inception in 1976 but in 1983 when there was an election he lost his post to Abdel Halim. This defeat led to rioting by his disgruntled supporters immediately after the election. Sulha was later achieved by forming a coalition of the two major factions and agreeing to have the patriarchs serve jointly on the local council. In the 1988 election Zaidan won back the mayoral post and with renewed power began to dismiss local council workers hired under Abdel Halim. Despite the consequent tensions, Zaidan continued the firing process throughout 1989. Many of those removed from their positions were members of small families who had moved to the town seeking employment and protection from the Abdel Halim clan. During the first week of April 1989, Zaidan discharged four workers and told several others that they could expect to lose their jobs in the near future. This episode sparked a new round of heavy fighting.

Now that he had been re-elected, Zaidan, unsurprisingly, was no longer in favor of the previous power-sharing arrangement. He complained that the pact had not functioned well and conveniently ignored the fact that his side had been allowed to share power when he had lost the elections. Abdel Halim, who in 1989 was no longer in a position of strength, argued in favor of a coalition. "That would be good. We are always in favor of cooperation," he told the press *(Jerusalem Post,* April 10, 1989). Halim went on to say that he wanted to ensure that the Zaidans did not gain autocratic control of the village. The Zaidans, for their part, defended their steps of dismissing workers and counter-charged that Abdel Halim's tenure as council leader was rife with corruption and nepotism.

The Arab leaders from nearby areas joined together with some of the villagers who were seeking sulha after days of fighting and arrests. They started talking about how to arrange a peace agreement. Villagers formed a committee of leading residents to ask the police for the release of 200 men who had been arrested from both of the rival camps. Ya'acov Ganot, the head

of the Galilee command, told the members of the committee that he would consider their request if the village remained peaceful and both sides agreed to participate in sulha. After three consecutive days of violence and pressure from Arab elders and senior police officials, the leaders of the two clans agreed to hudneh. In a show of cooperation Commander Mosasia, Ganot, and clan leaders Taher Abdel Halim and Mohammed Zaidan issued a united call from the loudspeakers of the village mosque asking all men to lay down their weapons. The police officials, peace-seeking villagers, and jaha elders had created an interactive system by relying and insisting on sulha. Indeed the police had conditioned their release of prisoners on the sulha process, indicating the extent to which they acknowledge sulha as vital in maintaining law and order.

The Confluence of Sulha, Sharaf and Electoral Politics

In the minds of indigenous actors then, sulha, revenge, and sharaf are often intertwined with state institutions and practices of local government. In this section I shall delve further into the nature of this interaction. I begin with evidence that indicates an intertwining of systems to the point of convergence—sometimes there is but one system of politics and any State vs. Palestinian divide is but an artificial distinction. The leaders of sulha and local government are often one and the same, indicating the confluence of these institutions. Another common thread is the practice of *wasta* or mediation that is pervasive throughout all political relations, official and unofficial, of Israeli Palestinians.

To begin, I turn to the first of these points of union. The political power one gains from becoming mayor of a town or head of a local council in a village is inseparable from the power of sharaf and high social status. All political battles, be they official or unofficial, are essentially about sharaf. The jaha elders supply evidence in support of the argument that ultimately there is but one order of local politics, and that the strict separation of official versus unofficial practices is not meaningful. As noted in previous chapters, jaha leaders and those empowered in local government are often the very same men. This overlap in power holding is readily apparent in Kamila, the home of three notables known throughout the north of Israel as distinguished sulha leaders: Ibrahim Nimr Muhammed, Jafar Jubran, and Sheikh Saleh. Each of these three political leaders has distinguished themselves through service in official and unofficial systems.

Ibrahim Nimr Muhammed, the mayor of the town for over three decades, is the head of a small Muslim hamula and has only a first-grade education. His political prestige is based predominantly upon being a well-known jaha elder and to a lesser extent on his long-term holding of the mayoralty. Jafar Jubran is the son of Jubran Jubran who was the Christian mukhtar and mayor of the town from 1934 to 1970. Jafar himself, served in the local government

throughout the 1960s and 1970s, including a spell as deputy mayor. Throughout his life he participated in sulhas and decided to retire from official local government in the late 1980s in order to devote himself fully to sulha and developing a peace center, "The House of Hope." Sheikh Saleh, the most respected sulha leader in the country, is a former member of the Knesset, the first Druze to be elected to such a position. At age 85, he is now retired from national politics and continues to be represented in local government by his son, Fareh Saleh.

In addition to the fact that sulha elders and local government officials are roles simultaneously held by the same men, local politics whether played out in a sulha process or an electoral contest fundamentally revolve around the practice of *wasta*. [26] Throughout the Levant, the term "wasta" refers to a practice of patronage and clientage that is ubiquitous at all levels of Arab and Israeli society. The word stems from the root w-s-t, which means "center" and may be used to indicate either the arbitrator (translating to "middleman," "intermediary," or "go-between") or the intercession itself (Hans-Wehr 1976:1066). Farag (1977:235) states that in order to get a job in Jordan a man must have a wasta regardless of his qualifications and the same holds true in Israel.[27] In academic literature wasta has been noted as a mediation practice in Jordan and Lebanon that facilitates the forging of any kind of agreement, including the reconciliation processes of sulha that I have described in Israel.[28] Even in Israel, a jaha mediator performing a sulha ceremony may alternatively be referred to as a "wasta," and the terms "sulha" and "wasta" are occasionally used as synonyms. Wasta is a practice essential to electoral and sulha success alike; both official and unofficial processes are fully dependent on wasta.

Important connections exist between networks of patronage (wasta) and networks of electoral support. In an example provided by Afeef Rayak, a teacher from Mghar village, one can see the association between wasta and voting patterns: "People vote for those who can, or have, helped them. Smaller families form alliances with larger families whose heads serve as their patrons." In Mghar village, which has a Druze majority and Christian and Muslim minorities, the smaller families align themselves profitably with larger ones. The voting patterns were explained to me by Rayak after I asked him if people always voted for those in their own family or religious community. He replied:

> Sometimes, actually often, but it does not always work like that. It depends on interest *(maslaha)*. Well, Druze always vote for Druze. They will not vote for Muslims or Christians. But Muslims and Christians often do vote for Druze. Christians do not vote for Muslims and Muslims do not vote for Christians because the strongest groups are Druze. I mean the big families are Druze and people want to make good connections for themselves with their vote. That is politics *(siyassia)*. People vote for those who can help them and this means voting for the strong families. For example, if I am from the biggest family, I am

> Druze, and say you are either Muslim or Christian, maybe I have 400 members in my family, and you have about 200, so we form a relationship or a coalition together. We go to the local council election on the same list, and I will be the first name on the list and you will be the second. After two or three years, whatever we decide, I will step down from my councilor seat and you will step into the representative position.[29]

Voting patterns follow a segmentary principle of shifting coalitions or wasta agreements. In this village it was not a simple pattern of voting for one's closest family, hamula, or religious community members. Depending on one's circumstances and relationship to the candidates, one may vote for one's kin or a member of one's religious community. Yet one may also decide to vote for an affiliated hamula and even one from a different religious group. People vote according to "interest" or *maslaha,* a term from the same root as "sulha," meaning "that which is right or beneficial, an interest, rather than to make right or to resolve" (Hans Wehr 1976:522), but to say this does not mean that they do not vote along segmentary principles. "Interest" always breaks down along segmentary fault lines. Interests are mapped onto bonds of loyalty to family, religious community, coalition partners, and wasta networks parallel these segmentary loyalties. In a village like Mghar, all Druze will vote for Druze but two branches of a Christian hamula may decide to vote for different Druze men who each represent separate powerful Druze hamulas. Chances of electoral success are much speculated on prior to elections but are often difficult to predict, especially given the confidential nature of these deals. What is significant from the informant's explanation above is that politics itself is defined as voting according to interest, and here interest can be correlated with the probability of gaining financial and prestigious benefits—this is the wasta process inherent in the electoral system.

Wasta is crucial not only to local-level politicians but also to high level government players. The government's practice of wasta or "vertical mediation" dates back at least to the Ottoman period when brokers negotiated the dealings between Turkish rulers and Palestinian villagers. The Turks demanded taxes and conscription but the majority of peasants were in opposition to such burdens and protested. Mediators, including elders, pashas, and mukhtars, were called on by the authorities. Each level of leadership representation stood for the interests of a group or groups and constituted the basis on which the community operated internally and externally. In a segmentary fashion, each elder portrayed the interests of his hamula in opposition to other hamulas, but all elders united on behalf of the peasantry and in opposition to the wider society. The pasha represented the Turkish authorities and the mukhtars represented the Palestinian religious community, which cut across the various hamula segments.[30]

"Wasta" most frequently refers to the deals brokered between villagers and state authorities but may more generally be invoked as a concept of reciprocal assistance. Wasta in the sense of

the give and take of favors as practiced in Israel is often referred to by both Israeli Jews and Arabs as *proteksia* (a Hebrew term meaning protection); it is a practice of favoritism and networking frequently employed by Arabs and Jews alike. Mention of proteksia often causes discussants to smile, a bit uncomfortably perhaps, presumably because they are speaking of how they might benefit from the use of sly and clandestine connections. Wasta or protektsia in the abstract is often frowned upon as "corruption," by informants and by analysts seeking to identify "cultural" reasons for Middle-Eastern or Arab "backwardness."[31] Yet these same wasta critics self-righteously employed all the resources of the patronage system themselves when they were looking for a promotion, or a job for their son or nephew. One informant, who regularly complained about and pointed to the corruption of proteksia in the university, fully expected me to take an English examination for him and was incredulous and angered by my refusal to do so. He viewed my lack of cooperation as disloyalty to our friendship stating, "After all I have done for you!" Indeed I had broken the unspoken rules of wasta.

In theory one could appeal directly to the official leaders—the mayor, local councilors, state officials—with any personal problem. In practice, however, one always goes instead to a mediator or wasta with whom one has some affiliation. One may visit the wasta as if one is simply calling upon a friend, asking him to help out in a given situation. Wasta favor-seeking is generally an indirect process: a man may make a request from a "friend," who then turns the favor over to another "friend," and so on, until someone in a powerful enough position is reached. Chains of obligations are created with numerous links.[32] A wasta, who is often a jaha elder, will never explicitly state that he expects a favor in return. On the contrary, he will always declare the opposite though a return is clearly expected. As in Campbell's portrayal of Zagori villagers, "The person who gives the favour will assert that he expects no return; it would be insulting to suggest his act of friendship had a motivation. It is, however, the very altruism of the act, whether this is simulated or not, which demands a counter favour" (Campbell 1964: 230, also cited in Farrag 1977:233).

From a dependency theory perspective, it might be argued that wasta is precisely one of the "traditions" co-opted and cultivated by the colonial state in its efforts to maintain control over a subaltern minority. This viewpoint, however, blinds us to the extent that such practices open up space for the agency of subject populations to be acted out. When one looks at what is happening in detail, often it is unclear as to who is manipulating whom. Wasta, like sulha, is certainly a rich source of prestige and political capital for the village notable who exhibits his talent as a mediator. With every performed mediation event, each favor successfully secured, the notable's reputation as an important man is augmented—he becomes known as one who is able to deal effectively with state authorities. If villagers believe that a certain man has connections to the Israeli authorities, they may appeal to him for assistance when they have a problem involving the

central government; this was Amin's endeavor. As his reputation grows, a wasta will tend to be cultivated all the more by the Israeli authorities, increasing his ability to procure favors for those who come to him. Thus wasta, like sulha, is a potential arena for indigenous agency and power.

Although the concepts of "wasta" and "sulha" overlap as understood by Israeli Palestinians, they are not identical. Sulha may usefully be thought of as a subset, or more specialized form of wasta. Sulha is a process that focuses on "horizontal mediation," mediation between basically equal sharaf parties that have temporarily been thrown into a state of inequality. The power negotiations between the parties or between one side and the sulha leaders are covert. Wasta may refer to any mediation but most frequently refers to the mediation that takes places between government officials and local villagers; a vertical brokering between incommensurate factions. One should remember though that any sulha is in fact also a negotiation between parties of unequal status (i.e., higher and lower status families, a man and woman) and that both kinds of mediation rely on influential forms of power rather than overt coercion. The difference between wasta and sulha practice is, therefore, largely in the tone of the rhetoric: sulha utilizes a declaration of equality as a means of brokering. It is a four party process: the two reconciling parties, the jaha men, and the public audience. It creates equality between families by the pretense of equality; wasta does not. Wasta may involve two parties or a chain of participants and although power differentials may not be stated boldly, they remain fixed in place, there is no pretense of removing the hierarchy between the parties. Finally, sulha is about "forgiveness"; it generally involves lofty and pained emotions. Wasta depends more on a "mutual benefits" model between parties; it is about making a deal.

The expectations of the mediator mark a significant difference between the two practices as well. The jaha man conducting a sulha must be neutral, or at least must be able to convince all parties that he is disinterested. If he fails to do this, the sulha will falter and the prestige of the jaha man will be diminished or destroyed. When it comes to a wasta, on the other hand, one expects partiality. The client seeks a wasta who is squarely on his side and can use his political clout to obtain the client's goals. The jaha man performs much of his role in public while the wasta conducts himself far from the gaze of the community. Wasta is carried out privately, on telephones and in smoke filled rooms. Publicity makes sulha both a richer source of prestige and a more dangerous arena in which to make mistakes. The failure of a wasta to secure some particular favor for a client is unlikely to result in a precipitous fall in the former's social capital.

Wasta, like sulha, may refer to any mediated event such as the time an incumbent mayor spoke to Israeli authorities on behalf of his jailed rival, or when a cousin mediated between an estranged husband and his wife to resolve their dispute and prevent a divorce. As is true for the Zagori villagers, mediation favors among Israeli Palestinians and Jews tend to create the basis for the formation of formal political alliances. Both sulha and wasta are institutions of mediation and

patronage and thus mark a point where local politics and local government come together. The fact that the word “wasta” is used synonymously with “sulha” in many Levantine village communities testifies to the close relationship between what I describe as the more specialized practice of mediation to prevent revenge (sulha), and the wider practice of patronage mediation (wasta) to secure a broad variety of resources in village society. The main underlying point I wish to emphasize by elaborating on the concept of wasta is that persuasive mediation and patronage are the essential aspects of all power and political relations, official or unofficial.

Sulha and Local Elections

I now turn to ethnographic illustrations that highlight juncture points, places where these systems, official and unofficial, come together. In these instances, state and sharaf politics are not represented or practiced as one seamless system, but they do interface and mutually affect and interact with each other. Elections for local office often influence the actions of sulha participants. In the sulha case from Ilbihs village, a jaha leader intimated to me details that illustrated the direct link between the sulha negotiations and local elections. The families of the five men accused of murder had each tried to shift the responsibility for the murder onto others but to no avail. In the local elections, members of these families lost their council memberships because everyone in the village knew about the incident. The election loss was now a tangible indication of their low level of sharaf, their lack of power. The electoral defeat, which came about because of their actions in this sulha case, in turn affected the accused families’ attitude toward the sulha arrangements. Once their reputation was already at such an irreparable low, and once they had already lost the electoral battle, they did not judge it beneficial to admit guilt and pay the diyyah in the sulha proceedings. They had nothing to gain from accepting the responsibility in terms of returned patronage or a chance at local elections. This, of course, is not always the only or even the primary reason to pursue sulha, but in this case it was a main factor for the families.

Sulha and electoral politics can function in mutually reinforcing ways. Just as being a government official often leads to a sulha invitation, performing jaha mediations enables a man to enter into or maintain government office with greater ease. An event such as a blood dispute becomes the focus of popular discussion and persons involved in the mediation process are thrown into the public eye. A man seeking office is aware of the fact that by acting as a sulha mediator he may place himself in a good position to gain political support for local elections. Participation in sulha as a jaha elder creates political capital, capital which can be used not only to carry the jaha man to further and more prestigious mediations, but which may create goodwill for the prospective candidate or build political alliances in electoral contests. The parties who

come to a jaha mediator seeking to arrange a sulha are indebted to him if the mediation is carried off successfully. This indebtedness may well form the basis for political support in the next local election.

Thus serving on a jaha may not only increase a man's power in terms of sharaf and future sulhas, it may also serve as a springboard to local or even national political office. Sometimes, for this reason, a jaha man may time it so that a sulha is successfully concluded just before a local election. Several informants told me of a Bedouin leader who organized an extremely rapid sulha, coordinating an agreement in an unprecedented fifteen days. Their speculation, with hindsight, was that his hasty dealing may have been motivated more by his political aspirations in government than by honest intentions to prevent revenge. The notable in question was running for the Knesset on a Bedouin ticket and wished to show potential supporters how much influence he had over his tribe (cf. Ginat 1987:73-74).

Local elections may intersect with sharaf and mediation practices for insidious and clandestine aims. Ginat (1987) recorded a chilling event that illustrates such a complex interaction of mediation politics, local elections, the logic of sharaf, and the Israeli police force. Here a local political actor attempted to manipulate the sharaf logic of mediation, as well as the Israeli authorities and law enforcement in order to retain his mayoral power. This story also highlights the agency of individuals to use all political institutions to their advantage. Several years ago, a 19-year-old girl was stabbed but survived; the blade of the knife just missing her heart. She identified the mayor's brother as the assailant. The deduced explanation of local villagers was as follows: The father of the girl and the mayor had split from the same political faction and become rivals. The girl's father posed a serious threat to the incumbent mayor's victory in the upcoming election. The mayor was intent on a successful reelection and reasoned that, if this girl were to be killed, her father and brothers would immediately be arrested by the Israeli authorities. The police would presume the murder was a family sharaf killing, and hence that the girl's father or brothers were the culprits. At that point the mayor planned to step in as a mediator and assist in the release of the father or brothers from prison. The girl's father, indebted to the mayor, would then become his "client." Being obligated and grateful to the incumbent, the father could not honorably pursue any actions to oust him from office and would take himself out of the race.

If this was indeed the plan of the mayor, it represents a ruthless and clever manipulation of both sharaf mediation logic and the Israeli authorities. The mayor banked on the fact that the community and the police would assume the girl's murder was a family honor killing and arrest her male relatives. He also hoped to exploit the logic whereby patronage creates a relationship of obligation and "political gratitude" between two people; this would have effectively neutralized the murdered girl's father as a political opponent. This Machiavellian plan was foiled only when

the girl failed to play her role and die.

Actors Link the State's Judicial Rulings to Their Sulha Moves

It is not only electoral aspects of local government that overlap with sulha and sharaf politics. The two ethnographic cases I present below illustrate the fact that villagers perceive an integral connection between the state's judicial system and the sulha system. In the first case, sulha is initially sought because the killer's jail sentence was about to terminate; sulha depended on the ruling of the state's punitive institution and would not have been pursued under other circumstances. In the second case, the victims' acceptance of sulha was conditioned on the state court's verdict. In both of these cases, the length of the jail term given to the perpetrator was significant to the victims in figuring out their reactive steps. Israeli-Palestinian actors were fundamentally influenced by the decisions of the court and thus one can view the course of these sulha events only in light of state judicial processes.

An Aggressor's Release: The Delayed Sulha in Majd el-Krum

In March 1996 a sulha took place in the village of Majd el-Krum, the purpose of which was to reconcile two estranged brothers, Samir and Marwan. The hostility between the brothers had begun six years earlier when the son of Samir stabbed and killed the son of the Marwan, enacting a rare instance of first cousin murder *(qatil ibn amm).* The repeated explanations given to me by several family members amounted to claims that the fatal dispute had been one over a land border *(hadud)* between adjacent properties. I was unconvinced that a land dispute between cousins had fueled such intense anger. In confidence, one young woman, a member of the extended family, informed me that there had been other underlying factors that had contributed to the rage, namely a contest between the cousins who both wished to marry the same woman.

The sulha was being held at this particular point in time, nearly six years after the murder, because the killer was scheduled to be released from jail in three months time. Samir, the convict's father, was fearful that the freeing of his son would cause old angers to reignite and that Marwan, along with his surviving sons, might attempt a revenge killing.[33] Samir felt that such an attack was especially likely given his son's relatively short term of incarceration for a crime of such a severe nature.[34] Hoping to protect his son's life, Samir appealed to the village notables to make a sulha.

According to family members, no requests had been made to the elders for their intervention

before this time because there was no threat of escalation, in terms of the number of men involved or potential revenge attacks, and therefore no need to make it a political and public matter. The murder had taken place within the close family circle and so it had remained a contained matter for years. The jaha was not called on before this time (nearly six years after the killing) because it was clear that neither branch of the family would seek revenge so long as a satisfactory form of punishment was being imposed—the state's justice system was just that; until that point it had adequately controlled the problem by imprisoning the killer.

Yet ultimately neither the force of kinship nor that of the state's criminal system was strong enough to alleviate fully the anger caused by this murder, and obviate the need for sulha. The prospects of revenge and violence seemed probable to the killer's father for the light sentence of the court had exacerbated the anger of the victim's brothers. The mayor of this town and six notable elders responded when they were called on by the father of the killer to serve as the jaha and arrange a sulha. Both sides of the family were cooperative ultimately and, by and large, the sulha proceeded according to the planned routine.[35]

In this instance, as is true generally, Israeli Palestinians view state institutions (e.g., the judiciary) as legitimate and may form a link of dependence between these institutions and the processes of sulha. In calculating plans of reaction after individuals have become personally involved in a dispute, decisions about whether and how to respond may be based on the perceived efficacy and justice of official state institutions and methods of handling the problem. Yet the state's courses of action, albeit legitimate, are not always considered sufficient by Israeli Palestinians who may seek further steps to acquire justice and resolution. In such instances, state and indigenous systems are both viewed as institutions concerned with law and order; the sulha system simply is seen as a system that works better to resolve the matter profoundly and for the long run.

The legitimacy Arabs accord to the state courts in Israel differs dramatically from the situation of the Bedouin in Egypt. According to Abu-Lughod, most Bedouin disputes are handled by customary law alone. If the crimes are of the magnitude of homicide, however, and Egyptian authorities get involved, "the judgments of the state courts are not considered valid" (1988:72). According to Abu-Lughod, Bedouin try to gain a quick release for the prisoner so that they can handle matters through customary law; they are uncooperative in the courts, and they largely live outside the state law (1988:72).

Victims' Perspectives Depend on Actions of State Courts: A Pending Sulha in Mghar

The terms of imprisonment decided on by state courts may well influence the outcome of

conflicts. The following situation supports this point and illustrates the ambiguity of social action—there is no blueprint for the actions family members will take under hostile conditions. In one case from Mghar, because the killer was given a light sentence that exacerbated the victims' already enraged sense of injustice, the latter were hesitant to agree to sulha. As was shown in the preceding case, victims are affected by the state's handling of matters and may condition their actions based on the court's ruling. Yet, the Mghar case further illustrates that there is not any straightforward, simple and predetermined relationship that can be assumed between sulha and court rulings; in other words, nothing is entirely predictable. Ambiguity and uncertainty arise in terms of how people respond to an affront, especially when two judicial systems are in play and influencing each other.

In April 1995 a man from Rame village was murdered in nearby Mghar village. The family of the victim granted the killer and his family an initial hudneh at the request of the jaha and thereafter renewed the agreement of non-action twice. The cousin of the victim explained to me:

> We agreed right from the start not to have any revenge for ten days. And at the beginning we were not even given a reason for why they had killed Jamal. The father of Jamal, he is religious. Not only is he religious, he is the Imam of the *khilwe* (Druze house of worship) of Mghar. The people here look up to him and believe him to be wise. They know that he will not do anything unwise (i.e., take revenge). So Jamal's father felt that he must do what these old men (the jaha) were asking. After 10 days the same men came back and asked us for another period of 6 months [of cease-fire] and after this another 6 months. And after that they began to talk about 'atwa—the men from Rame wanted to pay my uncle the 'atwa.

Jamal's family, however, did not agree to 'atwa or final sulha because they were dissatisfied with the court's handling of the case. The four brothers involved in carrying out the murder received light sentences given the nature of their crime. The victim's cousin further elucidated:

> Up until the present time [March 5, 1996], we have not agreed or done this yet [i.e., grant 'atwa]. The reason is that the court *(muhakim)* made a decision that in the eyes of my uncle was unacceptable. The decision made by the court was that one of the four brothers would go to prison for about 7 years. They had found all the brothers who tried to escape but the other three will each only spend about two and a half years in prison. This is because, according to testimony, the actual killer was an underage youth, just seventeen years old. And because he was so young he could only be given a light sentence. But my brother said that this boy was not the killer; it is another one of the brothers. The brothers agreed among themselves and asked this one to say that he was the killer. You know after only about five years he will be free. Of course we are very angry and hurt and do not agree to this. We do

> have a cease-fire, I think this is the third time, but as of yet, we do not have the sulha because we want the judge to make another, stronger decision.

Killers manipulate the judicial system by agreeing that the underage family member will take responsibility for what in fact was a joint effort or in other cases a crime carried out solely by an adult family member. The final line above makes clear the significant influence the court system can have on the sulha process. The victims' family feels that if the court system would stringently handle the problem, they would not take revenge and would agree to sulha. When I asked my informants what they expected the outcome of this situation to be ultimately, their response once again emphasized the key role of the state's judicial system:

> What Jamal's father will do in the future, I do not exactly know [By the tone and expression of the speaker I understood that he was being careful not to admit to me explicitly that they are contemplating revenge yet at the same time he was hinting that it is a possibility]. But for now he wants to wait and hear what the next court appeal decision will be because this first decision is not fair, only 7 years, and you know it will not even be 7 years, but only 5 or 5 and a half because there is the policy of reducing a sentence by the last third. It is a very difficult case and it is not the end of the story.

In the minds of indigenous actors, the court and the sulha system are related; indeed, whether the victims proceed with sulha or revenge may well depend on the courts. This latter case also provides evidence that the state's judicial system, if it handed out what would be considered a fair sentence, could alleviate a family's sense of injustice after it has suffered the death of one of its members. If the jail term for the killers is lengthened, these victims told me that they would agree to end the hostility; they certainly do not wish to take revenge and would prefer for matters to be settled through the courts. The state's system, albeit legitimate, ultimately failed to ensure or even make it likely that the problem had been resolved because it had been too lenient; the convicts had figured out a way to manipulate the system. The sulha process was initiated along side of the state's measures, but the victims will not agree to complete the former and instead reserve their right to take revenge, based on the latter's decision.

Imprisonment may slow the revenge or sulha process down but it has not replaced it in any meaningful sense. This has been true throughout this century with regard to all external powers implementing their judicial systems with the Arab population. Aref el-Aref wrote in the 1930s, that if the killer is hanged or shot in prison, his death serves as revenge for the offended family and under these circumstances the offending family members can safely return to their tribal settlement. If the killer is released from prison or dies there of natural causes, however, the family cannot return with a promise of security (1934:5-6). In the case from Majd el-Krum

described above— imprisonment had little or no impact on the victims' final decision about how to react but it did have a temporary halting effect, buying everyone some time to figure out what to do next.

Although the courts do not render sulha superfluous, their rulings in contemporary times can indeed greatly affect the actors' response. The fact that the Majd el-Krum killer was to be released from prison after serving only six years of a nine-year term affected the victims by exacerbating their sense of injustice. The heightened anger intensified the situation and made revenge more likely and sulha efforts all the more vital. In the Mghar case, imprisonment, if set for a sufficiently long term, will be the factor that determines the victim's willingness to make sulha peace. A protracted sentence is a public indication that the victim and his family are worthy of respect. It may therefore help to restore the victims' sharaf and alleviate their feelings of pain and anger. The victims' reaction, be it revenge, engaging in sulha, or remaining in a tense stalemate, is determined more than anything else in this case by their sense of wounded sharaf and this is in part dependent on the mechanisms of state institutions.

Yet, ultimately, the state's systems do not achieve final resolutions to Arab conflicts because they do not entail reconciliation between disputing parties; they do not rectify a situation of injustice and adequately redress the sharaf imbalance. Sulha reconciliation, on the other hand, brings the two sides face to face and publicly acknowledges the hurt and indignant feelings of the victims. Sulha restores sharaf al-'a'ileh by creating a sense of dignity and justice for the victimized family, a basis for healing and a balance of sharaf, and in these ways sulha enables peaceful relations to resume and continue over time. Because state systems do not address the victim's sentiments or issues of sharaf identity directly, they cannot replace revenge or sulha processes. The state has the potential to settle problems to the extent that it does deal with these matters; the efficacy and resilience of the sulha system lies in the fact that it does indeed recognize and contend with sentiments of sharaf.

How the Jaha Views the Courts: The Shibli Case

Just as the courts' decisions may affect but do not dictate the actions of disputants, so too the jaha members are aware of official proceedings but these do not necessarily overrule or determine their own rulings. In the Ilbihs case raised in the previous chapter, the court had declared that five of the six men who were initially arrested were innocent; they were released from prison with no further legal actions to be taken against them. This official proclamation of "not guilty," however, did not halt the sulha proceedings or alter the jaha's firm position that all of the involved men were responsible, much to the dismay of these families. The latter tried to argue that the court's decision proves their innocence and thereby relinquishes them of all

accountability.

This attempt to manipulate the sulha proceedings by holding up the official ruling as a legitimate basis from which to refuse to make diyyah payments is instructive. Actors tried to rely on the declarations of the official system when it was in their best interest. The official system must have some general legitimacy for them to have attempted this course of reasoning. Ultimately, however, their efforts failed; the jaha decided that these families had already agreed to and indeed requested the jaha's mediation and paid the 'atwa. This in effect had been an admission of guilt. A jaha member explained, "If I were wrongly accused, I would never under any circumstances agree to pay 'atwa," and apparently neither would any innocents. The jaha member who explained this logic to me ruled that all of these families must compensate the victim's family. The diyyah was divided among all of the aggressors' families but the five "innocent" families did not have to pay as much as the proclaimed killer's family. The jaha made their own ruling but they were aware of the court findings and in fact their decision was affected by these rulings when they deemed that the "innocent" guilty parties had to pay less.

A Final Case Study: Local Politics in Deir Yasmin[36]

If one looks to the case study of Deir Yasmin village, what appears again at first glance to be an example of "western-style" electoral politics replacing prior hamula and sharaf battles proves to be otherwise. Local politics, despite "westernization" remains a fight for sharaf power, and, in this case, a hamula-based competition. One does find here, as in other Arab villages, old battles dressed in new categories and forms. The family-based contests now take place in the electoral arena, which offers the tangible prize of financial control over the village, and a visible zone from which to display sharaf. Sharaf politics, in the sense of power endowed in family status and recognition, are linked to state politics—the power to control local budgets, mayoralty, and appointments of councilors. These forms of power and the logics that articulate them are inseparable in Deir Yasmin as is true in many Arab villages. As is the case for all interfamily battles, the sulha system is brought into the electoral system to resolve the tensions and restore indispensable social relations. The electoral process may make the situation appear to the outsider as if modernization and dependency theories are being borne out, but looking deeper, these battles are fundamentally about the quest for sharaf.

Deir Yasmin is situated in the Bet Netoffa valley in Central Galilee, 20 kilometers northwest of the Galil junction. It has 8,000 dunam in its area of jurisdiction with an officially estimated population of 5,500 in 1991 (Center for Local Government 1991:53) that has expanded, according to locals, to 6,500-7,000 residents in 1995. Approximately 5,000-5,500 of the villagers are Muslim and 1,500 Christian. Most of the village men are employed in construction or hotel

services in nearby Jewish or mixed cities. As for the rest of the labor force, approximately 10% work as administrators or clerks, 10% are employed in the educational sector, another 10% run independent businesses, primarily small shops, and 10% are agriculturists. There is a primary school, a secondary school, and a high school that was constructed in 1993. The total number of students is estimated at 1,800. Deir Yasmin schools are regulated by the local council and are not bound by state regulations for most infrastructural or internal matters. Thus, for example, schools are closed on Fridays and Sundays because the population is Muslim and Christian but open on Saturdays, unlike in the Jewish sector. Heads of departments in the local council hold monthly meetings to manage and coordinate their particular services. The educational sector, as well as the health, environmental, and social services for the elderly and physically challenged, are all entirely under the jurisdiction of the local council. Development is also fully dictated by the administration of the local council; they alone control matters concerning construction of homes and roads, electricity, and all other infrastructure—water, sewage, garbage, and design of the village.

The long-standing fight over family sharaf, status, power, and recognition vis-à-vis other surrounding families began before Israeli institutions of local government were set in place. The tensions between the two largest hamulas of the village—the Hussein and the el-Khattib families — have existed as far as human recollection extends, which means at least since the time of the British mandate. This kinship-based conflict merely took on a new guise with the founding of an Israeli local council in the mid 1970s. Bloody eruptions of violence occurred just before and after local council elections. The fight between the two hamulas has involved the entire village: “All families ally with one or the other of these two people.” Informants state that all Arab villages used to demonstrate this moiety division in past times.

The local council building is the epicenter of the village both geographically and in terms of controlling various services. The building itself—with a central dome, winding stairs, sparkling tiles, and stained glass windows—is an impressive, airy, and newly-built structure that conveys a message of power: those who work within this conspicuous building are important people of command. Yet this centralized command has only a recent historical existence. The first village council was appointed by the Israeli Ministry of the Interior in 1975. Before this time there were informal committees comprised of the heads of local powerful families. These committees were in charge of education, water supplies, housing projects; all that the local council now manages. During the period after Israeli military rule but before the local council was set up, from 1967 to 1975, the large hamula heads were able to establish relationships with the government officials because they had previously formed connections to the Military Government officials; links that were mutually beneficial for the involved parties but less so for the villagers.

Samir, the current deputy mayor, recalls this period (1967-75) as one of extreme

mismanagement and corruption. He and others concurred that the state government provided little assistance for the benefit of the common villager. When I asked Samir if the Israeli central government gave the village any funding for infrastructure, education, electricity, or other necessities, at that time, he replied, “We can say that the Israeli government gave very little money at that time, something like … zero percent! There really was no budget at this time. Well in 1967 they did designate a minute budget for the schools, but really what did that really mean? Just two or three rooms were built with nothing in them, no supplies at all.”

In 1975 the Interior Ministry appointed the first official local council in Deir Yasmin. The establishment of this local council was generally welcomed by residents who felt that being more fully incorporated into Israeli frameworks would bring material benefits to their village. The council consisted of seven men selected from the heads of the biggest families: two representatives from the Khattib clan and one from the Hussein, Habib, Halileh, Daggash, and Abu el-Hof families. Israeli authorities appointed Rajja Khattib to serve as mayor. He was to hold the position for two years and then be succeeded by the head man of the Hussein family for the subsequent two years. The first round of elections was scheduled to take place in 1979.[37]

Shortly before the first elections in Deir Yasmin in 1979, three political parties were formed, two of which assumed the names of national political parties: *al-Jabba* (“The Front,” a Communist Party) and *Abna’ el-Balad* (“Sons of the Country,” a Palestinian Nationalist party). The third non-affiliated local party was called *el-Islaab* (“Renaissance”).[38] In 1979, five of the appointed members and the mayor were elected to office from the Jabha list, three from Abna’ el-Balad, and one from el-Islaah. El-Islaah represented the Halileh family and smaller families related to them by marriage. According to the deputy chair of the council and others residents of the village, however, all three of these political parties were and are primarily or even solely “family parties”: “They have no ideological program whatsoever.” People professing to support Abna’ al-Balad are associated with a coalition coalescing around the Hussein family; they voice little if any concern for Palestinian nationalism. On several occasions, residents of the village claimed to be “Communists,” but when pressed, it became clear that this meant no more than the fact that they supported a certain coalition of families revolving around the Khattib family during the election period. Intisaar and Amira, two young women of Deir Yasmin, for example called themselves “Communists.” When I asked them to explain what this affiliation meant to them, they elaborated on the type of work they did for the party. They spoke of their efforts to help teenagers in the schools and at the municipality, how they helped to set up an exchange program for students to travel to Germany. They made no reference to any ideological beliefs or larger affiliations. Indeed when I asked informants why most residents voted for the “Communists,” no one mentioned anything to do with a Communist political philosophy or program.

The deputy mayor explained why these clan-based lists, consisting entirely of the chiefs of the

large families and the heads of affiliated families, took on names of national and local parties: “They do it for the sake of their image with the Israeli authorities and because it makes them feel that their local politics are as ‘modern’ as those in any other part of the country. They use the names of parties so that they can give a democratic feeling to the election, so it will not appear to be based on families.” Underlying the titling strategy, Samir explained, is insecurity that the villagers would be seen as “primitive,” “backward,” or “undemocratic.” The traditional hamula competition for village power had taken on the appearance of party politics or to put it another way, party politics have been incorporated into local kinship-based power struggles.

From the Deir Yasmin example, it is clear that local elections can still be hamula politics. Families in this village vote as bloc groups although there is nothing automatic about their choice of candidate. The Khattib hamula support their list and candidate, and the Hussein family likewise support their family representatives. The smaller families, however, align with one of the two major factions, often based on marital affiliations and particular events of past history that have sealed social relations. All the Christian families line up with the Khattib candidates. One young female informant explained that this was because of an illicit relationship that offended the Christians: A Muslim man from the other side had pursued a relationship with a Christian woman. Since this time, according to my informant, all Christians support the Khattib family. Female sexuality entails family sharaf and in this case was integral to electoral politics. The result of the illicit affair was that the entire religious community of Christians voted only for the Khattib candidate. Others selected their candidate based on the allure of specified benefits (“He made many promises during this campaign that I can assure you he kept.”). Local elections were fought on segmentary lines (divisions occurred at the family, hamula, and religious community level) rather than on political party lines or ideological grounds.[39]

Yet not all locals depicted patronage and hamula and other segmentary ties as the determinants of voter choice. One man explained that village politics is not so different from the presidential elections in the United States that are, at one level, about political or ideological differences but at another level simply about personality and presentation. “One gets the vote if one comes across as attractive, capable, strong, experienced, and intelligent.” Another man stated, “It is simply a question of personality. He [Khattib] pulled off a good campaign.” But this informant did add, “Also, he made many promises during the campaign.” When I asked a resident of a minor hamula why certain families chose to support the Hussein family rather than the Khattib family, her response indicated that it was no more than a matter of who each voter believed was the most effective person for the job:

> He (Rajja Khattib) has been in office for 15 years and he has not done anything for the village. Even the high school, after three years, he just finished building it this year.

> Because of this, maybe people have changed their minds and decided to go with the other side. If they think someone else will be of greater benefit to the village, they will vote for that person.

The deputy mayor also emphasized the factor of efficacy when it came to deciding which candidate for whom to vote. This analysis—that people vote for whom they feel is "the best candidate"—does not conflict with the notion that voting choice is a matter of personal interest or patronage. Hamula politics, patronage, personal interest, village interest, and other factors are all simultaneously in play and may coincide without problem.

Now in the guise of state electoral processes, hamula-based segmentary politics of Deir Yasmin were being played out as before state institutions existed, but there was one important difference now: the centralization of power. The establishment of a centralized government transformed these battles into a more violent and focused competition. Electoral contests concretely established which family would hold the most power, prestige, and status. Being in the position of head of local council gave certain individuals a tremendous advantage over those who were not authorized in this way. There were tangible benefits, such as control of budget and the power of patronage and less tangible benefits, such as "winning," having a stronger and more prestigious position.[40] After the 1979 election the sum of money given to the council was divided up based on the number of seats each party held.

Fatal eruptions of violence occurred just before and after each local council election in Deir Yasmin. The deputy mayor reluctantly spoke with me about these problems, displaying embarrassment and nervous laughter. He felt that he should be presenting a polished and respectable image of his town; after all he was a guardian and upholder of his village's sharaf or reputation. When I asked him to speak frankly *(dughri)* about the conflicts surrounding the elections and the physical violence that I knew had occurred in the village, he told me, "There have always been bad relations." He apologetically admitted to the problems and then emphasized repeatedly that his people are no different from Americans:

> In theory it is all a simple and logical, democratic process *(demokratsia)* but in reality it is very different. Losing is always a bad feeling and it can lead to a caustic reaction. This is the same in every place, every culture and country. It is like Bush and Clinton in the elections in the United States. I heard it was a dirty campaign; they too engaged in this negative behavior. And I feel so much regret about what has happened here in Deir Yasmin. It is not easy to remember those difficult days and all the terrible things that happened. Really I am opposed to all of those things.

Below the details of the ongoing political conflict between the Hussein and Khattib families is

more fully told in the words of the deputy mayor:

> These two families have a long standing history of conflict *(Siraa')*. It began before the establishment of the state. During one of the meetings with the Chief of Police in the midst of the period of severe fighting, I learned that the conflict between these two families started during the British Mandate time. Under the British, three mukhtaars were selected: one was from the Khattib family, one from Hussein family, and the third was a Christian representative. Each one basically managed the issues of his family and the family groups that fell under his sphere of influence by virtue of some affiliation or socio-economic relation.

After the first election in 1979 all was very quiet. The people chose from Khattib and Hussein, and the majority voted for Khattib.[41] The people involved accepted the results and there were no real problems. The Hussein family of course had a bad feeling after this election; they tried to oppose the results but in the end they had no choice. It was a democratic election, after all. At this point their negative reaction only took verbal forms.

After this first electoral loss, the Hussein family was upset by defeat and began planning a way to restore their power, prestige, and supremacy in the next election. In 1983, when they were again defeated by their competitor, the rage was too strong to contain. The deputy mayor continued:

> The trouble really started after the second election in 1983. We can say that this election was, not warm, but intensely hot! The only candidates for the mayoralty were of course the head members from the Khattib and Hussein families. Everyone in the village had to select only from these two possibilities because they are the biggest families, period. In this election more than 60% voted for the Communist party and so Rajja Khatiib once again took the elections. The Hussein family had lost the elections again and this time their resentment reached great heights. They began to react in physical ways, in addition to the verbal attacks. A terrorist situation prevailed in the village, wherever one went one faced the possibility of being attacked. Any small incident could provoke violence, a meeting at the market place, a wrong word here or there, the wrong intonation, the wrong glance. All this began directly after the elections and continued for 3 or 4 months.

An elderly woman of Deir Yasmin concurred with the above description of the situation during this time:

> All of the families sided with one family or the other, and so the village was completely

> split. It was clear to see which families were with the one side and which went to the other. It was not geographically divided, but people from this family did not like the people from this other family. And people would only buy goods from the shops where they liked the families; they did not buy from the other stores. You know every weekend there is a market in the village, and every weekend many people go there from the two sides. If they started speaking to each other there was fighting. It was not planned at all, just spontaneous. If you go there and see the other side it is like fire.

Another Deir Yasmin native now attending college in Haifa recalled the clash:

> All of the [Khattib] family decided that they wanted to back this particular man when they drew up their list. But those from the other family [Hussein] were not compliant. They formed the opposition, and it was violent. They hurt people, broke bottles, and destroyed houses. By the mid-1980s the battle was on.

And another young Muslim resident recalled:

> No one was killed but one man was very badly wounded in his eyes; there was a scare even that he would lose his eyes. He was not from the biggest families, but from a smaller one, still he was with el-Khattib. And an el-Khattib member took revenge on the one who had hurt this man until he [the latter] was critically wounded.

A Khattib supporter summed up the problem thus: “The Hussein family wanted all of the cake *(biddhum kullee kaakee*).”

When there is feud, there is sulha, and because feud revolves around the elections for local government, so does the sulha. A jaha elder explained, “This was a situation where there was no clear victim and aggressor, rather, both sides were aggressors. The jaha men acted on their own initiative because the situation was threatening to get out of hand.” A local councilor details the course of electoral and sulha events that then took place:

> Men came from Sakhnin, Owad Halileh from Mghar, and others from Beit Jann. Outsiders and insiders came to make the sulha. The agreement was that both sides had to take full responsibility to pay for and repair all of the damages that they had created. There were broken windows; cars and houses had been destroyed. Many items were stolen from stores that had been broken into. Each side had to pay the other side for the goods they stole. This clash was not an unexpected fight that spontaneously broke out but the result of a slowly heating, escalatiing conflict.

Because of this sulha in the mid-1980s, the third election in 1989 was a quiet one again.[42] It took about 2 to 3 years for relations to improve really after the sulha. They still had all the prior attacks and problems in mind but the election was smooth and all the same people retained their positions in the council. But, as if the tide of peaceful relations rises and falls with successive electoral waves, 1993 brought a new surge of attacks and conflicts. This time the situation was far worse than in 1983. It was a very heated election with lots of tension. The Hussein family was so angry that the other side won. According to the surveys that they had done before the elections they expected very positive results. In fact, they were confident that this time they would take the mayoralty.

What had happened was that people told them they would vote for them but in the end they did not; they simply lied perhaps out of fear of a reprisal. In the situation the best thing for voters to do was to say "yes" to both sides and then on Election Day, vote for who they wished. The Hussein family could not figure out who actually did not vote for them. Due to the unexpected results and the fact that this was the fourth time in a row that they lost the battle, their reaction was extremely violent. Violence prevailed again and even more than before. There were repeated attacks with sticks, stones, bottles, knives, and other weapons. People smashed cars, houses, stores, windows. There was even physical fighting among the women and children.

The sulha committee formed again but it was unable to secure a final peace agreement for one and a half years. The head of the jaha was Owad Halileh from nearby Sakhnin, and the secretary was As'ad Arrayde, the mayor of Mghar village. The other members of the jaha were the mayors of el-Abud village, Arabe, Mghar, Sakhnin, Rame, and Tur'an. All of these men were present along with other former mayors. Additionally one or two people from within Deir Yasmin came [to serve on the jaha]. They were Christian leaders because the Muslims are not neutral. After one-and-a-half years the jaha succeeded in a ceasefire in September 1994.

Another resident added to the explanation that there were difficulties in effecting this sulha:

> For three months after the last election there was major fighting and they just made the sulha now in July 1995. It took more than a year before they made sulha. You see, before this sulha there was another sulha [agreement], but it did not succeed. It broke down when one person attacked another and so now it was further complicated.

Finally, all the eruptions had been settled and the village remained quiet at least from July 1995 through the following year. The facts of Deir Yasmin's history support the claims of anthropologists that the Israeli state created local government along traditional factional lines and perpetuated the existing intra-Arab tensions. The formalized power of a local council served to heighten pre-existing antagonisms between the two largest hamula heads as they vied for the

mayoralty, budgetary control, and prestige. Sharaf politics, power endowed in family status recognition, became inextricably linked to the state. When the family-based electoral battles escalated, sulha processes were set in motion. These multiple expressions of power and the logics and practices that articulate them became integrated.

Conclusion

Some analysts have argued that the employment of sulha in an Israeli-Palestinian village, despite the existence of a "western-style" police and judiciary, like the practice of feud, should be conceived of as no more than a cultural lag. Western-style local government based on a theoretical separation of public and private authority, located in local councils, administered through authorized personnel, and installed by electoral processes, are, according to these modernization views, increasingly competing with and displacing the past tribal codes, customs, and ideologies.

I agree more with others who have argued that manipulative tactics of national parties have reinforced the tendency toward factionalism in the village. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that the Israeli Palestinians are breaking with their sulha or other sharaf-based traditions. As the Deir Yasmin case illustrates, these practices are now often integrally linked with official ones. There is some evidence, in fact, to suggest that jaha mediation is a more significant source of political prestige than service in Israeli local government. One of my informants, a young university-educated man with political ambitions named Ishmael told me in a matter-of-fact tone that "Ibrahim Nimr Hussein is only famous for his work as a jaha elder, for doing sulha, not because he is the mayor." Hussein has been mayor of the third largest Arab city in Israel for more than thirty years. He is president of the National Committee of Heads of Arab Local Councils, but he is "famous" in the Arab sector not so much for these accomplishments but because he is an active, successful, and respected jaha leader.

In this chapter, I have attempted to argue and demonstrate that the official and unofficial political systems of the Israeli Palestinians mutually influence each other and sometimes overlap without there being any uni-directional takeover. By focusing on points of integration and interaction as well as points of distinction, I have tried to depict and convey something of the nature of Israeli-Palestinian local politics, namely that local politics is often played out in the relatively new arena of government but it goes beyond these structures and revolves around sharaf (and hamula, religious, and other communally based) power battles. The Palestinian systems of sulha and sharaf, the heart of indigenous politics, are not in any fixed relationship with the official state systems. From the perspective of the Arab political players, there is recognition and legitimacy granted to governmental structures but Israeli Palestinians do not bow

to these passively. While the official system is a real power structure that Palestinians do not have the option of ignoring, it exhibits points of hegemonic weakness that are visible in the state's de facto recognition of indigenous processes and actors. The official institutions have become incorporated into preexisting structures and values as much as the other way around, causing indigenous politics to undergo a dialectical modification.

The fact that the political systems of the local Palestinian actors have not been wholly imposed and dictated by the Israeli officials is clear also from the limits of integration of official and unofficial political systems. Israeli Palestinians sometimes view these systems as separate and antagonistic. Natives themselves have spoken to me and presented binary opposition frameworks; when they are incensed by the Israelis and want to distance their identity from the state, maintaining a separate political system can become an issue of cultural survival, pride, and distinction. Sometimes, however, Israeli Palestinians make the division between state vs. traditional political systems to identify themselves with the Israelis and the "modern" world. They wish to be seen and associated with what they view as progressive forces, a culture that is materially advanced, civilized, and not "primitive."

And yet, the demarcation of separate sulha and state systems of penal justice is, as often as not, an artificial and nonsensical construction from the actors' point of view. Most candidates for council or mayor positions run on local lists with hamula affiliations rather than party tickets, although many local lists are affiliated to national parties.[43] Sulha may be used to create political capital for local elections and indeed there is an extensive overlap between local political leaders and jaha elders. Voting patterns are related to links of patronage, clientage, and obligation that are part of the sharaf logic. As I have pointed out, the word "wasta" is used for the mediator in sulhas and for those who work deals with the official government authorities. Wasta, as a concept of patronage, is one significant way that the sharaf system of indigenous politics interfaces with mechanisms of the state or national political system. Furthermore, state and local politicians must legitimate themselves in terms of traditional moral codes as seen in the Arab el-Jeeb example.

Perhaps the overlap between official and unofficial politics is most clear when viewing local elections, such as those that took place in Deir Yasmin. These contests are generally fought along familiar segmentary fault lines but cast in the mold of party-politics and ideological splits. By looking at how the unofficial and official systems have come together in a hybridized form, one can appreciate the resiliency of cultural values and practices, such as sulha, sharaf, hamula organization, and wasta, and simultaneously the dynamic cultural changes, adjustments, and "democratic" reincarnations these have undergone.

Chapter Six

Israeli Palestinians: Discrimination and the Dilemmas of a Double Minority

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After nearly three decades of statehood, Sabri Jiryis presented a study of Arabs in Israel that highlighted the considerable extent to which this population was subject to Israeli control. Jiryis detailed many of the methods, forms, and manifestations of Israeli domination of its Arab minority, including the restrictive policies set by the military administration (1976:9-55), the office of the Advisor to the Prime Minister on Arab Affairs (1976:60) (which served to create and implement state policies toward the Arab sector), the "legal" expropriation of Arab lands (1976:129-134), and the violent incidents that took place in Deir Yasin and Kfar Qassem (1976:157). With regard to political action, Jiryis describes how Arabs were restricted: Arab or Palestinian nationalist factions were outlawed altogether and Arabs were permitted only to play minor political roles within the Israeli electoral system as defined by legal parties (e.g., Mapai) that courted the Arab vote. Arab leaders perceived as cooperative with the state were placed on special Arab lists to run in national elections (1976:166-167).

Arab actors increasingly sought national political office through these restricted channels and, for their part, rationalized their involvement in Zionist political parties with the justification that it made strategic sense to "lean on the strong … and benefit from the association" (Jiryis 1976:167). Local Arab leaders were sometimes co-opted by state authorities to aid in the carrying out of policies that profited the brokers but ultimately contributed to the subjugation of the non-Jewish minority. Yet even with their largely obliging nature, Arab Members of the Knesset (MKs) were never fully trusted or treated as equal to their Jewish counterparts; they were restricted from engaging in high level politics. Arab MKs were relegated to roles of benign domestic politicking and primarily served as liaisons between local councils and Arab villagers on the one hand, and the state government and officials on the other.

In terms of local government, the Israeli state has shown mostly indifference toward the Arab sector. According to Jiryis, the state was in no rush to develop Arab villages and took its time in setting up local councils in the Arab sector. Furthermore, the state intentionally appointed chiefs

such that divisiveness and lack of cooperation between council members ensured a dysfunctional system within the Arab villages that did have organized councils. The state abolished the mukhtar system but the local council structure provided Arab villagers with little more than a change in name (Jiryis 1976:228). Local councils and municipalities were granted a certain degree of autonomy by the state (e.g., to supervise construction, road building, water and electric supplies, education, health care, licensing of trades, and levying taxes), but financial and economic roadblocks plagued the Arab local councils and have remained paralyzing obstacles that have yet to be addressed adequately.

Elia Zureik (1979) points out that the scant literature on the Arab minority (at the time of his publication and prior to that of recent decades) largely viewed the Arab population of Israel as a problem in and of itself. Analyses tended to de-contextualize Israeli Arabs from the broader political and economic realities of the Zionist state and promote explanations of psychological reductionism to justify the social situation of Israeli Arabs. Israeli social scientists avoided controversial political analyses and did not give any weight to the role of foreign or Zionist domination (Zureik 1979:104). As a corrective to these portrayals, Zureik highlighted the "institutional and ideological bases which govern the relationship between the subordinate Palestinian Arab minority and the dominant Zionist regime (1979:4). Zureik traced the transformation of the Arab population from a majority into a controlled minority and looked at the discrimination Israeli Arabs confronted in the law, education, and general Israeli society (1979:106-165). From a rubric of dependency theory, Zureik posed that the post 1948 asymmetrical relationship of Jews and Arabs was a manifestation of "internal colonialism" whereby Arabs were dispossessed of their land and subject to the legal frameworks of the state that instituted and promoted discrimination.

Within this paradigm that is sensitive to the power dynamics of race and ethnic relations, Ian Lustick (1980) posed the enigma of Israeli Arab quiescence in light of socio-economic and political circumstances that by all logic would seem fertile ground for severe ethnic or nationalist rebellion.[1] Despite evident discrimination against Arab citizens practiced by state authorities, and the formers' profound sense of injustice as a result, this minority did not succeed (at least for the first several decades of statehood) to organize itself to challenge this inequality. Lustick joined the chorus with Jiryis, Zureik, and others, and convincingly explained that the "failure" of Israeli Arabs to come together and gain leverage to contest their subordinate status was due to the "presence of a *highly effective system of control which, since 1948, has operated over Israeli Arabs*" (1980:25, emphasis in original).

From the beginning of statehood, the Israeli Zionist regime had no interest in integrating the Arab minority into the Jewish community, or in developing the former. Rather, according to Lustick, the intent was to maintain social segregation between Arabs and Jews, extract

indigenous Arab resources, and direct Arab behavior to serve the interests of the majority (1980:28-64). The state's primary aim regarding the Arab sector was to control rather than eliminate, absorb, integrate, or develop it (Lustick 1980:64). Lustick describes precisely how the inexplicit system of control operated and served the regime's objectives, and why it has been so thoroughly effective for such a prolonged time. In the conceptual framework that Lustick presents, Israeli authorities achieved on-going control over the Arab minority through a tripartite process of segmentation, dependence, and cooptation (1980:27).

Arab village society has long been internally segmented into rival (and allied) family clans or *hamulas* and these divisions have served as a basis for social life and political competition in the Arab villages. Israeli authorities were able to manage the Arab minority effectively by reifying these divisions in the state institutions of local councils and municipalities. Control was achieved by capitalizing on these intra-Arab cleavages and in conjunction by recognizing those Arab leaders who would largely cooperate with state policies. Thus through segmentation of the Arab community, the military administration (in place until 1966), "Arab experts" or Advisers to the Prime Minister on Arab Affairs, co-opted Arab leaders, as well as other means, the Israeli regime has maintained control and suppressed Arab efforts to form a collective national identity. The massive dislocation of the Arab population in the wars of 1948 and 1967 meant the departure of urban elites who might otherwise have served as national political leaders. Arab unity was thwarted because an empowered non-Jewish minority might fight for equal civil rights vociferously and threaten the Jewish nature of the state.

Economic dependence of Arabs on the Jewish sector remains another tangible dimension of the state's discrimination and control of this minority. Specifically, Arabs in Israel experienced inequality in the economic sector from policies that excluded their participation in the Histadrut (General Federation of Jewish Labor),[2] limited their travel and ability to obtain work permits, and paid them less for their produce than Jews (Jiryis 1976:215). Arab men, who identified themselves as protectors of and providers for their families, suffered from the lack of decent jobs, low wages, and economic dependence on the dominant Jewish population. The fact that Arab men could no longer harvest their own or other Arab land but had to seek low paying day labor jobs that often depended on the Jewish sector impinged severely on their autonomy. The proletarianization process of the Israeli-Palestinian male population transformed this segment of society into an undifferentiated class of exploited workers. By the 1980s some Arabs had become independent proprietors of workshops, small businesses, and even substantial industries. Even so, industrialization in the Arab sector remained limited and Arab-owned businesses still depended on Jewish industries. Now in the 1990s and early years of the 21st century, many of these Arab businesses have folded as Israel has been hit by an economic recession and moved primarily to high-tech industries, which are nearly entirely Jewish (Kimmerling and Migdal

2003:191-192).

Since the establishment of the state, the Arabs in Israel have been looked at and treated as a security risk; they are perceived by the Jewish majority as citizens whose loyalty to the state is dubious. This security outlook led to the state decision to exclude Arabs in Israel from mandatory service in the IDF.[3] Arabs thus were and continue to be ineligible for the many benefits that are accorded only to army veterans (cf. Amara 2003:251). The past forms of control in which Israel invoked military law as a means to restrict the Arab population and, under the cover of "security," seized Arab lands and set up Jewish settlements, have disappeared or lessened in severity. But while there may be some improvement in the policies directed toward Israeli Arabs, there still remain basic injustices and Arabs continue to be discriminated against in terms of allocation of financial resources.

Ultimately factors of discrimination and the struggle for civil equality remain the bottom line for Israeli Arabs today after more than five decades of statehood. Bligh poses the ongoing central dilemma of Israeli Palestinians: Flow, as citizens of Israel, can they continue to identify with the state that oppresses their brothers while providing as much assistance as possible to their brothers without violating acceptable norms of civil behaviour?" (2003:6). With the Palestinian uprisings from 1987 to 1992 and then from 2000 until the present, Israeli Palestinians are increasingly confronted with the unique challenges of negotiating an identity that is both Israeli and Palestinian—on the one hand, Israeli Palestinians have a growing solidarity with the residents of the occupied territories and the PA, and on the other hand, they have a complex and entrenched relationship with Israel being themselves citizens of the state since its inception. Palestinian Israelis are still caught in the paradox of trying to belong to the state and yet identifying with the Palestinian people at large for whom Israel is viewed as the oppressor.

The central axis of scholarly debate regarding the one million Arab citizens of Israel is whether this group of citizens has been "politicizing"—defined as mobilizing through increased participation in Israeli politics to gain greater equality in the allocation of resources—or "radicalizing"—defined as developing opposition towards the state by linking up with outside forces of Palestinian nationalism and thus posing a secessionist threat (cf. Frish 2003:165). If twenty years ago the prevalent scholarly perspective was that the Arab sector was radicalizing, there is currently near consensus among Israeli Jewish and Arab researchers that Israeli Palestinians are now working for societal change from within the system and that most accept the fact that they live in a Jewish state. Ghanem and Ozacky-Lazar, for example, conducted a survey in 1994 on the political orientation of Arabs in Israel and found that the vast majority Israeli Arabs recognize the Israeli state and its right to exist, see their future as citizens of Israel distinct from other Palestinian groups, and do not feel represented by the PLO or PNC (2003:274). Palestinian Israelis wish to continue to live in Israel and are not interested in

relocating to a Palestinian state in the West Bank or Gaza.

As evidence of the increasing politicization of Palestinians citizens, Bligh points to the heightened activities and involvement of the Israeli Palestinians leadership within the state's parliamentary system. Israeli Palestinian leaders are now more tied into the state's political system than in the past, attempting to hold onto and fortify the number of their governmental bodies, seeking to be partners in coalitions, and trying to elect Arab ministers.[4] Yet overall these actors are not a radical bunch. Prior to the October riots, 92% of the queries of the Arab parliamentarians dealt with topics focusing on civil rather than national aspects of Israeli Arab identity, such as socio-economic deprivation and other forms of discrimination (Bligh 2003:10). The clashes between Israeli police and Arab citizens that occurred in October of 2000 and resulted in thirteen deaths coincided with the beginning of the *intifada al-Aqsa* in the territories. This timing seemed to indicate parallel and coordinated activities of Palestinians from across both sides of the Green Line. While Arabs are becoming more active players within the Israeli Knesset, at the same time, some are developing deeper solidarity with Palestinians outside of Israel and an independent political system that pursues foreign policy in conjunction with the PLO and the PA (2003:6-15). After the clashes in October 2000, the Palestinian issue captured the political stage at the national level and Arab MKs acted as spokespersons for the Palestinian community as a whole. Yet simultaneously these leaders were careful to stress civil issues that were a common denominator with Jewish citizens in order to emphasize the fact that, despite the national differences between Jews and Arabs, Israeli Arabs are securely part of Israel (Bligh 2003:11). By seeking international recognition, the political leadership of this group has increasingly attempted to represent Palestinian citizens as a national minority within the country, a unique Palestinian group that does not look to the PA as their authority.

Frish takes the politicization of Israeli Arabs within the Israeli system as his starting point and then examines whether the greater participation of Arab citizens in Israeli politics and society has translated into a greater sense of identification with the state (2003:166). As an indication that Israeli Arabs increasingly have accepted the legitimacy of the state and are focusing on and limiting their political activities to maneuvers within the legal framework, Frish looks at the nature and substantial increase of Israeli Arab participation in national elections. Muhammad Mi'ari's party, the Progressive List for Peace (PLP), a faction closely linked to a distinctive Palestinian national identity, disappeared in the 1992 elections when it failed to garner sufficient Arab support. The more moderate Arab Democratic Party (ADP) headed by 'Abd al-Wahab Darawshe, however, which emphasizes a more general Arab identity, continues to be a political contender. Outside of electoral politics, Frish argues that most Israeli Arabs demonstrate sentiments of solidarity (*tadammun)* toward the intifada rather than participate actively in the uprising. Fie furthers his portrayal of this minority as non-revolutionary by noting that Israeli

Palestinians read Israeli Fiebrew newspapers, which reinforce their Israeli civic identity.

The politicization rather than radicalization pattern of Israeli Arabs, according to Frish, can in part be attributed to the fact that the Jewish majority has shown an increasing acceptance of the Arab minority, for example, in its tolerance of political groups like Abna al-Balad, the Islamic Movement, and the National Democratic Rally (2003:169). Given certain caveats, the civic participation in state institutions and the social and cultural demarcation between the two Palestinian groups on either side of the Green Line are substantial. While Arabs from both sides of the Green Line recognize the suffering of the Palestinian people and demand the establishment of a viable Palestinian state, Israeli Palestinians recognize Israel as a legitimate state and focus their efforts on calling on Israel to transform into a state for all of its citizens.[5]

The relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel remains that of a dominant majority and a dominated national and cultural minority. This political reality, according to Muhammad Amara, a Senior Researcher at Bar-Ilan University, is reflected in every interaction between the two groups (2003:93). Israeli Arabs are struggling primarily to obtain more resources and positions of strength within the state. They seek to achieve full egalitarian status with regard to their citizenship and national identity and indeed to redefine the image of the country (Amara 2003:249).[6] Many scholarly studies by and of Israeli Arabs continue to focus on the historical and political dimensions of legal discrimination.[7] The central dilemma for Israeli Arabs remains between their identity as citizens of Israel versus their identity as Palestinian Arabs. While Israeli Palestinians sort out their conflicting identifications, what remains eminently clear is that they are still in the midst of a struggle for full equality as citizens of the state, a battle that focuses on eliminating discrimination and bettering their socio-economic position.

Most Palestinians in Israel are not satisfied with the general advancement of their minority status in terms of social, political, or economic conditions. They call for furthering the peace process and a Palestinian state but also for their equality as an Arab minority in the state of Israel (cf. Ghanem and Lazar 2003:280). The events of the intifada seemed to have deepened the conflict of loyalties felt by Israeli Arabs and brought them more into the public light. The government of Israel for its part has failed to declare a clear and coherent policy regarding the Arabs of Israel (cf. Bligh 2003:315). The conflicting identity felt by many “Insider Arabs” has come to be epitomized in the famous saying, “My country is in conflict with my people”[8] Since the signing of the Oslo accords in 1993, the issue of the Palestinians in Israel has been discussed with greater frequency in popular discourse. The Arabs continue to face the challenges of being a double minority, identifying as Palestinians and supporting the creation of a Palestinian state, while not acknowledging the supremacy of the PLO, and also continuing to fight for their own rights as equal citizens within the Jewish state of Israel.

Overview of Sharaf Politics, Chapter Summaries, and Reflections

The above section has presented an analytic sketch of the Israeli Arab minority as a group of people who have been and remain subject to the political control of the state, yet who nonetheless are engaged political actors seeking equality from within a state system that they regard as legitimate. They are restricted in a real sense, and yet Israeli Palestinians do have a certain political agency that they are battling to increase by maneuvering within the system. In this next section I will review the main subjects and claims of my own ethnographic research as presented in this book and show how my points correspond well with and complement the above perspective of the Arab minority in Israel. The fact that Israeli Palestinians do have political agency and engage in traditional Palestinian politics that the state has come to recognize, does not contradict the above portrayal of a minority that is discriminated against.

The political actions of Israeli Arabs that I focus on in this book are not those behaviors of political involvement in the nation state frameworks per se. Rather I have concentrated on the more micro-level political behaviors and systems that Arabs are caught up in actively and that take place on the ground daily in and across Arab villages in Israel. The presentation of these more local and regional political processes is not meant to counter the thesis that Israeli Arabs have become increasingly politicized within the national frameworks of the state. Nor is my attention to the vitality of traditional Arab politics, power, and agency meant to challenge the above depiction of Arabs as a discriminated against population subject to Israeli law and institutions. My aim here is to try to provide a window for outsiders to glimpse into this largely private world.

Traditional Arab village politics centered on sharaf and displayed in the sulha procedures has largely been an untold story of Arab political action. Ignored as insignificant perhaps, Arab village politics reveals a noteworthy arena of Arab political agency that does not deny the state's control of this subjugated minority but may speak to the limits of that control. Certainly the state dictates the parameters of national politics, and Israel Arabs vie for their place and power within the Zionist system. Yet the state also recognizes and submits to the power of the local Arab political forms, systems, and leaders, at least when it is in their best interest to do so, and when it comes to intra-Arab relations. State systems of local government have not erased, displaced, or rendered obsolete the Arab systems of governance. Israeli Arabs engage in official local government but also take seriously and view as meaningful, the political processes of law and order, peacemaking, and reconciliation that are fully their own.

Living with Israeli Palestinians in the villages, towns, and cities of northern Israel was for me

at first an intense, disconcerting, and exciting adventure that predictably grew increasingly routine, familiar, and normalized over time. Although I can recall numerous moments of frustration and alienation, the expectable feelings of "not fitting in," my endeavors living with Israeli-Palestinian Arabs ultimately resulted in an enlightening and positive experience. Christian, Muslim, and Druze individuals across numerous villages in the north of Israel opened their homes to me, invited me in as a guest, and treated me as warmly as a close family member. Living in these communities with people who hold hospitality at such a premium, taught me much about the value of generosity, human compassion, and social relationships. Above all else, fieldwork among Israeli Palestinians gave me the invaluable gift of lifelong friendships with people whom I otherwise would never likely have encountered.

The arguments and ethnographic illustrations set forth in this book are the end result of several years of fieldwork that I carried out in the mid-1990s among Israeli Palestinians of all religions. Indeed I got to know many in this community of people who continually navigate as a minority within the broader contexts of both Israeli and Palestinian nations. The depictions and claims that I have presented in this book evolved from, and are thoroughly grounded in, the ethnographic cases studies and narrative accounts of violence, family honor, and conflict resolution that I collected and recorded from natives of northern Israel. As a young anthropologist heading off to engage in fieldwork among a people with whom I previously had only limited contact, I held a prefigured agenda and set of assumptions based on scholarly readings and previous travel impressions. These proposals, however, soon appeared naïve or irrelevant to me based on the ethnographic realities I encountered. Thus my original design bore little resemblance to the social understandings and cultural depictions of Israeli Palestinians that I came away with after my time "in the field."[9]

In the first chapter of *Sharaf Politics,* I introduced the central subjects and themes of the book —the existence and significance of sulha, a process of conflict resolution in Israeli-Palestinian society; the fact that reconciliation is highly valued and as significant as violence or revenge in relations of conflict; and the all important concept of sharaf, a cultural value fundamental to manhood, and that which frames sociopolitical relations among men. Anthropological analyses on these vital subjects of sulha conflict resolution, family honor killings, and sharaf have been altogether lacking. While Joseph Ginat's book, *Blood Revenge*, brings forward many relevant case studies, it focuses largely on the intra-Arab clashes and only superficially addresses the phenomena of sulha, family honor killings, or wider political contexts. Ginat does not explore the central mechanism of sharaf as the basis for manhood or male action. Prior studies of local Arab politics make mention of indigenous mediation processes but have not seriously explored reconciliation systems as a significant component to the phenomenon of feud. Indeed accounts of Israeli-Palestinian society and cultural forms remain limited in number and kind. While many

studies are out of print, the ones available to readers tend to be personal accounts that highlight the Israeli-Palestinian conflict[10] or political analyses of this community vis-à-vis the national conflict.[11] There are few published texts in English that address the central issues raised in *Sharaf Politics*—reconciliation, the construction of Israeli-Palestinian manhood, and notions of sharaf in practice. I have tried to explore these issues here by beginning with indigenous perspectives, practices, and values, and then by viewing the subjects within the larger national contexts of Israeli-Palestinian society.

In Chapter One I include some self-reflective illustrations of my personal experiences as a young, female, and Jewish anthropologist negotiating life in an Israeli-Palestinian village. I discuss my fortuitous invitation to live with a Christian Arab family where my host "father," along with other Arab notables of varying religions, engaged regularly in sulha. I described select details of entering the community and interacting with villagers, not to draw attention to my personal experiences per se, but as a means of illuminating key cultural nuances of gender and politics, and elucidating the force of sharaf politics in individual, familial, and village life. In this initial chapter, I raised several instructive points regarding my own negotiation of gendered politics. Restrictions based on strict gender rules that inhibited my mobility and thwarted my initial research intentions, ultimately, served as lessons that provided insight into the patriarchal, political realities of this society's sharaf and morality codes. In one dramatization of sexual politics, I was trying to sort out an unfortunate encounter with a man who acted in a socially inappropriate manner and found myself thrust into a complex gender play of "family honor." I was cast in the role of a guarded girl, helplessly watching her male relatives reclaim their sharaf and lower that of the offender, more for their own amusement than any sincere sense of being violated. Less highlighted in these recollections perhaps were the uncomfortable moments when I navigated through sexually charged interactions that facilitated and sometimes were key to my research. Many male political actors were anxious to speak with me simply because I was an American female; I was very aware of such facts and knew that certain doors may not have been open to me otherwise. Beyond my personal negotiations and methodological challenges, however, I encountered disturbing gendered events that tested the limits of my principles of cultural relativism, namely occurrences of family honor killings. I felt compelled to write about these murders and did so while coming to understand and analyze these horrifically violent acts as set within the broader rubrics of sharaf politics and the construction of manhood.

Thus in the second chapter I focused specifically on family honor killings, lethal events in which young women are murdered at the hands of their own relatives, typically their fathers and brothers. I moved away from critical reflections on my own personal experiences as an ethnographer but continued my argument for the pervasiveness and cultural significance of sharaf in Israeli Palestinian social life. Sharaf is understood and widely embraced by male and

female members of this society and although sharaf was at the core of everyone's personal identity, I chose to focus my discussion on ways that it featured in constructing male identity. Sharaf is a fundamental aspect of male identity and as such may become a potent motivator of action, even murderous action, at the personal or individual level.

Family honor killings are analyzed in this chapter with an eye toward understanding how it is that male identity connects to female sexuality and leads to such heightened emotions and aggressive eruptions. I argued that the underlying reason why some men murder their daughters and sisters who have been "violated," or accused of being involved in a sexual encounter, is because the sharaf of men is literally invested in the bodies of their patrilineally-related female kin. Men may perceive these corrupt or sullied women and girls as stains on their sharaf, a visibly noticeable and unacceptable state of affairs that directly pierces their sense of self and may become unbearable. It is this attack on their reputation, their manhood, and thus the core of their being that may provoke a man to kill his daughter, or order his sons to do so. Furthermore, men who murder girls and women for any other personal or political reasons rely on an in-place system and logic of sharaf to justify, legitimize, and exonerate their actions. They commit murder with full knowledge that the Israeli-Palestinian community will assume that the family's sharaf was the underlying motive and accept any such pretence as a legitimate causal factor.

When a woman or girl is murdered there is generally social inaction and public silence, despite the devastating waves of pain and anger her death may cause among friends and those who cared for her. Sulha reconciliation politics, entailing active social players engaging in procedures beyond condolence calls, do not apply or go into effect when women are the only victims. Sulha is an indigenous practice of mediation and conflict resolution performed in the Galilee region of Israel (and indeed throughout the Arab world) whereby notable male elders seek to mediate conflicts between and within disputing Arab families and communities. Sulha, in its fully-elaborated form, is a process that is largely reserved for men. If all goes as it should during the sulha process, Arab leaders will have ensured the resumption of peaceful relations between families and within the local communities. A lengthy process of political jockeying culminates in a ceremony that peaks when "enemies" shake hands and publicly forgive the criminal deeds of those responsible for murder. Sulha is a process, a principle, and a practice that fosters co-existence among Israeli-Palestinian men and families by expressing values of peace and reconciliation and by providing a vehicle to restore a sense of community after clashes have damaged inter-group and interpersonal relations. Thus, the third chapter of *Sharaf Politics* is an exploration of this sulha reconciliation process that depends on the violent conflicts of men, male victims, and the values and mechanisms of male sharaf.

The sulha model, which in some form has been employed in Arab villages for centuries, hinges on several key mechanisms and shared cultural values, namely: (a) a poetics of

humiliation in which the honor or sharaf of the attackers is lowered while that of the victims is raised; (b) reverse *musayara*, a series of additional sharaf balancing actions; and (c) magnanimity, drawing on the value and honor of forgiveness in this culture. Providing an analytical model I demonstrate how sharaf functions as the basis and mechanism of this indigenous form of mediation politics. Through case studies, I explore how reality may stray from the official representation of sulha while still serving to bolster the necessary amount of sharaf and foster peaceful social relations among men. The reality of specific sulha cases may deviate considerably from the theoretical model but both the official framework and the actual events point to the deep seated valorization of peace and reconciliation in Israeli-Palestinian society.

Much of the social interaction within sulha and sharaf order that I have discussed in this book is aimed at a level of appearances but these appearances are nonetheless real and significant. Expressions of extreme politeness and civility (*musayara)* actually do serve to maintain peaceful relations in families and communities, even if at times bitter tensions remain beneath the surface. In this context then, a dichotomy of spurious outwardly appearances versus more profound, true, or real inwardly sentiments is suspect. In contrast to alternative cultural conceptions, here what is superficial and what is fundamental are inverted, that is, what is taken as style is actually substance and what is on the surface, far from being less important, is actually of utmost significance.

While not denying the existence of competition and even violence in the status contests among Israeli-Palestinian men, which themselves hinge on notions of sharaf, I demonstrate that beyond rhetoric there is a political style of sharaf politics played out in the practice of sulha that serves as an alternative to feuding politics and state systems of criminal justice. Sulha is the basis of indigenous male politics and social practice within and across religiously or ethically defined Israeli Arab communities. The sulha method of peacemaking is widely employed to resolve clashes among and between Arab men and functions to restore the sharaf of a man and the injured family without recourse to a revenge killing. The “pathology of Arab culture” elicited blatantly or subtly in social scientific literature, is but an overstated analytical focus on feud and a lack of attention to reconciling phenomena such as the value and process of sulha. I challenge the view of established scholars that feuding and violence are the main characteristics of Palestinian society and instead contend that social energies are directed at preventing violence and effecting reconciliation (sulha) when violence does flare up.

Sulha and the set of assumptions associated and integral to its practice constitute a basic social contract. While being the foundation of an egalitarian social order for men, sharaf norms, values, and associated practices paradoxically exhibit a divisive side and allow for male hierarchy and political stature. Sulhas entail prestigious sulha leaders. The participation of these notable men

(collectively referred to as the jaha) in sulha mediation politics not only facilitates law and order in this society, but also provides the leaders themselves with a covert yet important benefit: it augments their sharaf and thus increases their own social status and power. Regional leaders compete to effect successful mediations and allow for the peaceful resumption of social relations while simultaneously constructing their own identities as men of prominence.

While Chapter Three illustrated a political reconciliation process that revolves around the notion that all men are entitled to an equal amount of sharaf, Chapter Four shows that there are exceptions to the rule. Chapter four delves into a detailed portrait of these prestigious male leaders who engage in sulha politics and perform the reconciliation ceremonies between longstanding enemies. Jaha men forge themselves as more honorable and above other men by acting as selfless, peacemaking mediators. Their power derives from this seemingly voluntary humanitarian activity and is not blatantly coercive, for the most part. Mediation is the acceptable political form of power and prestige in a society predicated on men of equitable sharaf and egalitarian ideals. By detailing the construction and contradictions of these men of prestige, sulha leaders who comprise the jaha or arbitration committee, I show that sharaf entails both egalitarian and hierarchical political order.

Sharaf serves as a basis in constructing manhood; the driving force and structuring framework for the social and political action of men.[12] As such, sharaf is involved and invoked in a wide variety of circumstances including peacemaking among men and violent acts committed by men against women. When viewed in practice, sharaf or honor manifests as a truly ambivalent concept. While being the foundation for an egalitarian social order among men, sharaf norms, values, and associated practices paradoxically constitute and exhibit divisiveness among men and between men and women. Sharaf is the foundation of a patriarchal order in which men maintain extreme control over women and their bodies. Sharaf also forms a medium or capital that allows for male hierarchy and political stature. By engaging in sulha negotiations, Arab leaders create sharaf capital and hence a prestigious political persona for themselves.

The ubiquitous and all-important cultural notion of sharaf is bound up in different spheres of institutional, communal, interpersonal, and individual belief and practice. But to argue that sharaf is a prevalent and multivalent social value in Israeli Palestinian society is not to say that sharaf is *the* defining characteristic of Mediterranean or Israeli Palestinian culture, or even to presume that such a thing exists. Certainly, “honor” and a social order founded on “honor” has been and continues to be a significant paradigm of many cultures throughout human history and across the globe. Far from a static or inherent quality of “the Arab psyche,” sharaf or honor is a complex cultural construct that serves as a relevant, dynamic, and powerful basis of identity and provides meaningful frameworks for gender construction, political contests, law and order, elections, and general social action in this patriarchal society at this particular historical juncture.

Sulha is not a static form or holdover from of an ancient period, though some Palestinian youth mocked it as such and other Palestinian enthusiasts portrayed it to me as an invaluable timeless tradition. Sulha, in some form, has been around for centuries but its vibrancy and resilience derive from its adaptability and contemporary relevance. Sulha is flexible in practice and to a lesser extent in form; its significance depends on the particular context in which it is enacted. "Traditional" political forms do not take place in vacuums. Chapter five, therefore, sets sulha and traditional sharaf politics into broader sociopolitical and nationalist contexts and explores the intersections of indigenous political processes and systems of the Israeli state. Having elaborated on the indigenous political system of reconciliation, its leadership, and how this style of conflict resolution is permeated by and revolves around notions and codes of sharaf in Chapters Three and Four, I focus in Chapter Five on explaining and viewing these traditionally indigenous processes in light of and in interaction with the official state structures of the Israeli government.

Israeli-Palestinian men create their manhood and establish their power, commit criminal acts, and engage in sulha all within the reality of the Israeli State and its systems of government and criminal justice. In Chapter Five, I illustrate how the two systems of law and order, that is, traditional Palestinian or Arab and Israeli state, sometimes run separate and parallel to each other, and at other times overlap and form a mutually supportive relationship. The point of this chapter's focus on the interaction of Palestinian and state political systems is ultimately to argue for the continued relevance of the indigenous cultural form and practice of sulha reconciliation and sharaf politics. These political forms have not and will not be replaced by official western-style state governance because the former embodies and is an expression of meaningful cultural notions of sharaf and reconciliation that are central to Israeli-Palestinian manhood and society; the latter is limited in these realms. Modernization theory with its perspective that western structures will replace traditional native practices is a bankrupt paradigm though it continues to frame analyses of Middle Eastern societies and influence local thinking.

Indeed the state's influence has been to bolster this Arab political form. The cooptation of local Arab leaders and their installation into state office has contributed to the viability and presence of the sulha system. To the extent that these Arab leaders are seen by the Arabs of their locale as men of high standing and influence, they are raised up in terms of public respect and prestige. Position within the state's political system makes men more desirable as jaha participants and in general more likely to be perceived as effective sulha mediators.[13] The fact that some leaders move in and out of the Israeli state systems, and may be manipulated by the state leaders to attain votes and quell rebellious action, does not stand in opposition to the fact that these Arab men hold real power and lead sulhas, and that indigenous processes are employed by the Arab sector as the effective and preferable system of maintaining local order. Furthermore

while the state has helped to continue systems involving sulha and sharaf, this does not mean that the latter are reducible to a function of the state; this is an overstatement of dependency theory.

It remains questionable whether or not there are in fact two distinct systems of local politics in the Israeli-Palestinian village—one involving unofficial sulha processes and the other official electoral governance. Is there a binary distinction or does an analytical duality reveal unfounded and Orientalist assumptions in the study of Israeli-Palestinian local politics? In order to reflect on how indigenous practices interface with state systems, or indeed if there are in fact distinct systems, I turned to the ethnographic setting and considered various political events, behaviors, and views of involved parties. Certainly sulha practices and state institutions are various political systems in the sense that each has its own distinct historical origins. In addition, these two frameworks of law and order often entail separate procedures and actions. Sulha and state institutions may consider, address, or emphasize different aspects of a given conflict, recognize divergent authorities, hold dissimilar objectives (i.e., reconciliation vs. punishment), and follow diverse sets of rules.

The demarcation between Israeli state and Arab systems was explicitly underscored and granted significance by Israeli-Palestinian informants most prominently when, analyzing and representing their society to me, they advanced reflexive socio-cultural critiques. Indigenous political thinkers frequently put forth perspectives based on binary distinctions: “Us” (e.g., the Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims) versus “Them” (e.g., the Israelis, state authorities, and Westerners). Israeli Palestinians offered a spectrum of opinions on how each of these political systems were functional or dysfunctional and how they should evolve. In these theoretical discussions, informants often depicted two distinct but compatible forms of keeping order, parallel systems with both state and indigenous ways being recognized as legitimate.[14]

On the ground, however, government institutions in Israeli-Palestinian communities and the politics of sulha commonly crosscut each other and form a hybridized system such that any observer, whether native or foreign, might not be able to discern where one left off and the other began. Looking at the details of the sulha ceremony, for example, one finds evidence of this hybridization or dialectic reinvention of political practice. The site of the sulha ceremony in Majd el-Krum in April 1996 reveals a typical setting: Arab jaha elders stand in a row inside the Israeli municipal building facing a crowd of Israeli-Palestinian citizens where police officers and other state officials, Arab and Jewish, are visibly present. Hundreds of Arabs are in attendance including the Israeli Arab mayor and head of the local village council who now serves, at least nominally, on the jaha committee in nearly every sulha case. The Arab notables tie knots in a sulha flag as an Israeli flag, photograph of the Israeli president, banners displaying Hebrew and Arabic writing, universal peace symbols, and plaques with Zionist emblems, all hang on the walls behind the Arab elders. The public aspect of the Arab sulha is retained with an outdoor

procession: jaha elders lead the aggressor and his family through the village streets to the center of town where the victim's family is waiting. Although the public and outdoor aspect of the sulha tradition continues and remains significant, it is now common for the remainder of the ceremony to be held inside the state's municipal building as it was done in Majd el-Krum and for the crowd of attendees to be invited in.

In political practice rather than theoretical reflection, Israeli Palestinians did not generally make as radical of a distinction between what is "Israeli" and what is "Palestinian." Self-Orientalizing analysts were the same people who drew on political tools from either system indiscriminately. Disputants, jaha elders, government officials, and residents generally were bricoleurs working with any and all available political tools that suited their interests in the given context. This toolbox sometimes included elements from indigenous sulha processes and at other times aspects from systems of foreign or Israeli origin initially imposed on Arab village society but now naturalized there. Ethnographic illustrations showed further integration in that behaviors in one system were often predicated on happenings in the other. Disputants gauged their sulha steps according to judicial rulings in courts and judges were more lenient with assailants if they were assured that a sulha was forthcoming. Local politics in the Israeli-Palestinian village reveals the existence, interplay, and even conflation of institutions and practices of various origins, including elections, electoral lists, mayors, local councils, municipalities, hamula rivalries, sulha procedures, and wasta mediation. Thus, to describe Israeli-Palestinian politics as a combination of "Israeli" and "Palestinian" symbols and ingredients is somewhat distorting because from an emic perspective the basic distinction is not typically noteworthy; this is just seamless reality. Certainly any notion that there is a contradiction or necessary tension between the "Israeli system" and the "indigenous system" is more a function of analytical preconceptions than of the ethnographic evidence.

The Agency and Power of a Controlled Population

In this book I have characterized the way hierarchy, power, law and order work within the Israeli-Palestinian community and how much of these systems revolve around the values and medium of sharaf. I have focused on the behaviors and perspectives of Arab male villagers and their means of forming a powerful male identity through mechanisms of resolving clashes. Arabs have political agency within Arab local settings and even manage to get state authorities to recognize their power and grant them autonomy over their own political affairs. But ultimately Arab citizens are disadvantaged subjects with limited recourse to resistance. State rulers still hold ultimate control over Arab lives through forceful means. If, as happens at times, aspects of Arab traditions or cultural practices run counter to state interests, authorities have coercive means by

which Arab citizens must relinquish their cultural traditions and acquiesce to state laws. Police, guns, jails, and legal policies are imposing realities to which Israeli Arabs have no choice but be subjected. The noted resilience of indigenous practices and the abilities of actors to re-create novel forms of politics that take precedence over state institutions do not erase the realities of discrimination. As they continue to fight for equal rights and redefine the image of their country, Israeli Palestinians are rightly described both as a controlled population and as one that has political agency.

The tenacity of indigenous cultural forms has been enough to encourage scholars—often sympathetic toward the local population—to view these manifestations as wholly determined by external forces. Arab institutions are reduced to a function of colonialist domination, determined entirely from without, and Arab actors are presumed to have a homogenously imposed, colonized identity. What I wish to emphasize here is the exaggeration of these theoretical claims. While it is of course crucial to recognize and address the influence of colonial, imperialistic, and state powers on the local or indigenous people, it is equally critical not to overstate the dependency claim and thereby treat the indigenous form itself as fully foreign. One must resist the dependency model claim that the Israeli state has somehow been able to dictate the indigenous populations' social practices and perspectives.

Despite the dominant power structures to which Arabs are subjected in Israel, indigenous actors have managed to express and assert their political agency both through politicization with regard to state institutions and by engagement in their own political systems of governance in village and regional matters. There are structural conditions, institutionalized norms, and even aspects of official policy that block the exertion of total control over the Arab population and give Arab citizens opportunities for enacting limited resistance to the regime. Lustick refers to these potential breaks in the hegemonic power as "aberrations" (1980:81). *Sharaf Politics* has reflected on aspects of these "traditional" political systems that testify to the political agency of Arabs in Israel. Israeli Arabs have used the state institutions such as local councils and elections as arenas to engage in and further their own hamula and sharaf contests. State institutions have become newly incorporated aspects in the longstanding and continuing sharaf politics and sulha reconciliation practices of Israeli Palestinians.

I have chosen to emphasize the integration of the state players and institutions into traditionally Arab forms of politics in part as a corrective to the tenets of dependency theories that presume the omnipotence of state power and underestimate the agency of indigenous people and the tenacity of their cultural forms and values. Israeli Palestinians are not passive subjects of their political situation. Rather they are active players, determining the form and process of local and national politics. Their multiplicity of identities translates into a complex political system with competing idioms—hamula, party platforms, nationalism, and religion (cf. Wood 1993).[15]

Palestinian Israelis have not relinquished their indigenous systems and practices and substituted them with the methods and institutions of the Israeli state. Rather the indigenous population has maintained and reworked pre-existing Arab political traditions of law and order and these hold widespread significance. I was told that Arab men strive to be sulha leaders in their community first, and mayors second. The sulha and sharaf systems work within the Palestinian village and regional society to maintain peaceful relations among Arabs in ways that state systems do not, and in ways that incorporate Jewish authorities but preclude too much state involvement.

Israeli authorities sometimes bow to Arab systems and not only recognize that they exist but also partake in them. Jewish authorities attend sulhas, for example, and participate in the Arab system nominally as men of recognized status. The Jewish authorities release prisoners from jail to participate in the sulha ceremonies. They allow convicts to return to their village and engage in sulha un-handcuffed and as free men, at least for twenty-four hours. They do this because de facto they recognize and respect these procedures; sulha is only effective if it is viewed by its participants as a voluntary expression of remorse and plea for forgiveness, not because one is forced to but because one wishes to. Not only do Arab villagers keep the official system at a distance as they actively practice their own traditions, they have also educated authorities on these practices and managed to engage officials' support but on the former's terms.

Is the sulha system one of the "aberrations" that Lustick refers to, an exception to the rule of Israeli dominance? The sulha process is a functioning and significant Arab form of politics that does remind its players of their Arab identity and keep that sense of self alive for them. This may in part explain why these events are now routinely video recorded. A jaha notable is a man who, far from having no agency, has become actively engaged and successful in two political systems. Many jaha leaders have gained status, prestige, respect, political clout, and financial comfort through their social actions in sulhas and in the state government. Israeli authorities have not managed to stamp out Arab beliefs, values, systems of law and order within the village. Arabs have created their own hybrid realities and lived practices by adjusting Israeli frameworks to suit Arab systems. Arabs continue to find meaning, identity, and peace in ways that resonate and work for them. Thus while sulha and sharaf political systems do not directly challenge the authority of the state, they mark a territory in which state power is not primary or intrusive.

Hierarchy and social stratification are real and remain clear in Israeli where Jews are the dominant authorities. Arab citizens are subject to state laws that sometimes favor their Jewish counterparts, and Arab women are at the bottom of the social ladder when it comes to holding societal power. Israeli Arab men do carry on meaningful political processes of their own but their power is limited and relative. By spotlighting the power of jaha men, and the significant forms and processes of sharaf politics as embodied in sulha, I have tried to illuminate a system of law, culture, power that is meaningful to the community of internal actors. Within this community,

villagers compete, negotiate, reconcile, and create relations of equality and distinction through sharaf and whatever other means available to them. Sharaf politics are permeable systems, but ones that are somewhat self-contained and mostly relevant to Israeli Palestinians. Those without freedom and control in certain broad and basic respects can still manage to hold onto and develop means of creating power relations, hierarchies, and order among and within their community. Relationships of power are negotiated within all groups, no matter if that group is collectively embedded within a wider society that subjugates and dominates it.

In Summary

Sharaf Politics has looked at how male action is carried out and socially perceived, in short how manhood is created, through the framework of sharaf or honor. Sharaf is crucial among the inter-subjective assumptions, rules, and values instantiated in the socio-cultural practice of Israeli-Palestinian men. It is the basis for the significant reconciliation processes in which all men engage to preserve the ongoing peaceful relations among their Arab brethren in Israeli-Palestinian society. Sharaf is complexly interwoven with other factors and inextricably linked to the emotions, identity, and behaviors of men; at times it may provoke men to engage in violent actions.

Sharaf Politics has shown how Palestinians, under the radically intrusive political and economic policies and circumstances of the Israeli state, have held onto political institutions that have long been a part of Arab history. Palestinians have maintained, reformed, and reinvented indigenous political practices based on social norms and values of sharaf and reconciliation despite, and sometimes with the assistance of, Israeli-imposed political systems of government. While the state is intrusive, it does yield to certain exigencies of local politics in the Palestinian communities. Though clearly a subaltern group in Israel, this minority has managed to carry on Palestinian politics and to an extent assert its agency in political realms. Israeli Arabs have retained and reformulated their own familiar institutions, practices, and values such that these continue to be political options for them, alongside state-based resources, as they seek to maintain a peaceful social order.

Notes

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. It took me a while to realize that Israeli Palestinians switch languages automatically, depending on with whom they are speaking. When Israeli Palestinian men talk among themselves, they tend to speak a blend of Hebrew and Arabic, with a sprinkling of English. This is the mixed language that I learned and often conversed in with my friends and informants.
2. Pseudonyms are used for the name of my primary research town, as well as for proper names of many individuals, solely for the purpose of protecting the privacy of my informants, even though many told me that this was not necessary. “Kamila” is the pseudonym I have used in this book to refer to the town where I carried out much of my fieldwork. This term means “to be or become whole, integral, perfect, or complete.” (Cowan 1976:840).
3. An indigenous Jewish population lived in Kamila until the 1920s when this group relocated to more urban areas, Haifa and other nearby cities, primarily to seek better economic opportunities. Kamila Arabs refer to these former neighbors as “Arab Jews.”
4. Choosing an ethnonym by which to refer to this group is not a simple act; it is always one laden with political significance. In 1992, when I spoke with a prominent Israeli social scientist, he told me not to say “Israeli Palestinian” but “Israeli Arab” claiming the later to be neutral and the former to be political. In fact every designation and self-appellation, including “the’48 Arabs,” *“dakbil”* (insiders), “Green Line Arabs,” “Israeli Arabs,” “Israeli Palestinians,” “Jews who speak Arabic,” and “Palestinians in Israel,” carries particular connotations and makes a political statement. I have chosen to use the referents “Israeli Palestinian” or “Israeli Arab” which seem to be used about equally by actors.
5. There were in fact organized groups of Christian tourists who came to Kamila occasionally to meet with Jafar and hear his talk on Arab-Jewish coexistence. These groups, however, were bused in for short structured visits and departed thereafter as a group. It was highly unusual to see any unaffiliated outsider visiting or living within the town.
6. Informants state that this synagogue is the only remaining synagogue in any Palestinian village and that it has been standing continuously since before the destruction of the second

temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. I was told that Jews and Christian Arabs resided peacefully in this town since at least that time.

7. Jafar did later put together a short manual in English discussing some of the basics of sulha.
8. Pseudonyms used.
9. Jafar found it amusing that when he traveled and told people he was from Palestine, they often did not understand and would respond by asking, "What did you say, Pakistan?"
10. These localities include Shefa ʻAmr, Daliet el-Karmel, Isfiya, ʻAkko, Tamra, Sakhnin, Rama, Jish, Majd el-Krum, Mghar, Yirka, Tarshiha, and Kufr Yanouh.
11. A reference to the Balfour Declaration of 1917.
12. Statistics are taken from al-Haj (1987:23-55) and municipal records provided by local council members.
13. See al-Haj (1987:23-55).
14. The process of "de-urbanization" began during the Mandate period when Kamila lost its status as an administrative center (Rosenfeld and al-Haj 1989:46). In 1921 there were 73 stores serving an estimated population of 2,200 people; 31 out of 73 were groceries serving an average of 71 persons per shop. By 1947 there were 84 stores serving a population 4,700 people; 38 out of 84 were groceries serving an average of 124 persons per shop. Between the first and the last years of the Mandate the decline in services such as carpentry, locksmiths, and oil presses, indicates a decrease in the economic dependency of surrounding villages (al-Haj 1987:34).
15. Although I am not focusing my attention on the national tensions per se, ultimately, there is no sense in neglecting the subject. Indeed to ignore the national conflict is to offer a distorted depiction because it is an integral facet of social and political life at all levels.
16. According to The Political Dictionary of Israel, 156,000 Palestinians remained in the new state after the 1948 war.
17. The statistics cited here are taken from al-Haj (1989). These are generally accepted figures that concur with numerous Jewish and Arab Israeli sources (see Minns 1989; Zureik 1991).
18. With an influx of Jewish immigrants after 1948, this figure declined to 11% by 1955. Despite the high birth rate (4.1) of Arabs, and the quadrupling of the population in less than fifty years to an estimated 700,000 people, Arabs comprised only about 18% of the Israeli population (including the Arabs of East Jerusalem that was annexed in June 1967) by the 1990s. This is because of large-scale Jewish immigration and the selective Right of Return given to Jews but denied to Palestinians.
19. For more on this fluctuating immigration and emigration throughout the region, see Segev (1984).
20. For more statistics and further general discussion of these demographics see al-Haj

(1987:25-29). From 1953 on, the population has largely stabilized, although since the 1950s there has been immigration of Druze el-Jabal and of Bedouin, in addition to natural factors of population growth.

21. For more on policies of land confiscation based on absentee landlord regulations, see Nakhleh (1975).
22. One of the darkest incidents of this period is the slaughter that took place in Kufr Qasem when the government placed a curfew on residents in the middle of the day and unwitting workers returning home in the early evening were murdered outright. Military rule was maintained until 1966 under the banner of national security, though most Israelis were in favor of its abolition at least a decade earlier (al-Haj 1989:207).
23. The decline and destruction of Arab society and economy stands, of course, in sharp contrast to the tremendous, rapid urbanization that took place in Jewish parts of the state and generally the image of Israel as the land of miraculous rapid development.
24. Before this time Arab citizens had no recourse to professional protection. Still even today, the Arab labor force remains dependent on the Jewish sector for employment and subject to much exploitation.
25. For a discussion of the Israeli policy of Judaization and its impact on the Arab localities, see Falah (1989).
26. A pseudonym.
27. Only Israeli Druze males are considered reliable enough Arabs by state authorities to be conscripted into the IDF, and even so, they are segregated into special Druze units. Bedouin too often join specialized army units set up for solely for the Bedouin. Other Muslims and Christians are not conscripted and relatively few choose voluntarily to join these segregated units in which they may serve. Under the Ottoman Empire, Muslim and Druze were conscripted whereas Christians were exempt until 1910 in exchange for taxes. The Bedouin were exempted from paying taxes during early years of Israeli statehood (Golani 1966) but now most are sedentarized and undertake agriculture or construction.
28. Just after the invasion of the first Gulf war, *al-Nadwa,* an East Jerusalem weekly published a survey that found that 69% of Israeli Palestinians supported Saddam Hussein's actions in Kuwait and viewed him as a national leader *(al-Nadwa,* August 10, 1990). The support for Hussein, apparent in editorials and articles throughout the Israeli-Palestinian press, crossed party lines. Two weeks after the invasion, Abna al-Balad ("Sons of the Village") sponsored a demonstration in Kfar Kanna to which 3,000 supporters attended and during which both an American flag and a picture of Egyptian President Hosnei Mubarek were burned. There were slogans that read: "Oil for the Arab masses, not the Pig Princes." One week later the police prevented another such demonstration. The two Arab political parties, PLP (headed

by Muhammed Miari) and ADP (led by Abd al-Wahab Darawsha), issued official statements supporting the occupation of Kuwait: "[The PLP and the ADP] support the unification of Iraq and Kuwait and oppose any and all foreign involvement in the Gulf" *(Nida al-Aswar,* September 21, 1990; for ADP's leader Darawsha's statements supporting the invasion, see *Yediot Achronot,* August 17, 1990). In its weekly *al-Watan,* the PLP predicted that all Arab people would eventually stand behind Saddam Hussein, against the American invasion, "and for the liberation of Arab land and people from imperialist domination and its agents."

29. See the work of Dan Rabinowitz (1992; n.d.) for anthropological literature that deals with the ethnographic subtleties, contradictions, and complexities of the discriminatory relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Rabinowitz (1992), for example, discusses the fact that despite the dominant discourse of Jewish Israelis that regards Palestinians as threatening and malicious, there are personal interactions in commerce, industry, and government by which trust is formed—in these cases, the individual Arab is attributed by the Jew to have an acceptable self-seeking rationality. Rabinowitz (n.d.) explores how Jews rationalize selling their land in Nazareth Illit to Palestinians despite their desires to keep them out of the town.
30. I experienced a relatively minor bout of this form of harassment being questioned for hours at the airport, for the simple reason that my research was about Israeli Palestinians. One time I was taken into a back room for over three hours, my computer was confiscated, my luggage was taken from me, opened, and searched piece by piece, my body was searched (albeit not strip searched), and I had to remove my shoes. After this I was escorted directly onto the plane, prevented from speaking with my friend (a Druze soldier) who had waited patiently for the duration, and finally given a Ben Gurion airport pen with an attached card that read, "We apologize for any inconvenience."
31. This is the typical reciprocal naming process that links every other generation with the same title and personal name.
32. Often people would introduce me to one of their friend with a statement about how I will never believe the story about how they first became friends. After repeatedly hearing some version of the same refrain, I was no longer surprised when friends recounted a story about how their first encounter had entailed a major altercation but, somehow, they worked things out and transformed from strangers to enemies to closely bonded friends. Indeed I can recall an occasion when a woman in one of the offices at Haifa University was vehemently yelling at me after I requested to use her printer. My Hebrew was not perfect at the time and several others nearby got involved and came to my defense. Before the hour had passed, this woman had invited me to her home for the Jewish holidays and one time during dinner she

was telling the story of how we became friends to another guest.

33. The fact that I am Jewish was of little significance to the Palestinians who knew me. Also many of my informants categorized people in terms of nationality and made the assumption, if they thought about it, that as an American I had to be Christian. Many Israeli Palestinians viewed "Israeli Jew," "Arab," and "American" as three distinct categories.
34. He recounted a story in which several young American guests had come to visit his home, and two of them were seen kissing on steps of his home. This was scandalous behavior and caused him great embarrassment. My assurances to him that I would behave with full modesty were to no avail for simply stepping out on my own as an American girl in the Arab village was enough to stir up public suspicion.
35. In Arabic women are either categorized as "married woman" or "girl" (an unmarried female) regardless of age, unless one is an elderly widow.
36. Druze men are conscripted into IDF services as are Jewish men and women from ages 18-21. Thereafter into their fifties, men serve one month per year in what is known in Hebrew as *milluim* or reserve duty.
37. The question of whether or not sulha practice will continue in future generations is a topic of controversy for both actors and analysts (Glazer and Abu-Ras, 1993; Ginat, 1997). There are those who argue that the practice has diminished significantly and will soon disappear and others who raise evidence to support the opposite view. I largely refrain from engaging in speculative debates of prediction and restrict myself in the fifth chapter to highlighting the present interaction of unofficial and official practices and discussing the nature of this interaction.
38. Others have pointed out the misguided predictions of modernization reasoning, for example, Despres (1984:19) and Moore (1989) argued that ethnic pluralism persists despite "modernization."
39. Abu Ghosh's research was conducted in Qabilya, an all Muslim village ten miles east of Netanya and three miles from the Jordanian border, with a population at the time of 3,000 residents. He discusses the new "political groupings," (the functioning of each electoral group and aspects of intraand inter-group strife), "political actors" (distinguishing the "internal players" [i.e., the native Arabs] from the "external" [i.e., Israeli] national system), and the Arab's "socialization to politics," that includes the trends in the political thinking of villagers as influenced by Israeli mass media and radio. Under this last heading, Abu-Ghosh focuses on the radical impact of the Israeli elective local council system, which he calls the "modern tool of local administration" on village politics, which he labels the "traditional system." The former he says is replacing the latter.
40. This view is contested by Amina Farrag who reports on *wasta* in Jordan and argues that the

practice does not diminish with an increasing level of formal education. Farrag's conclusions call into question Farsoun's reasoning but both Farrag's and Farsoun's analyses are set within the same paradigm. They assume a dichotomy of practices and question whether or not the western form will replace the indigenous form.

41. Wood rejects Benedict Anderson's conception of a rupture between social solidarities based on kinship and clientage, on the one hand, and the imagined community of nationalism, on the other. She does not believe that "older" forms of power, community, and authority necessarily disappear with the rise of nationalism.
42. Wood gives the example that, in Palestine, intifada deaths are represented as both human rights violations and as acts of martyrdom.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. According to *The Hans Webr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic,* "sharaf" means "high rank, nobility, distinction, eminence, dignity; honor and glory" (1976:467). The fuller, culturally-contextualized meaning of sharaf is a central subject of discussion throughout this book.
2. The poem was written by Nazik al-Malaika and published in *A Tranquil Moment of a Wave,* Beirut 1957:146 (translated to English in al-Khayyat 1990:35).
3. Family sharaf killings and other violence committed in the name of "honor" or reputation occur beyond the Arab world and Middle East; these are by no means endemic to the religion of Islam or tied to any particular ethnic group. My ethnographic research is based on cases that occurred in the Galilee region of Israel, and thus may pertain only to the practice within this region.
4. "Honor crimes" in Iraq are mentioned, for example, by Sana al-Khayyat (1990:24-25); in Israel by Brooks (1995:49-51); in Saudi Arabia in the film *Death of a Princess;* and for the story of a case that took place in the United States, see Ellen Harris' *Guarding the Secrets* (1995).
5. See, for example, Ginat (1987) and Kressel (1981).
6. The cases I discuss involve Druze, Muslims, and Christians. Although I do not have written documentation, there were several informants who reported knowing of a case that involved a Rabbi killing his daughter.
7. In the Qur'an (4:15-16) it says, "Those of your women who commit abomination *(faahisha)* seek against them the testimony of four of your number, and, should they swear, detain the women in their quarters until death release them, or until God appoint a procedure for their case *(lahunna).* See John Burton (1990) for a discussion of the punishment for sexually illicit behavior and the bases of the sanctions in the Qur'an and other sources of Islamic law. Burton traces the debates—origins, positions, and interpretations—of the "stoning issue" (1990:123-164) and argues that no direct penal code comes from the Qur'anic references. In the Qur'an (24:2) it calls for stoning adulterers (*thayyibs)* and for one hundred strokes and a year of banishment for non-adulterer fornicators (1990:127). He points out that the flogging punishment and some references to stoning refer to both male and female (*lahumma*), but other Qur'anic dictates (4:15) use the term *lahunna* (to her), referring only to the woman. Discrepancies have given rise to hadiths and counter-hadiths and even claims that these passages refer to pre-Islamic customs.
8. See Fernea and Bezirgan (1997: xvii-xxxv) for a discussion of the conflation of religious

and cultural factors in the Middle East.

9. This figure was reported to me by five separate sources on different occasions although I was never told the exact basis for this calculation. Those who gave me these figures were active feminists and social workers, some of whom worked at the Haifa Rape Crisis Center, the Battered Women's Help Line, and the *Woman to Woman* feminist center in Haifa.
10. This is not a novel point; for a discussion of male domination in Iraq that mentions the occurrence of "honor crimes," see al-Khayyat (1990).
11. See Ortner (1974).
12. Note the opening story of this chapter and Herzfeld (1980:144) for equations of women with non-human animals and the related implication that women are not socially worthy beings. An imagined bride is construed as a donkey, which is a grave insult "since the donkey is taken as being totally lacking in social worth" (Herzfeld 1980:144). Also, according to Herzfeld, there is a parallel between raiding sheep and the abduction of women. Quarrels are said to be over animals and women, "both entail a contest over claims to manhood by both sides, both involve a high degree of risk to the physical person, and both—if successful—may lead to the creation of an alliance based on mutual respect" (1980:180).
13. cf. Herzfeld 1980:155. Interestingly animal thieves of Glendi are closer to nature and thereby morally superior. Such a man is "a true 'wild animal' (*therio,* an approving term) and must be full of spirit' *(psikbomenos).* He has, as it were, made a virtue of his exclusion from the effeteness of 'culture.'"
14. For dictionary definitions of these concepts, see Hans-Wehr (1976). These definitions, however, are of limited use because these are complex concepts and cannot be glossed with a single term or phrase. The concepts of sharaf and 'ard are inseparably bound to cultural practices such as family-sharaf killing and sulha, and can only be understood in connection with socially embedded practices and cultural beliefs. Conversely, the social behavioral processes themselves can only be understood with an elaboration of the complex concepts, sharaf and 'ard, which underwrite these practices.
15. This phrase is Marcel Mauss' formulation in *The Gift* (1950[1925]).
16. While families did not openly display the fact that their sons were involved with outsiders, in the course of carrying out fieldwork, I did get to know several families whose sons were having relationships with European or American women. In these cases the family's embarrassment was mitigated, or at least parents attempted to mitigate their humiliation, by claiming that the woman came from a high status family. Evidence of a "good family" included signs of wealth—photographs of expensive cars and luxurious homes belonging to the woman's family—and discussion of the profession of the woman's father.

17. For more on the tension between egalitarian principles and notions of status hierarchy, see Chapter Four on the jaha.
18. A woman remains part of her patrilineage throughout her life and is therefore a reflection of male agnates, and much less so her husband. In the Middle East, however, patrilateral parallel cousin marriage (or some form thereof) is common, and in these cases where the woman is patrilineally related to her husband, she is a reflection of his ‘ard, and he is likely to be involved in any sharaf violence carried out against her.
19. A young male informant kept telling me that the diyyah of the woman is four times that of the man, providing the example that if the diyyah for a man is 100,000 shekels, the diyyah for the woman will be 200,000 shekels. I was confused until he explained further.
20. I do not mean to imply that women categorically do not have agency or power. Certainly they do, and I will discuss some of the avenues women have taken to prevent and halt sharaf violence. In daily life women frequently control the domestic realm, and display forceful personalities. During significant moments when sharaf is jeopardized, however, the woman may have less agency than the man, and perhaps none at all. If an animal is punished for behaving in a way its owner considers improper, the victim of the sharaf killing is not even necessarily being punished for misbehaving. She may or may not have always acted in the “proper” fashion. Though a sharaf killing can result after the woman has transgressed social limits placed on her sexuality, it may equally result even if she has always followed the rules of sexual propriety.
21. In Muslim accounts of the Crusades, when Salah al-Din besieged Jerusalem and offered terms to the Franks, the latter threatened that they would kill all their women unless Salah al-Din eased the terms of surrender. Also, early Muslim Arab armies brought along the womenfolk as an incentive to fight bravely because they know that if they lost, their women would be violated by the enemy.
22. For the recounting of this case, I only have one side of the story—that is, the version told by Ajia, the woman involved, and Kifakh, the social worker at the Rape Crisis Center in Haifa. Other members of Ajia’s family would no doubt present a different picture. The argument that a woman’s volition is inconsequential, however, is confirmed by the numerous similar stories told to me by informants in which women, as victims of rape, were markers of the family’s damaged sharaf, and thus became the targets of family-sharaf violence.
23. When Ajia had become pregnant the first time, Wasim had taken her to someone he knew to perform an illegal, extremely painful, and physically dangerous abortion.
24. Ironically and sadly, marrying Wasim, the man who beaten and raped her, was Ajia’s desired goal, the path that would set her life straight.
25. Statistics suggest that women fear turning to any official source for help. During 1995, of

the total number of victims who contacted the Haifa Rape Crisis Center, 46.3% had been attacked more than one year prior to their seeking any assistance, and 10.8% of all the reported cases had occurred ten or more years previously. Only 6.7% of the reported incidents had occurred within the previous 24 hours. These are percentages of the total number of *reported* rapes. According to the 1993 report of the Association of Aid Centers for Sexual Assault Victims, only 10-20% of incidents of sexual assault are reported at all. Rama Lusky, the head of the Tel Aviv branch said, "An estimated 80% to 90% prefer not to report the attack at all due to the prohibitive legal process, which turns the victim into a defendant in court" (quoted in *Jerusalem Post,* August 24, 1994). And only 2.6% of victims turned to the police directly after the attack; 78% did not involve the police at any point.

26. An interesting countering trend to the "blame the victim" tendency is apparently happening in the Occupied Territories. The situation is discussed by Nahla Abdo (cited in Simona Sharoni 1995:38-39). Abdo argues that the intifada has brought gender into popular discourse and helped to reconstruct ideas about rape. Political rapes, rapes of Palestinian women by Israeli-Jewish soldiers, once a taboo subject for discussion, no longer leads to the outcasting of women. Before this time women had suffered severe consequences, not only from the attack, but also when their families held them responsible. According to Abdo, because continued political activism of women is crucial, ideas have changed and these women are now held up as heroines who have paid a high price for the nationalist cause.
27. For further information on the subject of female genital mutilation, see Fernea (1985), Mernissi (1993), Walker and Parmar (1993).
28. I would like to thank Yusra of Tamra village for sharing this story with me.
29. Ginat is featured in various ways throughout this book as he is a scholar who has written considerably on several of the subjects raised here. While I quote and critique his work, I should point out that he is notoriously considered by many as one of the Likud governments "Arab experts."
30. This information is from an interview with Fatima, a relative of the family in 'Arabe village.
31. This information is from an interview with Yusra, a close friend of Maysoon.
32. These killings were not reported by the Israeli press. I give credit for this information to an Israeli colleague who asked to remain anonymous.
33. There have been cases where police returned an endangered girl to the custody of her family only to find her body a few days later.
34. Amal had been at the police station just a few hours prior to her murder. The police had picked her up when they caught her riding in a stolen car with a convicted criminal. She pleaded with them not to summon her parents due to the dangers that would entail. She told the police that she was having a romantic affair with this man and that her family would kill

her if they found out. Despite her pleas to the police, Amal was sent home to face the wrath of her parents, brother, sister, and brother-in-law. The very next day her family reported her "missing." Two weeks later Amal's body was found by a truck driver who had stopped for repairs at the railroad crossing on the Hadera highway. Amal had been dead for two weeks, brutally murdered by her brother and sister.

35. In 1996, Ahmed Tibi, Yasir Arafat's primary Israeli-Arab connection, ran on a ticket for a new Arab party in the Knesset elections with Maryam Mi'ari, a well-known educator and feminist. These two Arab leaders are unique in that they have spoken out against family-sharaf murders.
36. *Yediot Acbranot,* October 19,1995, "Vice Chair of Local Council of Daliat al-Carmel: Approves of Murder for Family Honor."
37. Being labeled a "collaborator" may not always entail assisting Israelis in major ways. Many Palestinians deemed "collaborators" have done nothing more than work for or sell produce to Israelis.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. This topic will be explored more fully in Chapter Five.
2. The distortion of Arab sociopolitical order is profoundly ironic. Witness the following exchange reported in the *Jerusalem Post* in which non-Arab commentators ignore the existence of sulha and patronizingly discuss the Arab inability to form compromises: "[T]he policy of peace is one of compromise, not one of the pursuit of principles to their deadly end," commented Jon Simmons in reference to Israeli Palestinians whom he said needed to learn to compromise rather than pursue political goals no matter what the cost. Jay Shapiro disagreed with Simmons, not for his vilification of Arabs but for conceiving of the possibility that the Other could embody the "Western Anglo-Saxon concept of dispute resolution." He said that in the Middle East, "the enemies have simply cloaked their goals of destroying the Jewish state in terms and symbols that are authentic and reasonable to the Western-oriented political, intellectual and media elite…." He reiterated Moshe Arens remark that "the Middle East is not the Middle West," meaning, Arabs do not have "our" concept of resolution *(The Jerusalem Post*, June 30 and July 13, 1995).
3. Sharaf is a distinctive idiom of social relations in Arabic that I translate here and throughout the text as "honor," although mindful of the scholarly abuses for which use of this gloss rightly has been criticized.
4. These scholars do not deny the existence of states in Middle Eastern societies but claim that at a local level, forms of social and political organization characteristic of traditional, "stateless" societies still prevail. Thus while the Israeli national state represents a centralized and bureaucratic type of power, local Arab politics has a structure and logic of its own that is not oriented toward national politics.
5. See Evans-Pritchard and Meyer Fortes, *African Political Systems* (1940); E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (1940); Meyer Fortes, *The Web of Kinship Among the Tallensi* (1949); and M. G. Smith's review of the use of the concept of segmentation in "Segmentary Lineage Systems," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 86(2):78.
6. Particularly influential in this regard are Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (1969) and Emrys L. Peters, "Some Structural Aspects of the Feud Among the Camel-Herding Bedouin of Cyrenaica," *Africa* 37(3):261-281 and "The Proliferation of Segments in the Lineage of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica," in *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*, Volume 1 (1970): 363-398. As Anthropologist Dale Eickelman notes, this transferal was especially appropriate as Evans-Pritchard was profoundly influenced in his formulation of the idea of balanced opposition by the late nineteenth-century work of William Robertson Smith on

Arabian nomads. According to T. O. Beidelman, a student of Evans-Pritchard, "Evans-Pritchard told me that he got his insights on segmentation from Smith." See Beidelman's review of Robertson Smith's *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* in *Anthropos* (1963-1964): 592-595 and Dale F. Eickelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1989), 39n.

7. In Gellner's presentation of the segmentary model as it supposedly related to the Berber tribes of the central High Atlas of southeastern Morocco (1969), the tree-like system of segments and sub-segments that emerged and formed a balanced opposition during moments of conflict were unambiguous (1969:44). Gellner also believed that this model was not merely an ideological construct belonging to the natives or the anthropologist that could be divorced from actual practice (1969:62-63; Peters 1967; 1990:59-83), but that it had a direct impact on real behavior, even if it did not always determine every move (see Munson 1992).
8. A related focus in these accounts of Arab feud politics is the structuring role attributed to *hamulas* or patrilineal descent groups in the village. Abner Cohen (1965) focused attention on hamulas by arguing that post-1948 Arab communities revived traditional hamula loyalties as the principle unit of sociopolitical organization in response to the cataclysmic changes suffered by Palestinian society. Since the appearance of Cohen's study, anthropologists have focused heavily on the significance of hamula as the key to political organization. See Abner Cohen's *Arab Border Villages in Israel: A Study of Community and Change in a Social Organization* (1965); see also the work of Henry Rosenfeld, for example, "The Social Composition of the Military in the Process of State Formation in the Arabian Desert," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 95 (1965):174-194.
9. In more ways than one the blood feud operates as a means of social mobility, according to Kressel. In addition to the outright combative competition for prestige that is involved in the killings and counter-killings, these feuds entail subsequent events of conspicuous consumption that serve as competitive tools, occasions to garner status and prestige within the local community (1996:60-62).
10. This statement is difficult to substantiate statistically. It is the position of elders and community representatives, certainly, and appears accurate with the exception of the long-standing family conflicts present in some villages.
11. Michael Meeker in "Meaning and Society in the Near East: Examples from the Black Sea Turks and the Levantine Arabs," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7(2):243-270 and Paul Dresch in "The Significance of the Course Events Take in Segmentary Systems," *American Ethnologist* 13(2):309-324 explore the moral basis of segmentary societies.
12. Although political language is discussed in studies by Barth (1960) and Gellner (1969),

Caton points out that analyzing the art of political speaking is not central to these earlier works.

13. Herzfeld's conception of poetics (1980: xiv-xv, 10,11,16), which focuses on how significance is conveyed through actual performance, is both edifying and analogous here. Exploring the way Cretan mountain-dwellers create their manhood through certain displayed actions, Herzfeld's poetic notion does not privilege speech over other forms of social action. Furthermore, he calls for the dissolution of the "artificial distinction between symbolic and political concerns" (1980: xiv).
14. Depending on the particular actors involved, the sulha process is sometimes more readily persuasive than other times. For some, engaging in the sulha process is embraced as a way of dealing with personal grief. In addition to the differences in how victims handle their emotions, factors such as intention may affect the ease with which men agree to engage in sulha. Although some victims claimed that the murderer's motivations were irrelevant, others countered this view. One man stated, "My father says if someone kills another, and he meant to do this, the sulha is very difficult. But if he killed another accidentally there can be a sulha made much more easily. In the case with my family, the killer meant to do what he did, so we cannot make sulha." Intention here was all important.
15. In this chapter, I narrowly focus on the murder of men. According to informants, women rarely are murdered by people outside their immediate family. When a woman is murdered at the hands of her father, brother, or close male kin, no sulha reconciliation process follows. Murder of women and its connection to the selfhood of men has been discussed in the preceding chapter.
16. All the men of the hamula (in theory up to five generations) may be held responsible for the murder and hence are in danger of being targeted for revenge. Killers commonly have consulted and acted in cooperation with at least some members of the family rather than acting on their own.
17. *Musayara* is translated as "compliance" or "adaptation" in the Hans-Wehr dictionary (1976:446-447). In use it means to be nice, patient, or go along with someone.
18. This step is an example of standard patronage relations. The killers become clients of the notable men. It is the hope of these "beggars" *(sa'ilun)* that the distinguished men they have approached will agree to assist them and travel as a jaha to the home of the victim's family.
19. Sulha is an example of the egalitarian discourse of this society. Sulha is a process that renders the two sides equal in sharaf if a temporary imbalance has been created. The fact that sulha is a meaningful practice for both sides and for society in general is a testimony to the strong ideology of egalitarianism. In this chapter I discuss sharaf balancing as a mechanic of the sulha process, a piece in the efficacy of the ritual. In the next chapter

contradictory cultural ideas of egalitarianism and hierarchy will be taken up in a fuller discussion of political power.

20. In the traditional Bedouin reckoning, the judge would take steps away from the victim until the injury was no longer visible. The diyyah would then be calculated based on the number of steps.
21. Sometimes, as in one case from a mixed-religion village, the jaha will bring in high-level Israeli politicians or even foreign dignitaries, such as ambassadors from Jordan and Lebanon. These politicians do not take a role in the negotiations but merely make an appearance during the ceremony. Since the sulha took place, the father of the accused proudly displays a photograph of his son, the accused, with an invitation to the sulha tucked into the corner of the frame. When I inquired about the sulha, the father brought out photographs and a video tape and proceeded to point out all of the important men present. The fact that his son, who was released from prison to attend the sulha, was convicted of throwing a bomb that killed a child was never mentioned by the father.
22. Another public ritual that is notably similar in its form to the sulha ritual is the funeral. Like sulhas, funerals involve a procession through the streets bearing a flag, a line-up of relatives, and the active participation of notables.
23. This information comes from interviews with Bedouin of the Khawalid tribe living in a settlement east of Haifa.
24. It is also more difficult for the jaha to deal with powerful families that are the aggressors paying the diyyah. A jaha leader recalled the problematics of a recent case:

    > It took a full year after the second killing before we (the jaha) were able to make sulha. There were many complexities. Both of the involved families were large Muslim families but the Dakhil family was the larger of the two. The Dakhil had extended family in a nearby village. This dar (extended family) got involved because they were contributing toward paying for the diyyah and were considered as sharing in responsibility for the killing. It was more difficult to reach agreement because of the fact that more people were involved.

25. cf. Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood* (Princeton: Princton University Press, 1980) p.36.
26. Structural-functionalist analyses do not deny the existence of mediation. Indeed, some see it as an important component of social life, but they always regard it merely as a component of a system of balanced opposition. In these studies the role of mediation is regarded as minor. Black-Michaud dismisses reconciliation rituals and mediation processes as merely temporary, strategic halts to feuds that, in principle, are interminable. He suggests that

"blood money"—a key part of the reconciliation process—actually functions as a mnemonic device, keeping the memory of the feud alive until one of the parties is ready to re-ignite it. At the other end of the spectrum Salzman describes mediation as a "crux of leadership" and Ginat (1987; 1997) claims that the importance of mediation cannot be overestimated in Israeli-Palestinian life. Yet even in these accounts mediation is ultimately reduced to a "lubricating factor" that links disputants and elicits "the healing potential in balanced opposition" (Salzman 1987:3). Rather than seeing mediation as an adjunct of a system of balanced opposition and feud, I see it as constitutive of a quite separate kind of political ordering.

27. "Jaha" translates to "arbitration committee." The term refers to the committee of notable mediators who are brought in to forge peace between disputing families. Jaha is alternatively referred to as *lejnah* ("delegation"). Jaha comes from the Arabic root w-j-h; *wajuha* means to be a man of distinction, belonging to the notables (Hans-Wehr 1976:1051-1052).
28. From these leaders' viewpoint, these cases await closure not in the sense that the killer must be identified, convicted, and suitably punished, but rather in the sense that the two disputing sides have not yet been brought back into "normal" peaceful relations.
29. The political construction of sharaf, specifically as it pertains to the leaders of sulha, is the subject of the next chapter.
30. I gathered the information of this case study from several Bedouin villagers of different tribes, jaha elders, and articles in Israeli newspapers.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Certain issues of female sharaf and illustrations of how male sharaf may be constructed through the control of the female body are discussed in Chapter Two on family honor killings.
2. Segmentary order, the model or ideology of opposition commonly attributed to Middle Eastern societies, pits one kinship-based group against another, as moral equivalents. Munson (1992), however, has challenged the utility of this model, at least with regard to Gellner's work. He provides a through critique of Gellner's segmentation model in *Saints of the Atlas,* arguing that the model is irrelevant in the case of precolonial Ait 'Atta tribesmen, that this was not a society in which political order was maintained primarily by balanced and complementary opposition of groups, either in ideological or real behavior terms.
3. See Frank Stewart (1996) who argues that "honor" is a right, namely a right to respect from other men.
4. The words of a father after hearing that his son was killed, recounted to me by the father one year after his son's death.
5. This form of egalitarianism is close to what Shryock (1990) and others refer to as "autonomy" in that both terms mean freedom from power relations, independence from other men or families. Israeli-Palestinian society exhibits an ideological tension—notions of autonomy or self-governance (for the individual man and for each hamula) are in conflict with those of authority and dependence on ruling men and power hamulas.
6. My host increased his already high sharaf by taking me in as a guest for hospitality in general is a prestige-building practice. Everyone in the town knew that he was hosting a foreign, American guest, and these factors added to the prestige of general hospitality.
7. "Sherif," deriving from the same root as "sharaf," is a title of the descendants of Mohammed and in Ottoman times, the title of the Governor of Mecca *(Wehr* 1976:467).
8. As I argued in previous chapters, this contradictory hierarchical conception is a self-centered one wherein each man feels himself superior to the next that expands out in concentric circles to the multiple layers of one's identity— family, religious community, ethnic group, etc. Thus, for example, certain families—one's own and those close to it—are "good" families. Those close to a person are the "right" people while others are often labeled immoral.
9. Labeling certain individuals as "lacking in sharaf" or "immoral" frequently took the form of stating that they were involved in drugs. Drug abuse is a real and growing problem among the Israeli Palestinians, but the contexts in which this stigmatization was cast had little or

nothing to do with whether a person actually was using drugs. This charge, I contend, was a trope, a signifier, and could easily have taken the form of other socially inappropriate behavior.

10. Outsiders are often struck by the fact that seemingly small incidents, one man's sheep grazing on another's pasture, can readily escalate into murder. Likewise many of my informants when discussing past murders neglected to outline the causes of the conflict, either not remembering the details or not feeling them to be highly significant, and only recounted the general catalyst and the intensity of the sharaf insult.
11. Personal interview, January 11, 1996.
12. Claims to male superiority (other than those made by jaha elders or sheikhs) place a premium on machismo, on being a "real man." In explaining the Israeli-Palestinian support of Saddam Hussein to an uncomfortable Israeli-Jewish public, journalist Attallah Mansur wrote, "Palestinians in Israel want action, Saddam is a 'man' and everyone knows that there are no 'men' in Arab leadership" (*Ha'aretz*, August 12, 1990). Power is sometimes expressed as potency in a sexual, gender-based idiom, and this machismo is a manifestation of male sharaf.
13. Violent eruptions among young men are numerous and frequent. Another example of the violence that young men are given to when striving for preeminence above others and also preventing others from standing above themselves came from a Bedouin man from Tarshiha whose brother Hasan I later came to know. This version of the killing was told to me by Sliman, a Kurdish sociologist of Kamila:

    > This is a story from the Khawalid family, a Bedouin tribe of the Galilee. It happened in the beginning of the 1980s. There was a boxer and he was well known as the strongest man of the village. He had left his place of training and was standing in the street on his way home when some other men attacked and murdered him. They did this because the man was flaunting his strength.

    Several other sources who told me of this case concurred that there were no preexisting tensions between the parties involved. Hasan claimed that his brother had no previous clashes or encounters with the men who killed him and the relatives all insisted that "they killed him without any reason." The reason may solely have been the fact that Hasan's brother was physically stronger and this posed a challenge.
14. The term "jaha" is related to the term "jaah," which means "standing, dignity, honor, glory, fame" (Wehr 1976:110) and derives from the root "wajuha," which means "to be a man of distinction" and "wajjuha," which means "to raise to eminence, distinction." For more on

the myriad of words derived from this root, see Wehr (1976:1051-1054).

15. A generation ago there were far more men who were recognized as members of high jaha council; several dozen for the Galilee region alone.
16. According to Ginat (1997:67) there are only about 7 or 8 members of the standing sulha committee who participate in each case in the Arab villages of the Galilee. This number has decreased in recent years as many of these elderly men are dying off. According to my jaha informants, there are still about a dozen men (or were in the mid 90s) who are constantly involved and the number of men sitting on any given case varies. The more serious conflicts of murder and particularly those that involve large families require larger jahas (up to twenty men may be called upon).
17. This position runs against Black-Michaud and those who hold that balanced opposition or feud is the political structure of the society (see previous chapter on sulha).
18. This is the dominant public discourse but it does not mean that all members of society admire these men privately. This is a topic I will take up later in the chapter.
19. A 1996 sulha ceremony was videotaped locally by a hired professional. The tape focuses on the speeches of the jaha elders, each one of which is recorded in full. The two families involved in the case are shown briefly at the onset and ending of the ceremony but the bulk of tape exhibits the notables who are upfront and separated off from the rest of the men ("the audience").
20. There is, however, informal recognition by the State, a topic to be more fully explored in the following chapter.
21. I am employing the category of "politics" in this latter, general sense—meaning all social relations of power and authority whether formalized or not.
22. Abu-Lughod most fully explores the gender-based hierarchy, arguing that women create a poetic language of expression in order to give voice to sentiments that if stated otherwise would entail a serious challenge to the patriarchal ordering.
23. Indeed Israeli-Palestinian men too often employed kinship terminology in conversation with each other. Those of roughly the same age frequently referred to each other as *akby* (brother), *ibny* (my son) and *ammy* (my uncle; FB) if there was an age differential. These kinship terms were employed not only to forge, reinforce, or express a felt bond but also to soften hierarchical or antagonistic relations for example when relations were in the process of escalating into conflicts and one party was trying to diffuse the tension and sway the other to his side.
24. The interviews and discussions with Abu Saleh about the murder of his father, the revenge he took when he was eighteen, and the sulha that followed were told to me by Abu Saleh in front of his son, Amir. This was the first time Abu Saleh had told this story to his son and

his decision to now do so was a very solemn one. He asked me to record the tale and provide his family with a transcribed copy. I believe that Abu Saleh's decision to tell his son the full story of these events at this time came about because of my inquiries and were made possible by my presence—the formalities of recording and the presence of a third, disinterested party (myself), made the extreme emotionality of this personal history possible for the father to confront.

25. This is a reference to a case from the Druze village of Jatt in the Northern Galilee in which this jaha elder was invited to participate. Being a Christian, he felt particularly honored to be asked to serve; Druze tend to settle their conflicts within the Druze community.
26. An elder reported to me that the emotional intensity of the victims led to the death of a jaha member in at least one instance but would offer no details of this case.
27. See page 105 for case where brother pulls a knife during a sulha ceremony.
28. This construal of one's role as sacrificing for the welfare of the public is reminiscent of nobles in early-modern Europe who justified their privileged position in public society by arguing that theirs, in fact, was a life of self-sacrifice, shedding their blood and spending their own fortunes to protect the nation.
29. A couple of the jaha elders raised the issue of the O.J. Simpson trial as an example of the Western's "shameful obsession with gossip and scandal." They were critical of the way Americans needed to know all the intricacies of Nicole Brown's life, feeling that this is "personal information" and of the way the lawyers and media focused on finding out each bit of information, which they viewed as a misguided focus on speculative details.
30. This was also the case apparently in the systems of tribal East Africa in precolonialist times (see Mair 1962).
31. This is in contrast to the marabouts or chiefs of the Cyrenaican Bedouin who acted as mediators between tribes and tribal segments and were able to arbitrate among them because they were not considered one of them (Evans-Pritchard 1949:65-68).
32. See p. 56 for an instance of this public-private discrepancy concerning an honor killer's sharaf. After an honor killing took place, everyone acted as if they thought the killer was a hero, but, in fact, they may have felt disturbed by the fact that this man was a violent killer. Sentiments that question a man's sharaf after he has "upheld" cultural values are usually unvoiced.
33. I thank Kemal for this insightful story (personal interview January 11, 1996).
34. Unfortunately, as an outsider, and particularly as a female outsider, I was not privy to these secret, high power jaha meetings. It would have been too much of a social breach for any jaha member to allow me to accompany him to meetings but I do know of one instance when an American man accompanied a jaha elder to a sulha negotiation meeting. Even after

the fact, it was difficult to elicit the delicate details that ensued during these jaha meetings from my informants who where investing in guarding the notables reputations.

35. The jaha elder's words portended what was to come, for in fact procedural order was not followed in this case (referred to as "the Dashem-Jenin case") and the negotiations did "explode" into a series of problems that stood as obstacles to completing the sulha process.
36. If someone in the village dies by natural or unnatural means, all the men of the village go to sit with the men, and likewise the women with the women, for lengthy periods of time, offering words of sympathy and comfort. Villagers recognize the psychological need for communal support as something fundamental to humanity. When a German volunteer had been staying in the village in 1980 and providing services in building construction he received word that his brother had died. Before going to the airport to return home, hundreds of villagers had arrived at the home of his host to comfort him.
37. One notable who frequently went abroad told me that, each time upon his return to Israel, his first order of business is to make condolence calls. Otherwise "the people would think that I did not care, that I was not profoundly committed to our community, and that I was not a good man."
38. This confirms a point made in the sulha chapter, that this process focuses on the familial or hamula unit, still a key organizational structure in the village, in order to perpetuate peaceful communal relations above all else.
39. The man recounting the story explained that it was the police's required duty to report the daughter's whereabouts to her father because she was only 16 years of age. The actions of the police, who were Arab, indicate their understanding of the dangers of this situation and that a daughter's elopement may well lead to a lethal reaction by her father's and family.
40. This is a quote from a man who had served on this jaha.
41. For example, one jaha leader I knew would always lock the doors of his home before lighting a cigarette so that other town residents would not see him smoking, an activity that appears undignified and could harm his image of respectability. The jaha elder with whom I lived told me that he personally could not show me around the village because this may appear immoral or imply immoral activities to witnesses. Jaha leaders always wear either traditional outfits manifesting their ethnic-religious identity or formal clothes (suits, ties, button-down shirts), they never wear shorts, tee-shirts, or casual attire. Certain leaders would not shake my hand, or that of any unrelated woman, and one senior man refused to meet with me.
42. The most famous example of this would be Druze Sheikh Gaber Mu'adi, who had his sons assassinate Sheikh Hammad Abu-Rabi'a, a Bedouin MK, in January 1981 because the latter reneged on an agreement to cede his Knesset position to the former. Mu'adi did become a

member of the Knesset as a result of Abu-Rabi'a's death, but sulha between the families, and by extension between these Druze and the Bedouin communities has not taken place as of 1997, although Mu'adi has made efforts in this direction. Discredited by his connection to this killing, Mu'adi, who once regularly served on sulha committees, no longer is requested to serve, according to several of my key informants.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. In 1996 there was a major debate within the Islamic Movement inside of Israel. Many from this party, which had always only run for elections at the local level because they did not recognize the national government, now wished to reverse their position and run for national elections within the state system. Until then this had been one of the only functioning political parties of Arabs that did not accept the state's political institutions.
2. Israeli-Druze men are conscripted into the IDF, and many Bedouin voluntarily join. (Christian and other Muslim Arabs by and large do not serve in the IDF, they are not conscripted and they do not volunteer. This is perhaps the single most institutionalized dividing factor that segregates Arab and Jewish citizens economically, socially, and politically.) Likewise a high proportion of the police force is Arab, and Jewish commanders regularly employ Arab officers to police Arab territories.
3. The local council of Kamila was established in 1909, under the Ottoman Empire, and was granted municipal status in 1910.
4. National Supervisor on Elections, Department of the Interior, cited in Rouhanna and Ghanem, 1992.
5. The city of Eilat is the exception being declared a municipality before its population reached 20,000.
6. After initial appointments, councils were comprised largely of members chosen on the basis of proportional representation. Since 1978, the mayor and heads of all local councils are chosen by direct popular elections every four to five years (whereas before this time the mayor was selected by the elected councilors after initial establishment). Toward the end of the 10th Knesset, Alignment banned members of the Knesset (MKs) from serving simultaneously as heads of local councils or mayors because of conflicting interests. In 1983, however, there were three mayors (2 Likud, 1 Hadash) and two heads of local councils (both Likud) who were also serving as members of the 11th Knesset.
7. While this proposition is certainly true, inter-group tensions have had a long history in the area. Oral histories as far back as the mid-19th century record "a bewildering mass of many-sided coalitions, marked by an equal multiplicity of betrayals and enmities" (Zenner 1972:183).
8. The Municipal Council funding crisis was ongoing throughout the 1990s: In an *al-Ittihad* editorial (November 7, 1990) Arab and Druze local councils were called on to coordinate their struggle to get funds. Despite the fact that the Druze serve in the IDF, their councils were faring no better. Sakhnin local council went on strike because they had not received

state funding throughout the year (*al-ittihad,* November 1, 1990). There was a strike in Nazareth and Kufar Yasif *(see Kul al-Ara, b* October 19, 1990), and Bi'na where because of the dire economic situation, no officials' salaries were paid for months *(Kul al-Arab* December 21, 1990). Strikes ensued, and one in which even Maxim Levy, the Jewish head of the Center for Local Government, marched in solidarity with the heads of Arab Local Councils *(Kul al arab* March 8, 1991). On May 1, 1991, the Druze local councils began a general strike—the Secretariat of the Druze Inititative Committee met with Druze MK Muhammad Nafa' (DFPE) and decided to support the decision of the Druze Council Heads to strike in protest of discrimination against Druze sector.

There have been moments of optimism: The Arab Council Heads formed an agreement with the Minister of Treasury and the Interior stating that the former were to receive 10-15 million NIS as advance payments. They also drew up a budget gaps document (see *al-ittihad* April 19, 1991; *Ha'aretz* May 23, 1991) and agreed to solve the financial problems of Arab sector.

Promises, however, were not kept and so the NCCALA recommended a general strike in July, 1991 (see *al-Ittibad* July 23-25 1991; *Saut al-haq* July 26,1991; *Panorama* July 2,1991). Itzhaak Modai, the Minister of Finance, said that his office transferred all the pledged sums and that he would not meet with any chair involved in the strike. He also stated that his ministry would not transfer the development budgets since he had not received certain documents (see *al-Sinara* July 26,1991). Despite the official line of ending discrimination between Arabs and Jews, in 1991 Arab councils received only 795 IS per capita while the Jewish councils received 1320 IS per capita (.*al-Ittihad,* March 12, 1991). Then PM Rabin declared his desire to end discrimination and pointed to the increases in the budgets for the Arab sector and that the appropriations for the Arab villages had been increased by 90 million shekels. Nonetheless the discrimination against the Arab villages continued (see *al-Ittihad* May 13 1993). Darawsha, head of the ADP, criticized the government for its treatment of Arabs and said that Arab local authorities were in financial distress because the government had not forwarded the approved budgets—most of the municipalities had not received their 1993 budget allocations by June of 1993 (Haifa University conference). (For more details on these financial battles, see *al-Sinara,* March 5 1993; *Kul al-Arab,* and *al-Sinara,* April 23, 1993; *Kul al-Arab* and *al-Diyyar,* May 14, 1993).

9. This committee is a separate body from the Center for Local Government *(merkaz hashilton hamekomi,* in Hebrew), a voluntary association that represents the municipalities and local councils, lobbying and addressing matters pertaining to local government. This latter organization is almost entirely Jewish run and takes a manifestly apolitical stance on

contentious matters of Israeli Palestinians.

10. Shmuel Toledano, advisor to the Prime Minister on Arab Affairs (1966-1977), revealed at a symposium at Haifa University (October 1993), at which I was present, that the government had initiated and promoted the Council of Arab Mayors (or National Committee of Chairman of Arab Local Authorities) and that the government was pleased to form the council because they hoped that this agency of local leadership would act as a counterbalance to the Communist party. Toledano and Chaim Kubersky, Director-General of Interior Ministry at the time, participated in this founding meeting.
11. The massacre that took place in Kafr Kassem in 1956 served as a basis for the Land Day protest two decades later in 1976.
12. The Committee cooperated with the Communists and the DFPE after Rabin's refusal to suspend the expropriation of Arab lands in the mid seventies. The government's policies sparked the coordinated planning of Land Day in protest.
13. Since the late 1970s, throughout the 1980s, and especially during the early years of the first intifada (which began in December 1987), national and nationalist causes became contentious issues in the local political arena. According to many of my informants, this change in local politics to include nationalist issues explicitly is a result of younger, more educated actors increasingly participating in local government. The 1990s campaigns that I witnessed, however, had reverted mainly to issues of personal or local concern.
14. Another aspect of the central government's exploitation of the local councils was put forth by Dr. Hathem Kana'ana of the village of Rama in the Galilee: The central government "exploits the backwardness of the Arab Councils in order to avoid providing the necessary services. [T]hey take a council head with a fourth grade education and expect him to deal with a dozen government bureaucracies. This is one of the reasons for the continued backwardness of the Arab settlements," Kana'ana stated *(al-Ittibad* May 13 1993).
15. The "Council of 40 [Unrecognized] Villages" met in July 1990 in Shefa 'Amr for its second national convention. The representatives decided to submit a master plan to the central planning agencies stating that these settlements are entitled to official recognition. The plan, formulated by Dr. Yubert Luyon of the Technion, was based on a survey conducted for two years that covered 31 settlement sites and consisted of a total of 4,518 residents. In 18 of these settlements the number of residents was greater than 100. Ibrahim Nimr Hussein, the Chair of the NCCALA, called for a public protest to get the government to recognize these settlements (*Ha'aretz,* July 8, 1990).
16. Many of the unwelcome changes were discussed in Chapter One. Some of the welcomed dramatic changes for the indigenous peoples since the creation of Israel include increased access to formal education and western medicine, a higher material standard of living

measured by developed and extensive systems of plumbing and irrigation, electricity, paved roads, and the widespread use of cars, televisions, satellites, and "pellephones" (cellular phones).

17. Abner Cohen's work on Arab villages, praised by some as "seminal" and criticized by others, caused a stir when it was revealed that the research was in fact on Kafr Qasem (unmentioned by the author) and that it was written the same year as the massacre but did not address this.
18. Nakhleh's argument counters Gluckman and others who portray conflict as functional.
19. Israel's methods for checking the nationalist struggle by exploiting tribal cleavages has been compared to similar tactics employed by the Apartheid government in South Africa (Wood 1993:120 fn.43).
20. Nascent "democratic" practices were evidenced in Palestine by the institution of parliamentary elections, as early as 1876.
21. A similar argument can be made about material products. The precise meaning of the introduction of consumer goods into this society, mostly from the United States, remains unclear. In the 1970s and 80s many social scientists interpreted the spread of "consumer culture" to the developing world as a form of westernization or "coca-colonization." This view is contested by scholars such as Marshall Sahlins who argue that these consumer objects do not carry their own structures of meaning about with them, but derive new significance from the local non-western contexts in which they become embedded.
22. The work of sociologist Sammy Smooha is commendatory for his efforts to complicate the dominant theoretical paradigms of his time. Smooha (1984) takes a modified position arguing that the general trend of the behavior and attitudes of Israeli Palestinians since the 1960s is toward becoming more westernized but not assimilated; they are becoming more politicized and their identity is transforming. Based on sociological survey data collected in 1976 and followed up in 1980, Smooha's central thesis is as follows: Israeli Palestinians are "non-assimilating, Westernizing, disadvantaged, hostile and ideological dissident minority undergoing politicization." His outlook, unlike many of his professional colleagues, is one of optimism. He views the tensions between Arabs and Jews in Israel as being on the decline, and believes that these groups are properly moving in the direction of mutual tolerance. Smooha's extensive work is only a starting point however; it remains limited to the general sweeping categories of survey questionnaires.
23. This practice of depending on local leaders was used in the 19th century by the British who turned to Aqiili Agha, a strong man of the Galilee for assistance (Zenner 1972).
24. The sulha process and other honor-based practices, such as family honor killings, are officially incorporated into the legal systems of Jordan and Lebanon.

25. This illustration of how local rivalries were aggravated by the creation of local elections and village councils supports the dependency contention that the Israeli authorities acted in ways to exacerbate the local rivalries with the deliberate philosophy of "divide and rule."
26. For other sources on wasita or wasta, see Sami Farsoun (1970:269-270) and Aharon Layish and Avshalom Shmueli (1979:30).
27. For the most part, my fieldwork efforts to make contacts, carry out interviews, access information were successful or thwarted depending on my use of wastas. Only if I had a friend introduce me to a mayor or jaha elder would he speak with me. When I attempted to reach contacts directly I was disregarded entirely. Furthermore, the level of assistance I received depended on the status of my wasta—if he was perceived as important or if the contacted party was indebted to him, my interviews went well. If their connection was not strong, the interview was perfunctory.
28. Amina Farrag (1977) discusses wasta in Jordan and uses the same term to refer to sulha procedures.
29. The prearranged pact described by my informant is illegal but it in fact occurs frequently.
30. The leaders in the Palestinian villages resemble those of Jordanian villages as described by Amina Farrag in terms of their function and interaction with the national authorities during the twentieth century. Farrag describes the interaction of mukhtars with the increasing power of the state. At the turn of the century, elders were given money by members of their hamula and were far more trusted than the Pasha who was appointed by and answered to the Ottoman authorities (Farrag 1977: 227). Mukhtars chosen by male elders were thought to be reliable and neutral; they were not supposed to favor their own hamula. They also had to be literate as they were in charge of recording all births, deaths, and marriages. They also collected the taxes and handed them over to the Pasha who gave them to the Ottoman authorities. Mukhtars received fees for these services in addition to bribes from those trying to escape conscription (Farrag 1977: 228). Mukhtars were in an ambivalent position—they had to do the "dirty work" (collect taxes and enforce conscription) but, unlike the Pasha, their position did not depend upon Turkish authorities but on the support of villagers. Under the Jordanian rule of Amir Abdullah (r. 1923-1951), the rural system became more incorporated into the centralized system. The peasants accepted this because the Amir allowed the customary tribal way of settling disputes to continue. Abdullah typically had the offender jailed, instead of just having him leave his village, until the reconciliation at which point he was released. Villages became more integrated into wider political and administrative systems over time. The elders retained their position in settling disputes but were no longer looked upon as the upholders of village interests and values. Villagers stated that this role was no longer necessary because they were not in opposition to the wider

system but rather regarded themselves as a part of it (Farrag 1977: 230).

Mukhtars actually gained more power after the end of the Turkish rule in Jordan. Under the Turkish rule their approval and position were only granted by villagers but afterwards it was also approved by the administrative officer in the nearby town. Mukhtars were given official responsibilities and had to answer to the central government, (e.g., handing over offenders to police and seeing that schools were built). Under King Hussein (r. 1952-1998), mukhtars retained their importance until about 1965 when the village became a *baladia* (small municipality) with a *majilis baladia* (municipal council) and mukhtars were basically replaced by the *ra'is baladia* (mayor). The functions of the majlis in Jordan, as in Israel, are to promote road construction, oversee electricity and water functioning, control food prices, inspect merchandise, and collect taxes. The mukhtars could still identify the couples to be married but were otherwise powerless. Elders continued to act in the capacity of a jaha, but had completely lost their role as the upholders of village values. Young men, now financially independent, could completely disrespect the elders and would even make fun of them in public saying, "their place is in the museum" (Farrag: 231). As I have discussed, in Israel there is this sentiment privately, but publicly respect is still shown to jaha elders.

31. See *Wasta: The Hidden Force in Middle-Eastern Society* (Cunningham and Sarayah 1993).
32. See Farsoun (1970:269-270) and Huxley (1978:10, quoting Ayoub) for a discussion of the release of a prisoner via these methods.
33. In this rare case of murder within the immediate family, the norm of taking revenge against any male member of the hamula did not apply. It was clear that should there be an attempt at a retaliatory killing, the target would be the killer himself, and certainly this clash could escalate such that Marwan and his four sons and Samir and his six surviving sons would all potentially be in danger.
34. I was told that because it had been a mutually provoked battle between the cousins, the killer had received only an eight year sentence that was later commuted to six years.
35. I was able to attain a videotape of this particular sulha ceremony. The sulha proceeded without a problem except for an initial outburst by Marwan who was having misgivings about going through with the sulha. Sheikh Yehia, the senior member of the jaha, scolded him severely and clarified that the sulha would indeed proceed. As soon as Yehia raised his voice in this brief exchange, Marwan backed down and indicated his compliance by trying to shake hands with the sheikh.
36. Historical details and stories of conflicts and sulhas of Deir Yasmin are based on literature I collected from the local council, interviews with residents of the village, and extensive discussions with Samir 'Ali the vice-chair of the local council.
37. At that time, elections were held every four years; at present, five years separate local

electoral contests.

38. Abna' el-Balad is a nationalist party in the sense that it had branches in villages throughout Israel calling for Palestinian nationalism. It does not, however, contest elections at the national level and indeed does not recognize the sovereignty of the Knesset over the territory of Israel. The party is now almost defunct, and even in 1979, it had reached a low ebb after enjoying an initial popularity in the 1970s.
39. This is not to say that voters did not have ideological concerns but simply that these were not salient. Immediately after the beginning of the intifada (December 1987), the electoral rounds exhibited a more ideologically based campaign than in the more recent rounds.
40. Even though the head of the local council is a strong position from the point of view of the villager, he is of course not so powerful from the point of view of the state. According to the deputy mayor, the State's Interior Ministry still retains a great deal of power in the village elections. "It controls the elections in a sense. It decides down to the day and time when to hold the elections. It provides official lists of all the names of those people eligible to vote. It provides the materials for the actual elections, and a small budget for each of the candidates." Nevertheless, in terms of internal village affairs, the councilors do hold some control.
41. Sabah a young Christian woman present during this discussion said at this point, "What about us?" The deputy mayor was quick to explain, "She is joking, you see, there was no Christian representative then."
42. Between 1983 and 1988 the timing of elections changed from every four years to every five. The Deir Yasmin election should have been held in 1988 but was delayed into early 1989 due to the conflict and subsequent sulha proceedings.
43. In 1983, for example, seventeen mayors were members of Alignment, nine were connected to Likud, one was from the National Religious Party, one from Tami, and the mayor of Nazareth was with Hadash.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. Zureik, like Lustick, examines the politicization of the Israeli Arabs, the absence of an effective independent Arab movement, and the limited abilities of Arabs to engage in nationalist politics (1979:166-187). He finds that Israeli Arabs have not risen up in protest, nor posed any military or political threat, because of the effective systems of co-option and control set in place by the state. These systems segment an already sectionalized society and exclude Arabs (1979:200-201).
2. In 1966, the Histadrut removed the word "Jewish" from its official title (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003:475, fn.32).
3. Druze men are the exception in that they do serve regularly in the IDF and yet in terms of income and educational level, they fare even worse than Muslim Arabs (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003:180).
4. Complex formulas for the future of Israel have been promoted by certain leaders among the Israeli Arab community. Bisharah, for example, calls for the formation of a bi-national state in all areas of Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, but within the context of a two-state solution, he promotes cultural autonomy for Israeli Arab citizens and the transformation of Israel into a nation for all of its citizens.
5. Frish (2003) makes this assessment by looking at the expressions contained within nakba narratives of Israeli Arabs in comparison with those of diaspora Palestinians.
6. Kaufman (2003) outlines the implication of adopting this formula that calls for Israel to become a state for all of its citizens (which is being promoted by certain Arab and Jewish strains) and assesses the impact that such a radical change would have on majority-minority relations. Yet the possibility of Israel transforming from a Jewish state into a civic nation state appears remote as the 1985 formula of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state still holds firmly for the vast majority of Jewish citizens.
7. Khawla abu Baker interestingly highlights social and psychological welfare discrimination that directly and intensively influences the quality of life of Israeli Arabs (2003:69-93). With certain exceptions, the welfare provisions for Arabs are not equal to that of Jews (2003:93).
8. Attributed to the former MK and Deputy Minister (Labor Party) Abd alaziz Zo'abi from Nazareth and cited in Koren (2003:226).
9. Although all anthropological writing is necessarily filtered through the observer's lens, and the very selection of which topics to highlight is subjective, sharaf is nonetheless an empirical reality. My choice to emphasize sharaf as a central social form derived

inductively, that is, from the culture and peoples themselves. Honor-laden social forms, values, behaviors, and beliefs were played out on a daily basis and plain for me to observe. Many members of this society attached great significance to sharaf, in its multitude of manifestations, and placed the cultural value at the core of their personal and cultural identities, as well as their political practices within the village and state settings.

10. For examples, see *Days of Honey, Days of Onion* (Gorkin 1993) and *Cultures in Conflict* (Goldscheider 2001).
11. For examples, see *Arabs in the Jewish State* (Lustick 1979), which looks at Israel's control of this national minority; *Arab Minority in Israel* (Landau 1993), which focuses on Israeli-Palestinian politicization and radicalization as a national minority; and *The Israeli Palestinians* (Bligh 2003), which is an edited volume that emphasizes the dual identity of this minority and furthers the thesis that Israeli Arabs are discriminated against by the state.
12. This book was inspired by other analyses of the construction of manhood in other ethnographic areas such as Michel Herzfeld's the *Poetics of Manhood,* Stanley Brandes' *Metaphors of Masculinity,* and David Gilmore's *Manhood in the Making.* There has not been, however, any full-length text that seriously addresses the construction of Israeli Arab masculinity in terms of sharaf and local politics.
13. Arab leaders who have connections with the Israeli regime walk a fine line between being seen as state puppets and being seen as powerfully connected men who can attain desirable benefits such as visas, money, permits, jobs, and hence be of great benefit to befriend.
14. One should not presume that the more politically radical actors always opt for the indigenous ways. Zenner found that some Israeli Palestinians who grew up during the Mandate and were influenced by Arab nationalism considered the 'feudalism' which Aqili Agha, a 19th century strongman of the Galilee, represented to be repugnant (1972:171). From my field observations in the 1990s, I found that the elderly tended to promote the "traditional sulha ways" in the cliché manner of being nostalgic for the good old days when life was simple and pure. They contrasted this with the modern decline of values and community life. One elder repeatedly emphasized how superior the sulha system was compared to Western forms because the jaha do not "go into all that shameful and unnecessary detail." He found the exposure of in particular women's private lives to be almost as much of a travesty as the murder itself. He stated, "While the western system busies itself with 'who done it' details, we restore peace." The youth, on the other hand, although always solemn in ceremony and respectful of elders, tended to mock the sulha system and the jaha, labeling these as "primitive" holdovers and instead promoted "democracy" and elections.
15. Multiple levels of identity even within the segmentary polity are apparent when on occasion

various loyalties and interests conflict and compete, often when it comes time to cast one's ballot. One of my informants, an idealistic young Druze man named Wisam, told me of the quandary he found himself in when it came time to cast his vote for the 1993 local elections in Shefa 'Amr. Wisam did not even consider voting for any non-Druze lists but internally there was a struggle. He felt that the best Druze list was comprised of a group of "academic" people who, if elected, would greatly improve the town. He also, however, felt personal loyalty to his uncle who was running as the third candidate on another Druze list. Yet he felt his relative had little chance of being elected. His loyalties were further split because he also felt he should give his vote to a third Druze list—that of the "Sheikhs," the old political family. Their success would maximize the number of Druze elected to the council. In the end, he decided to vote for this final list, even though they were furthest from his own views ideologically. Elections did not replace older loyalty structures of family and other segmentary units; they were simply grafted on to them.

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