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MEN'S BARGAINING WITH PATRIARCHY

The Case of Primaries within Hamulas in Palestinian Arab Communities in Israel

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This article expands Kandiyoti's concept of patriarchal bargaining to include men's negotiations. It analyzes how marginalized groups within a dominant sociocultural knowledge regime strategize to advance change while trying to maximize security and optimize their life options. The case study analyzes primaries held within kin-based groupings—hamulas (clans) among Palestinian Arabs in Israel—to determine the candidates for municipal elections. Based on interviews and analysis of newspaper articles, the authors claim that the turn to primaries by hamulas was an attempt to resolve disputes that were undermining the patriarchal system. The primaries provided entry to those of lower ranking in the hierarchy of hamula political leadership (e.g., younger men, higher education graduates, members of marginal segments of the clan), while retaining the exclusion of women from the political sphere. Thus, while bargaining with patriarchy, gender identities and hierarchies are contested, re/produced, and negotiated as both a political means and an anchor for social identities.

Keywords: *patriarchy; patriarchal bargaining; primary elections; masculinity; citizenship; Palestinian Arabs; gender*

The concept of bargaining—in relation to women's relations with patriarchy (Kandiyoti 1988), the ethnic order (Cockburn 2004), and liberal discourse (Sa'ar 2005)—is concerned with the theoretical question of how marginalized groups within a dominant sociocultural regime strategize to advance change while also seeking to maximize security and to optimize their life options. Since Kandiyoti's (1988) classic article "Bargaining

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with Patriarchy," many studies have explored the issue of how women deal with patriarchal arrangements in the private as well as in the public-political spheres (e.g., Arat 1989; Hutson 2001; Moghadam 1993). Correctly, such discussions deal primarily with negotiation from the women's point of view, since patriarchal arrangements most directly limit women and their ability to bargain. These discussions have also illuminated women's social role as active agents of social change. However, patriarchy is a gender regime that determines both men's and women's roles and relations, and thus it defines hierarchy between and within the gender categories. Accordingly, the analysis presented here argues that there is a need to expand Kandiyoti's concept of patriarchal bargaining to include marginal men who bargain with patriarchy to pave their way into the public-political domain.

More specifically, our empirical study delves into an emerging phenomenon: the holding of primary elections within kin-based groupings (*hamulas* [clans]) in the 2003 municipal elections in Palestinian Arab¹ towns and villages in Israel. We claim that the turn to primaries was an attempt to resolve disputes that were undermining the hamulas' patriarchal system used to govern local politics. The introduction of the primaries provided entry to those men excluded from politics due to their relatively lower ranking in the hierarchy of the hamula political leadership (e.g., younger men, higher education graduates, members of marginal segments of the clan), while retaining the exclusion of women from the political sphere. Thus, men's bargaining with patriarchy resulted in modifying the patriarchal arrangement for men, while reproducing the gendered hierarchy between men and women.

In the first section of the article, we introduce a theoretical perspective that ties together the logic of kinship-based communities and political arrangements in modern states. Then, we describe the sociohistorical background of the hamula as a kin-based system within the Palestinian community and discuss the ways in which it has been reconstituted to function as a major political factor within the local politics of Palestinian citizens of Israel. We also analyze the gender dimension of the hamula related to women and men. The second part of the article presents an analysis of men's bargaining with the hamula, a project that created space for the men while at the same time excluding women. We conclude with an analysis of the ways in which bargaining reinforces the patriarchal order while redefining masculinity within the Palestinian community in Israel.

KINSHIP-BASED POLITICS

The prevailing claim in the literature is that modern nation-states are built basically on patriarchal assumptions and that states' social arrangements tend to reproduce patriarchal relations (Brown 1981; Pateman 1988, 1989; Vogel 1998; Walby 1990). Researchers of southern countries add an important dimension missing in most Western-oriented discussions: the tensions that exist there between communal solidarities and society-wide institutions and identities. In postcolonial, newly independent nations, the nation's territoriality overlapped the state's boundaries. Old loyalties and foci of solidarity that rested on local, ethnic, religious, or kin-based communities were challenged by "newer" state demands for loyalty and obedience to nationwide institutions (Charrad 2001).²

Charrad (2001) claimed that central powers could form hegemony in various ways: They could confront kin-based solidarities and try to subordinate them, they could tolerate them and grant them some political leverage, or they could manipulate them in a divide-and-rule approach to politics. Similarly, kin-based corporate structures could develop a variety of relationships with the state. Such structures could compete with the state, support the state, or compete among themselves in an attempt to gain the favor of the state. It is important to emphasize that the state structure is in tension with the kinship structure, which is fundamentally patriarchal (Charrad 2001; Joseph 1993, 1997; Kandiyoti 1999). The latter serves as a source of authority, a base of political organization and support, and a source of identity. Kinship structures and their social roles did not disappear with the establishment of the modern nation-state and with the institutionalization of universal citizenship and the right to vote.

Kin-based or hamula connections serve as sources of support and security in the face of the intrusive, oppressive power of the state. Patriarchal connections can also be the basis for soliciting political support and for negotiations regarding power status. Our interest in this article is to examine how the logic of kin-based community intersects with political life and constructs gender relations. We argue that the boundaries between state, civic society, kinship units, and the private sphere are ambivalent, fluid, and negotiated. The interaction between the patriarchal logic of the state and kin-based political order creates a contingent, mediated citizenship that serves as a social site for bargaining with patriarchy. As we argue later, such a political structure has a strong gender dimension that affects women's and men's access to politics. However, bargaining with patriarchy not only is a

struggle over structural arrangements but involves negotiation over both political power and social identities and boundaries.

In general, the role of kinship-based communities has greater importance under conditions of occupation, colonialism, and/or in the absence of participation in the state's representative bodies—all of which apply to and thus lend special interest to the case of Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, especially in regard to gender issues.

HAMULA POLITICS AND INTERNAL CHALLENGES: BACKGROUND OF THE ISRAELI CASE

Connections between the State and its Palestinian Arab citizens have been mediated by the hamula from the inception of the state of Israel. But for generations before this, cultural codes based on hamula relations were a central axis of identification and social organization for Palestinian Arabs. Although the hamula is, fundamentally, a kin-based grouping, many studies have concluded that the rhetoric of connection based on blood relations conceals a more complex reality. Over the years, emigration and geographical mobility led to consolidation or establishment of different hamula settlements and/or even fictitious kinship relations (Al-Haj and Rosenfeld 1990; Kanaaneh 2002; Rabinowitz and Khawalde 2000).³ Furthermore, research on Israeli society suggests that the hamula system was strongly influenced, as well, by social and political processes that shaped post-1948 Palestinian Arab society in Israel. While prior to the establishment of the state of Israel, the status of the hamula was in decline, the 1948 war and latter policies of Israeli governments renewed and even strengthened it (Al-Haj 1987; Al-Haj and Rosenfeld 1990; Rosenfeld 1964, 1985). The post-1948 Arab community remaining in Israel changed overnight from majority to minority status. It was a community whose fabric of life was destroyed and whose political and social structures collapsed. The hamula was one of the few stable factors that remained in place, and it provided social and material support during the difficult postwar period. It became a source of identification for a community that had lost many members who were expelled, fled, or were not permitted to return to live within the borders (the Green Line) of the newly established Israeli state.

Successive Israeli governments contributed to the reinforcement of patriarchal structures by striking agreements with the largest and strongest hamula. The divide-and-rule approach to politics enabled better control by the state and reduced governing costs (Hasan 2002; Lustick 1980). While

manipulation of kinship-based groupings has existed in various Muslim societies (Charrad 2001), including in the Palestinian Authority (Abdo 1999), in these societies, a national identity is usually offered as a surrogate. However, this has not been the case for Palestinian citizens of Israel. Israel is defined as a Jewish nation-state, despite the fact that approximately 18 percent of its current population is of Arab descent. Although successive Israeli governments have described Israel as a “liberal democracy” (and indeed Arabs do have voting rights and enjoy the freedoms of organizing, speech, and press), more apt descriptors of the political reality are the exclusive character of Israeli republicanism and the systemic discrimination against Palestinian Arabs that has been widely documented (e.g., Ghanem 2001; Peled 1992).

Thus, while Palestinian Arabs have been mobilized as voters during elections, at the same time, they are excluded from participation in daily routines and performance of Israeli national politics. On the local level, they occupy most of the positions involved in the administration of their own villages and towns. However, such activities depend on and are controlled by Jewish-dominated government agencies (Al-Haj and Rosenfeld 1990). The Israeli government’s opposition to any expressions of Palestinian national identity has strengthened the tendency among Palestinians to see domestic and local space—the village or the town—as well as family relations—the hamula—as primary units of identity and identification (Bishara 2000; Mi’ari 1987). Furthermore, local politics within Palestinian Arab society in Israel have been based on competition between hamulas (Al-Haj and Rosenfeld 1990). Hence, the hamula has become a source of both political power and collective identity. From our theoretical perspective, the interaction between the logic of the Israeli nation-state and the kin-based political order creates a contingent, mediated citizenship that serves as a social site for bargaining with patriarchy.

Since the 1980s, this political arrangement has been challenged by young, educated adults who formed political parties and used them as a new base for social organization (e.g., initially the Communist Party and more recently by the Balad Party/Democratic National Coalition and the Islamic Movement) (Ghanem 2001; Landau 1993). This having been noted, very often these new formations, too, are based on kinship relations. As studies have shown, these parties are more significant on the national level in the elections to the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament. On the local level, hamula lists still dominate political competition.

Open political struggle between hamulas continues to the present day in most Palestinian Arab settlements. In terms of leadership, traditionally

the head of the strongest hamula—the *mukhtar*—was the leader of an entire village. He was appointed by the Ottoman, British, and eventually Israeli governments as the political representative of the community (Baer 1978). Thus, use by the state of the hamula as an instrument for indirect rule and vehicle of collective representation has been reinforced. At the same time, the establishment of the state and its policies have undercut, indirectly, the roles and the authority of the hamula. Changes and transitions that took place in Palestinian society in Israel since 1948 led to weakened support for the mukhtar and the principle of inheritance through which such a leadership role was determined. Among these changes was the shift in the occupational structure from agrarian to proletarian society that resulted in more people's making their living from wage work in construction and agriculture. The income generated from these new jobs enabled residents to develop economic resources that led to investment in higher education or in the purchase of land by families that historically had not held property. The rise in education level and government expansion led to new job opportunities in the public sector as civil servants, teachers, health professionals, lawyers, and so forth. The hamula, and branches within it, that had lacked status bases of traditional hierarchies—meaning control of land, political power, and social status—benefited most from the new structural opportunities and changes in traditional class stratification (Yahia-Younis 2006).

The rise in education and growth of new bases of economic and social stratification accompanied by changes in conceptions of society itself led to attempts among Palestinian Arabs to challenge both the sources of political candidates and the process through which they were appointed. As a result, new candidates presented themselves, and power struggles between different factions within the hamula broke out. As part of this process, men traditionally marginalized and therefore not part of the political game challenged the hierarchical logic of the hamula. Moreover, their claim for power was a threat to the legitimacy of the hamula as a political unit representing the patriarchal order.

As in previous elections, as the date for the 2003 election grew closer, different attempts were made to find ways to appoint a candidate for whom there was agreement and so prevent a collapse of arrangements that had served the hamula in the political process at the level of the local authority. The holding of primaries within the hamula emerged as one of the more interesting solutions to solve these internal conflicts. However, before proceeding with the analysis of the empirical case study, there is a need to elucidate the gender politics involved in hamula politics.

THE HAMULA, POLITICS, AND GENDER POLITICS

Patriarchy is an inclusive, contingent, and relational process between genders. Such a view extends beyond classic definitions of patriarchy that emphasize the material base of patriarchy and men's domination (Hartmann 1979). In contrast, we claim that patriarchy is an emerging property and changing social phenomenon that encapsulates dialectical relations between material, political, cultural, and identity dimensions that are embedded in sociohistorical conditions. Following Connell's (1990) emphasis on the historicity of gender relations, we aim in the following presentation to expose the sociohistorical contexts that produce these complex gender relations within the politics of kinship-based political arrangements.

Under the conditions of protracted conflict that define the lives of the Palestinian Arab population in Israel, the family has become the center of both social and national solidarity (Bishara 2000; Herzog 1998). Male identity in this situation is entrapped in a dual crisis: civil-national and patriarchal-normative (Monterescu 2006). The first crisis deprived the Arab male of national identity as a result of the collapse of society in 1948. This was then exacerbated by the loss of men's local sources of income, their extended absence from home (due to the necessity to work elsewhere), exposure to the Jewish foreign culture and Jewish women whose behavior differed from that with which they were familiar, their subordination to Israeli Jewish institutions, and dependency on the Israeli government. Such damage intensified the threat to men's status and national identity (Mar'i and Mar'i 1991). Given this traumatic situation, Palestinian men found themselves in a "crisis of masculinity" (Monterescu 2006).

Interrelated with this, the patriarchal-normative crisis produced a need to reconstitute patriarchy or, as scholars have defined it, neopatriarchy (Sharabi 1988). In meeting this crisis, the control of women served as a criterion through which Arab society judged itself in terms of its ability to preserve its uniqueness (Mar'i and Mar'i 1991; Monterescu 2006; Shokeid 1980). In this process, the hamula has become reinvigorated. Not only do elderly folks possess detailed knowledge about the clan, but teenage boys reproduce clan lineage in their neighborhood activities (Kanaaneh 2002). This reinvented hamula structure is fueled by competition between young males over their ability to provide family members with goods and services. Or in other words, it is driven by their ability to perform their masculinity.

Preservation of cultural values signifies the collectivity's borders in juxtaposition to Jewish culture and provides both identity and a source of

identification with the wider Arab world. As an integral part of the traditional hamula system, the intensification of the social control of women serves as a vehicle of cultural continuity and identity and, in addition, as a response to men's insecurity. Consequently, the central concept of family honor has been bolstered (Hasan 2002).⁴ These gendered practices reaffirm, collectively, men's masculinity, patriarchy, and patriarchal connectivity as the base for personal and community identities.

Since it has served as the basis for social and political organization, hamula discourse has appropriated real and/or imagined identities of connectivity. The base and borders of hamula changed over time, according to circumstances in different historical periods. As mentioned, the present structure of the hamula is a reimagined form that has emerged due to power relations, the influence of state-generated processes, and recent events and rivalries. However, even as the hamula base has undergone a continuous process of change and reformation, the use of the rhetoric of kin-based connections has remained and, thus, has continued to reproduce the hamula's patriarchal discursive and nondiscursive practices as well as demands for loyalty (Yahia-Younis 2006).

Grounded in patriarchal rhetoric, hamula discourse and practices are inclusive of both men and women. However, it is important to remember that as part of Arab culture, patriarchy is a means of control by gender and age that gives preference to men over women, mature adults over younger adults, and mature women over younger women. Social control is supported by kinship membership and justified by means of moralistic maxims, cultural codes, and economic, political, and religious institutional arrangements (Joseph 1993; Moghadam 1993). In such arrangements, the political rights of both men and women are mediated through the patriarchal order (Kandiyoti 2001). Following Connell (2001), we claim that the overlap between patriarchal logic and kin-based political order creates hierarchical citizenship. In gender terms, it means that all women are subordinated to and controlled by men. However, young men, men from marginal sections of a dominant hamula, and those who are members of minor hamulas are also controlled and dominated by older men and by men from the strong, prestigious hamula. Thus, masculinity has two dimensions: The first is hegemonic, in relation to women, and the second, hierarchical, defines the relations within the category of men.

Our case study deals with a situation in which dominated marginal men challenged the patriarchal order and launched a claim for power. This internal challenge posed a double bind. Challenging the authority of the privileged men in the patriarchal regime threatens patriarchy, in general,

as an anchor of masculinity as well as kin-based political power. Thus, we claim that the launching of primary elections within the hamula was an attempt to preserve the hamula as a kin-based political-social framework and at the same time an attempt to retain men's exclusivity in politics. This argument parallels Connell's (2001) claim that when dominant masculinity is threatened, structural arrangements are reshaped to reaffirm threatened masculinity.

SETTING AND METHOD

Municipal elections in Israel are held every five years. Since the election reform of 1975, the head of each local authority has been elected directly, as determined by a simple majority, while members of the local council are selected via the proportion of votes earned by each electoral party list. The electoral lists are determined by each party during a pre-election or primary period when politicians compete to be the list/party's nominee for mayor and/or to be included in the party's list.

Traditionally, in the Palestinian Arab localities, the mukhtar, the head of the hamula, was the only nominee to be mayor, and he also determined the hamula's list of candidates he wanted to serve on the local council. As the logic of a patriarchal system dictated, these candidates were men. Women were excluded from the political sphere with only very few exceptions (Abu Baker 1998; Herzog 1998). For generations, leadership was transferred between men within the same extended family or branch of the hamula. Thus, local election campaigns were mainly between rival hamulas, which mobilized the support of their own members and of smaller, marginal hamulas. The centrality of kin-based units in local politics led to preelection agreements between various hamulas that hoped to win the elections and lead the municipality. Potential coalition partners were promised roles in the local authority based on the number of votes the hamula brought to the coalition, its cumulative significance, and/or the leaders' bargaining skills. On occasion, and especially up until the elections analyzed in the present study, a list comprising two hamulas of equal worth would reach a power-sharing agreement involving a compromise of rotation in key roles prior to the election. However, the election results can lead to the need for a number of "rotations." Indeed, there have been cases in which there were four and even five rotations during one term in office in some local authorities. While this led to an absence of continuity and instability in the local authority, it has enabled continuation of the kin-based logic of organization.

The hamula as a political organization has been under threat since the mid-1990s, however. Driving this threat is the rise of internal competition for positions of power and representation that has involved three primary divisions: between different branches of the kinship, between different candidates who have sought to lead the hamula's election list, and between members of the hamula who have sought to be candidates in a political list and used the hamula as a recruiting source. We study this process through an examination of hamula-based primary elections that took place in 2003.

The phenomenon studied is still an emerging, informal process. There are several signs of the informal nature of this process. Primary elections within hamulas were held in private homes with no formal regulation or formal announcements about the need to register for the elections. Thus, our research field deals with an informal aspect of local politics where there are neither institutional frameworks nor well-defined sources for information. We accessed two principal sources of information in analyzing this phenomenon: Arabic language newspapers that appear in Israel and interviews conducted especially for this study. Regarding the first source, the five most popular newspapers in Arabic published in Israel were examined for two periods: in the half year that preceded the elections that took place on October 28, 2003 and then, for three weeks immediately following these elections. Three of these newspapers—*Kull al-Arab*, *Panorama*, and *al-Sinara*—are independent, emphasize different social issues, and serve as a publicity medium for different groups. The other two are newspapers affiliated with political parties: *Fasl Al-Miqal* (The Decisive Opinion), affiliated with the Democratic National Assembly, the political party known as Balad headed by Azmi Bishara, and *al-Ittihad* (The Union), the official organ of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, Hadash, an offspring of the Israeli communist party. Four of these newspapers are weeklies, while *al-Ittihad* is a daily.

Examination of the printed press enabled us to follow public discourse involved in local politics in general and the primary elections in particular. Altogether, we collected 500 items (e.g., articles, advertisements), and we found that 10 percent of these dealt directly with the issues of primaries in the hamula. Among the materials available were news items, articles, advertisements, and campaign publicity.⁵ A recent study of media consumption among Palestinian Arabs in Israel found that the majority of the readers read more than one newspaper (Jamal 2006, 75-84). Accordingly, we assumed that the public in general was exposed to at least some of the content published in these items.

Interviews, the second principal source, were conducted with informants and persons who had a direct, active role in the primaries in their immediate political-social environment. We conducted telephone interviews with 24 persons. Each interview lasted approximately half an hour. Half of the interviewees were political activists such as candidates who headed the list of their hamula or served as hamula representatives to the election committee or in another role related to the primaries. These interviewees were residents of different towns and villages located, primarily, in the Triangle Region⁶ and in northern Galilee. Informants referred us to some interviewees, while other interviewees were identified from the media, mainly newspaper items. Twelve interviewees were members of these communities, eight men and four women who were chosen randomly from the telephone directory. Interviewees we knew were involved in the primaries were asked the following opening question: We learned from the media that you are a candidate in primary elections being held to select the candidates for your hamula's electoral list for the upcoming local elections; can you describe for us what this involves? To those randomly selected, the first question was, Who leads the hamula list? In applying the semistructured interview format, the following questions were woven into the conversation conducted with all interviewees: How was it determined that a candidate or voter could participate in the primaries? Who made such determinations? What considerations were taken into account in making this determination? The response to the initial question established that women did not participate as either voters or as candidates. Still, the following question about women's participation was asked explicitly: Could women participate in the elections as voters and/or as candidates? And on learning in a majority of the cases that women were excluded from the process, we asked the interviewees about women's responses to this situation. Our analysis procedure for both the media data and the interviews was inductive. We followed the everyday, commonsense understanding of politics and the interpretation of primary elections within the hamula as they emerged from the media texts and people's narrations. Collectively, these sources of information enabled us to understand the emerging nature of the phenomenon, its different aspects, its prevalence, and its social meaning.

PRIMARIES WITHIN THE HAMULA AS A NEGOTIATED MEDIA ISSUE

As the 2003 election date approached, media discussion focused on intergroup relations within the communities, speculation about possible

coalition partners, and competition between candidates including those within hamulas. Primaries in the hamula as well as in the party and movement were discussed widely in the press. News coverage, interviews, reports, and politically oriented articles presented a variety of approaches to the use of primaries to determine the list of candidates. The newspapers' ideology can explain the differences in the approaches. Newspapers that serve as formal or informal organs for parties (e.g., *Al-Ittihad*, *Fasl Al-Miqal*) refrained from allowing the paper to be a platform for parties that had a narrow base in a hamula and/or ethnic-religious groups, regions, or others. *Sawt al-Haq wa-al-Huriyya* (The Voice of Truth and Freedom), the newspaper of the Northern Islamic Movement in Israel, presented a similar position, as explained by the editor in our interview: "We are against any hamula base in the elections. We would never publish something like this." In contrast, *Panorama*, widely distributed in Arab towns in Israel, served as a central means through which to publicize all aspects of the issue of primaries in hamulas. Beginning approximately two months before the elections, a call was issued to candidates for lists in municipal elections or those who had proposed themselves to lead a party list to publicize themselves in *Panorama*, along with their photo, at reasonable prices (*Panorama*, mid-August, September, October 2003). Relative to all other newspapers, this paper had the greatest number of news items and political advertisements for hamula primaries as well as reports about the election results.

The central place that the discussion of the different types of primaries assumed in the agenda of local elections in Palestinian-Arab localities reveals the centrality of another discussion: the place and status of the hamula discursive regime. The harsh criticism of the new phenomenon—primary elections within the hamula—leveled by newspapers of the parties focused primarily on this discursive regime. The excluded status of women and the manner in which recent university graduates reintegrated into politics were the primary criticisms leveled: "These candidates [the recent university graduates] are not prepared . . . to consider the total exclusion of women from participation in election of the candidate or prevention of expressing her opinion about what is happening, as is her right, and in doing so they reaffirm primitivism and her inferior status. This matter is neither on their agenda nor in their mentality. For them, women are an incomplete creation. There can be no doubt that if women of opinion in *hamula* were allowed to express their opinion they would resist this farce" (Abed al Fatah, *Fasl Al-Miqal*, August 8, 2003, 11). Referring to the "new mukhtars," the newspaper of Balad also criticized recent university

graduates whom it claimed used the hamula, cynically, as a means of personal and political advancement (Abu Hassin, *Fasl Al-Miqal*, October 31, 2003, 4).⁷

The multiplicity of candidates within the hamula has threatened the inner hierarchical authority structure and its unity. Moreover, the internal competition has been perceived to result in a weakening of the power of each hamula in its competition with other hamulas, as is explained in the excerpt from a newspaper item: “The multiple number of candidates in the two *hamulas* . . . [is due to] pursuit of personal interests, divisiveness . . . and is evidence of weakening of the families” (*al-Sinara*, October 23, 2003, 42). Attempts were made in different hamulas to find ways to mediate and to unify the ranks. An interviewee noted, “Today every one ascribes importance to himself. We need a means of mediating who will lead a hamula list.”

Newspapers reported extensively about struggles within families and hamulas: about the candidates, establishment of election committees, their members, size, and naturally, the election results (see, for example, *Kull al-Arab*, August 15, 2003, p. 31; *Panorama*, August 8, 2003, p. 9; August 15, 2003, 7).

These critiques reveal the internal social forces perceived to overtly and potentially threaten the age and gender hierarchy of the hamula regime—namely, women and young male adults.⁸ The study’s findings about the primaries in the hamula suggest that this threat was confronted in two ways: inclusion of young male adults, new to political competition, and exclusion of women from this arena. As we will demonstrate, in both cases, the goal in doing so was to preserve the hamula.

HAMULA PRIMARY IN PROCESS

Primary elections in hamulas are an emerging phenomenon. Not all the hamulas hold them, and clear patterns have yet to be established. Our analysis reveals a variety of the mechanisms used by different kin-based units: A committee conducted some primaries, while in other cases, an election committee was organized to ensure the primary was conducted properly. The numbers of committee members varied; some had up to 185 representatives from all the different hamula branches and segments; others consisted of a few members, one representative of each of the candidates and two neutral persons respected by all; some considered the relative size of branches within the hamula; others gave equal representation to each hamula branch.

Each of the different committees that supervised the election established the manner in which the election was conducted as well as who had the right to participate. Women's exclusion was a common denominator in all these arrangements, except in the case of one primary election.

Excluding women from the primary elections was one of the major mechanisms used by men in their bargaining with patriarchy. The analysis of our data reveals that the overwhelming majority of reporters and speakers simply assumed that only men would take part in the primaries.⁹ With very few exceptions, women did not participate either in primary or in secondary roles—they were not candidates, nor did they vote in the primaries, and they were not invited to attend family groupings and meetings.¹⁰ A purely male election committee ran primaries, and only men were eligible to be candidates. Simply, women's exclusion was taken for granted.¹¹

The hamula is by definition a patrilineage. Membership is traced through the male line, and women do not have a social personhood as such. In the primary arrangements, the logic of a patriarchal discursive regime was applied in spite of the use of universalistic language. In such cases, an election committee was established that was composed solely of men whose role was to organize and to supervise the election, to prepare a list of voters, and to send personal invitations to those to be eligible to participate in the primary. Three principal methods were used to exclude women.

In one method, married, widowed, and divorced men were invited to participate in the primary elections. Women and young, unmarried male adults were excluded. Such exclusion is the clearest expression of the patriarchal logic of gender and age hierarchy. The fact that only men who had established families were allowed to participate reproduced not only hamula hierarchy but also the centrality of the family as a unit of connectivity and masculine identity. In such cases, the right to participate is not a personal, civic right but rather a status derived from attribution and position in the kin-based grouping hierarchical order.

The second method awarded the right to vote to all men 17 years of age or older. This is similar to the age established in the state's civil law, except for the exclusion of women. According to the logic of this decision, gender hierarchy was dominant. Thus, while a young man of 17 was permitted to participate, this same right was denied his mother or grandmother. When we asked one candidate in this system, "Who has the right to vote in the primary?" he replied, "Everyone. They all can!" In reply to a follow-up question, "Everyone? Can women vote in the primary?" he revealed that it had been decided that women would not participate. Knowing this did not prevent the interviewee from answering without hesitation, initially, that

everyone was permitted to participate, because from his point of view it is taken for granted that women are not included.

Half jokingly, another interviewee said, "Actually, I would have preferred that women participate. I would have received more votes as I am popular among the women." In explaining that he and another doctor from the hamula had proposed allowing women to vote, he recounted the reasons why their proposal was rejected, all of which were grounded in patriarchal logic: the need to protect women, to ensure their loyalty; the desire "not to bother them"; one man's claim that "the presence of women heats up the atmosphere"; and finally, the need "to save them" from contradictory demands of loyalty (between a married woman's two families—her husband's and her father's families—both of which demand her loyalty and vote) (Yahia-Younis 2006).

The third method involved declaring formally that elections were open to all but acting in a contrary manner. While in this case it appears that the principle of democracy was adopted without gender distinction, here too the patriarchal principle was retained in practice. In this instance, the men of the nuclear family were allowed to vote on women's behalf on presentation of their identification cards. While there was no way to prevent a woman who insisted on coming to vote at the polling station, her hesitation in doing so was based on social control and tradition, as one of the interviewees explained:

The election committee declared that if a woman came to vote, so be it. If she chose not to come and her husband voted for her or if a father sought to vote instead of his (unmarried) daughters [it is acceptable]. Some women did come to vote, a few. There are women who do not like to interfere. Some women do not feel comfortable in a big courtyard filled with men since there is a family-like atmosphere during an election in which everyone knows everyone else. Since this is an internal matter and the hamula's intentions are known, with each branch having a favorite [a particular candidate], it is assumed that women have the same intentions.

After explaining the guiding principle, he commented about the situation, as it exists in practice: "In our hamula there was something strange—branches were divided within. However, since the general tendency was understood, men voted in place of their wives and daughters. All of the young men were enthusiastic participants. There was a lot of involvement." That is, although there was a disagreement, only the men and especially the young among them were involved in making the decision. Question: "How did the women react to this?" Answer: "None would

comment on this point. If a woman would have come and said that she wanted to vote, no one would have said no. There are [female] school-teachers who voted. My wife came with me and voted. No one said, 'Her husband cannot control her.' There were no suspicions. No one forced them. They chose [not to come]." We asked, "And what happens if the nuclear family has a different disposition?" Answer: "When a family has a dual identity [prefers other candidates], when it is clear and known in public, when the disagreement is known and he has been warned, then the committee decides not to allow a man to do so [vote instead of his daughters]." It is clear in this discussion that the patriarchal principle is assumed. Women are expected to obey the men in their family. Since it is not expected that they would have a different opinion, men can vote on their behalf. Moreover, statements such as, "What others will say is that he cannot control her," reflect men's apprehension about losing their masculinity that is rooted in their status as holder of the family authority.

The absence of women from the list of candidates, too, was explained by the logic of patriarchal discourse. When asked why there were no female candidates, the same man just quoted stated, "No woman said that she wanted to be a candidate. Had there been, no one would have told her not to do so. In my view, the reason is that they do not want to get involved in the world of politics." A woman from a town in the center of the county explained the absence of women: "Women were not elected in any of the primaries. I do not know, perhaps they thought that if the man is invited, they [those who invited him] know the woman agrees with him." As our previous examples show, this woman expressed the taken-for-granted assumption that men have the right to represent women, or even to vote instead of them. Thus, in accepting these norms, women reconfirm their mediated citizenship and the gendered patriarchal order.

While the patriarchal discourse was used to exclude women from the primaries, marginalized men were included through civic practices. Thus, the establishment of the elections committee, its members, and the call to hamula members to participate in the election were publicized in newspapers occasionally. More often, invitations and campaign posters were distributed along with announcements made in meetings and hamula gatherings. The public nature of the agreement achieved by the hamulas was of great importance as it unified members internally and presented a unified front externally. Much such attention was devoted to the agreements achieved in different forums of family members. For example, a newspaper report on a hamula meeting noted that following discussion of the family's candidate to head the local authority, "the audience stood and

applauded to show its warm support [of the decision]" (*Panorama*, August 22, 2003). The rhetoric linked the individualist logic of primaries and the communal, kin-based logic of the hamula. Repeated emphasis was placed on the democratic election process that took place when the family was in agreement: "Sections of Beit Nasser family gathered to discuss the upcoming local election of mayor of the city and Council members. The discussion among family members was friendly, democratic, and dignified. Full agreement was achieved regarding support for the candidacy of Haj Bassam Mahmud Nasser" (*Panorama*, September 26, 2003). And on the same page of the newspaper, one reads: "Following consultation among individuals, friends and loved ones, the family decided to support the candidacy of a young adult" (*Panorama*, September 26, 2003).

An especially interesting type of early election took place in Hurfesh in the north. Each hamula held an election, and then the four candidates to head the municipality were asked to arrive at a consensus regarding the sole candidate in the election. One political activist observed that "the village's families gave the candidates time to reach an agreement among themselves about the mayoral candidate. This did not allow for use of the primary as a solution to the problem." The newspaper continued, "This agreement meant that the list of candidates for the Council included all the representatives of the different families and that this would be the basis for a general coalition in the village" (*al-Sinara*, August 29, 2003, 40).

The words used to describe the different types of family forums were *assembly*, *gathering*, *meeting*, *primary*, *internal election*, *early election*, *consultation*, *consensus*, *agreement*, and *decision*. All types of meetings, election methods, and forms of ratification of candidates sought the same end: to establish alternative ways that would ensure agreement among most of the hamula's (male) members regarding the candidate for the head of the council or list of candidates in the local authority and, in doing so, to restore the hamula as the base for political organization and support.

The newspapers that covered the primaries and the candidates whom we interviewed repeatedly emphasized the democratic nature of the elections and, thus, relied on a civic discourse as a claim for acceptance of the primaries' results. For example, a candidate elected by his hamula in a primary election said in a newspaper interview, "My family is known for its honesty, commitment . . . [to] the democratic right of every individual to express his opinion. Everyone must accept a democratically achieved outcome. Those who have influence in the family have seen fit to elect me by means of an internal election in which I competed. . . . I received the largest number of votes" (*Panorama*, September 19, 2003, 37; for similar arguments made in

relation to other settlements, see *Kull al-Arab*, August 8, 2003, 41; September 12, 2003, 41). The demand to accept the authority of the hamula rests on the logic of democracy. Nevertheless, the main motivation to adopt democratic practices was the effort to strengthen the hamula as a political institution.

However, as our data showed, reestablishing the hamula as a political institution means including marginal men and at the same time excluding women. A short article in *Panorama* makes a number of critical points regarding the municipal elections in the Arab sector that, according to the author, demonstrate total dismissal of the full representation of the public. The author claims that he is not against family involvement and directs his criticism of the family's candidate with the question, "Why wasn't she a woman?" (Is'awai, *Panorama*, September 19, 2003, 20).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our theoretical perspective suggests that patriarchy is a gendered regime that should be conceived of as an inclusive, contingent, relational process between and within genders. Accordingly, we see patriarchy as an emergent, continuously changing gendered property produced through the dialectical relations existing between material, political, cultural, and identity dimensions that are embedded in sociohistorical conditions. Thus, we claim that the interaction between patriarchal logic and kin-based political order creates mediated citizenship that serves as a social site for bargaining with patriarchy. In the process of bargaining with patriarchy, gender identities and hierarchies are contested, re/produced, and negotiated as both a political means and as an anchor for social identities.

Our empirical study dealt with an emerging new phenomenon of primary elections within the hamula—a kin-based political organization—in Palestinian Arab communities in Israel. We found that primaries were adopted as a mechanism to resolve challenges to the patriarchal logic governing the politics engaged in by men in the community. The challengers were mainly young men, men from marginal sections of a dominant hamula, and those who are members of minor hamulas who were controlled and dominated by older men as well as by men from the strong, prestigious hamula. They claimed the right to be candidates in the elections, to lead the hamula in the local political competition and, ultimately, to hold power.

The many years of support by the Israeli government in backing continuation of traditional leadership has strengthened and encouraged the hamula patriarchal order. Furthermore, the hamula has served, and to a

large degree continues to serve, as a basis for the social and community identification preferred by Israeli governments that oppose strengthening of the Palestinian national identity. The juxtaposition of these social forces resulted in reproducing kinship-based grouping as one that follows a patriarchic logic. In terms of gender identities, this patriarchic logic means that masculinity has two dimensions: The first is hegemonic, in relation to women, and the second, hierarchical, defines the relations within the category of men.

Challenges to control by hamula elders and demands for intergenerational transfer of leadership positions rose from within the hamula and threatened to undermine its power in the political arena as well as patriarchal authority that is based on age and gender hierarchy. This is a form of bargaining with patriarchy that suggests that patriarchy is re/shaped not only by the dominant male actors but also by members of marginalized groups. As a means of accommodating these challenges, the hamula adopted primary elections and democratic discourse within the hamula that incorporated marginalized men and excluded women and in some cases unmarried men.

Such fortification of the kin-based grouping reproduced men's authority at the expense of women. The hamula discursive regime assumed that men would remain in control. The sexual contract, in Pateman's (1988) terms, was an integral part of the men's bargaining with patriarchy. In paraphrasing Kandiyoti (1988, 285), who studied women, we claim that patriarchal bargains not only informed men's rational choices but also shaped the more unconscious aspects of their gendered subjectivity.

Women did not participate in the primaries due to decisions made in different families as well as the strength of norms and the patriarchal tradition. Accordingly, the primaries in the hamula became a mechanism that reproduced gender hierarchy and social boundaries between men and women. The competition for a few political positions was difficult enough; thus, including women might have made the situation even more intense. In bargaining with patriarchy, young men who were educated and/or those whose origins were in previously marginal families modified the rules of the patriarchal game in politics. Masculinity was re/defined in this bargaining process, but only in relation to the hierarchy among men. Overall, then, the hamula and its logic as a kinship-based, social-political framework have been preserved. Although the right to be included in governance was extended to new male participants, the basic logic of men's authority over women has been reproduced through women's exclusion.

Nevertheless, one cannot ignore that while bargaining with patriarchy took place, an alternative civic discourse penetrated the political culture.

Thus, by extension, it is impossible to rule out the possibility that in coming elections, women too will challenge the system and that the hamulas will be forced to consider and even to allow women to participate in primary elections, if only for the reason that doing so will strengthen the kin-based grouping as a representative political body. Indeed, this was the experience of women in Turkey, when women were politicized through the influence of the men in their lives and made inroads into politics only as a result of the men's authoritative backing (Arat 1989). Similarly, the strategic use of patriarchy as a path to political integration has been applied in some southern countries. In South and Southeast Asia, for example, most of the important political positions open to women have been assigned through familial ties, death, or imprisonment of a male family member (Richter 1990). And despite holding a very traditional and patriarchal position in regard to the place of women in Palestinian society, the Hamas electoral list for the 2006 elections held in the Palestinian Authority included women who were wives or mothers of Hamas activists who had participated in attacks in Israel. Still, such bargaining remains within the constraints of the patriarchal logic.

At the same time, we would like to note that there are persons within the Palestinian Arab community in Israel—whose voices were echoed in our study—who oppose the hamula system and prefer political participation through political parties and right of representation for all. Many such persons criticize the exclusion of women in the kin-based system. Thus, the exclusion or inclusion of women has become a symbolic signifier for different types of political discourses. If this is the case, bargaining might be interpreted as a negotiation not only over relative power positions of hamula-related men but over the very nature of politics among Palestinian Arab communities. While to date, most political parties have not included women in their lists—and the few that did so ranked them in places where they were not likely to be elected—there does seem to be evidence of the emergence of alternative civic discourse that might lead to sociopolitical change.

NOTES

1. The choice of the term is strongly related to identity politics and its discourse (see Rabinowitz 1993). We chose to use this composite because both terms—*Arabs* and *Palestinians*—are used in academic and public discourse and because most previous studies have used the term *Arabs*; hence, reference to such research introduces the term into the discussion in any event.

2. The relations between ethnic- and religious-based communities are widely discussed in Israeli studies. See, for example, Herzog (1995) and Kimmerling (2004).

3. As the *hamula* is a reimagined form embedded in historical circumstances and power relations, there are common denominators between Palestinians in Israel and the Palestinian Authority but also differences that are the outcome of the different histories of the two communities since 1948 (see, for example, Mi'ari 1987, 2000).

4. Hasan, in her brilliant paper, explains the patriarchal politics of honor as a neopatriarchy. In doing so, she reframes the issue of honor killing initially by posing the question, "Why [does] the honor of the men, who are the woman's patrilineal kin, reside in the bodies of their female relatives" (2002, 2). Then, she traces the genealogy of the custom and in parallel reveals the economic basis for control of women's bodies by male family members and the way this mechanism coincides with state policy and hamula interests.

5. The diversity of items does not permit use of any quantitative analysis.

6. This is an area populated by Palestinians on the coastal plain of Israel.

7. Bishara (2003) has noted that this phenomenon is expanding and now includes persons with advanced degrees, especially doctors, whose political base is the clan and who use their degree for political advancement. He criticized this phenomenon, along with its social and political consequences, and claimed that it, along with other phenomena, impedes the enlightenment process in Palestinian Arab society in Israel.

8. Despite criticizing women's exclusion in practice, these parties did not include women on their party lists as well.

9. Yahia-Younis pointed out this fact already during the election time in *Fasl Al-Miqal* (September 12, 2003, pp. 20-21).

10. In two cases—the settlements of Tirah and Kufur Karah—women who were members of small families were included in the clan coalition list as candidates to serve on the council, and they were elected as part of the agreement for rotation between coalition partners. However, no primaries took place in their families. Such instances are evidence of breaches that exist in the system, and thus, they indicate the potential that exists for challenges to and future bargaining by women with patriarchy. See the discussion in the conclusion of this article.

11. Although women were excluded from the primaries within the hamulas, they were and are not excluded from the municipal elections. On the contrary, their vote is a highly sought commodity (Yahia-Younis 2006).

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