NETWORKS OF POWER IN PALESTINE

Family, Society and Politics since the Nineteenth Century

HAREL CHOREV-HALEWA

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To my wife Michal and children Arbel, Yarden and Eilon

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aside, I am confident that this study of Palestinian history offers a valuable contribution to the existing body of research.

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Introduction

Early in the morning of November 2, 2006, a car approached the al-Jura roadblock at the entrance to Hebron. Manning the roadblock were policemen and the Preventive Security Force (*al-Amn al-Waqai*) of the Palestinian Authority (PA), who signaled the car to stop. The driver, still drowsy, continued driving. The force opened fire, hitting all four passengers. One of them, a 14 year-old boy, was killed.[1] Under different circumstances, the incident might have ended with a brief mention in the media and an expression of regret for the misunderstanding and its fatal outcome. In this case, however, the incident ignited a massive fire that illuminates the social structure of the Mount Hebron region and its complex relations with the PA.

The boy killed at the roadblock belonged to the al-Ja'bari family, the proud 30,000-strong clan that was once the most influential family in the southern West Bank, between the 1940s and 1980s. The family's special status was also recognized by the PA, which appointed one of its scions, 'Arif Ja'bari, as governor of Hebron. The Masharqa al-Fawqa neighborhood, the Ja'baris' stronghold, was known to be off-limits to anyone not among the clan's allies. In the event of disputes with members of other clans, the well-armed Ja'abris made it clear more than once that their solidarity should not be tested. This time, however, a family member had been killed by the PA's official security forces, putting two opposing centers of authority to the test. On the one side was the PA, a product of the maturation of Palestinian political modernization processes; on the

other was a strong clan, which represented the "traditional" family-based social order.

Faced with competing loyalties, the Ja'baris' choice was clear. The same day, armed with assault rifles, dozens of family members raided the Namara police station near their neighborhood, wounding six police officers and kidnapping 17 others. Before leaving the police station, the raiders destroyed ten security vehicles and burnt down the building. The incident put governor 'Arif Ja'bari in an impossible predicament. 'Arif is the son-in-law of the legendary Sheikh Muhammad 'Ali al-Ja'bari, who led the clan in its days of glory. But he was also the senior representative of the PA, whose men were now being targeted by his enraged relatives. Even before 'Arif could deal with this contradiction, the sociocultural reality of Mt. Hebron presented him with a new challenge. The Ja'baris' attack on the police incited the policemen's families to gather en masse at the site of the incident, with many of the relatives coming from the adjacent village of Yatta. 'Arif, who was called to the scene, suddenly found himself threatened by the demonstrators – not because of his official position as governor of Hebron, but because he was a member of the Ja'bari clan. He shoved aside a pistol aimed at him from close range a split second before a bullet wounded his bodyguard. Two more of the governor's guards were wounded by protestors' gunfire.[2] News of the clash traveled swiftly to the Ja'bari stronghold, and once again they rushed out with guns in hand – this time to rescue their clansman the governor, whose policemen they had attacked only a few hours earlier.

This chain of events did not end there. After extricating the governor, the Ja'baris announced their condition for releasing the kidnapped policemen – an *'atwa* request to be submitted by the PA to the family. *'Atwa* is a term taken from the customary law (*'urf*), a pre-Islamic arbitration and conflict resolution system based on tribal traditions and other influences, including Islamic. Although *'urf* is informal and often contradictive in methodology to the formal judicial systems of the PA and Sharia, it is an extremely important social institution in the West Bank, and in the Mt. Hebron area in particular. Unlike formal law systems that usually deal with individuals, the *'urf* main purpose is settling inter-familial conflicts

by reaching a *sulha* (reconciliation). Requesting an *'atwa* – or ceasefire – constitutes the first stage in the proceeding, and is submitted by the "offending" side to the "offended" party. Demanding an *'atwa* between feuding families is commonplace. However, there was no precedent for such a demand from the PA, essentially subjugating the state to customary law. Still, it was not entirely unexpected. Since the PA gained control of Hebron (part of the city remains under Israeli control) in 1995, its officials were repeatedly intimidated by locals summoning them to *'urf* as if they were private legal entities, rather than representatives of the governing system.[3] This time, however, the Ja'baris took it a step further by enforcing the rules of the longstanding social institutions on the PA itself, as if it were just another clan with which they had a dispute and not the authority. And yet, the Ja'baris' term for freeing the hostages was accepted. Some 24 hours after the roadblock shooting, several PA ministers rushed to Hebron and submitted the *'atwa* request to the clan leaders, effectively conceding responsibility on the part of the PA. A final settlement was then formulated, stipulating a one-time grant, as well as a monthly stipend from the PA to the family of the dead boy.[4]

* * *

Approximately 100 kilometers north of Hebron, Munib al-Masri could contemplate his accomplishments and those of his extended family with satisfaction. His magnificent house, set amid a sprawling 28-hectare estate atop of Mt. Gerizim (*Jabal Al-Tūr*) and overlooking the city of Nablus was only one of those achievements. The house is an exact replica of the Villa Capra La Rotonda, one of Italy's most exquisite Renaissance buildings built by architect Andrea Palladio in the sixteenth century near the city of Vicenza. The interior of Munib's mansion was as lavish as its exterior, decorated with classic seventeenth- and eighteenth-century paintings as well as more modern works by Picasso and Modigliani. The antique furniture includes a chest of drawers used by Marie Antoinette; the cellar houses the remains of an ancient Byzantine monastery.

Munib's clan, the al-Masris, had been the largest Palestinian employer since the 1950s. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, they were the wealthiest family in both the Palestinian territories and Jordan, controlling over one-third of the Palestinian economy since the 1990s.[5] The PADICO Corporation, controlled by cousins Munib and Sabih al-Masri, owns the Palestinian Stock Exchange, the telephone companies, hotels and other industries in the West Bank. Bashar al-Masri is building Rawabi, the first planned Palestinian city built in modern history, on the outskirts of Ramallah. Samah al-Masri is the largest importer in the West Bank. The al-Masris' business in the West Bank is only a small part of their global enterprise, which includes oil, food, textile and other industries. In September 2012, after incorporating with the Lebanese Hariri family, Munib and Sabih completed their takeover of the Arab Bank, the most widely branched bank in the Arab world.[6]

In the realm of politics, the al-Masris have long enjoyed direct access to decision-makers in the PA, Israel, the Arab world and beyond. Munib, an international businessman who divides his time between Nablus, London and various global bases, served as a minister in the Jordanian government in the early 1970s, and claims he declined offers to serve as Palestinian prime minister. He was also a close friend of PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) chairman Yasser Arafat, whose body he returned to the West Bank in his private plane after Arafat's death in France in November 2004. In Washington, Munib and his sons are known as major donors of the Democratic Party. Munib's relative and partner in several businesses, Sabih al-Masri, has strong connections with the Saudi royal family, and Maher al-Masri, Sabih's nephew, served as Palestinian minister of economy. Taher al-Masri, Maher's brother, was prime minister of Jordan in the early 1990s and until 2013 the chair of the senate.

THE FAMILIAL ORDER AND INFORMAL NETWORKS

> *Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.*
>
> Jane Howard, *Families*

The above summary illustrates the different organization types represented by each of the two families. The Ja'baris offer an updated

example of the old Middle Eastern notion of family solidarity (*'asabiyya*), whereas the al-Masris can be viewed as a Palestinian version of a power family or dynasty such as exist anywhere around the world, for example, the Bush family. As shall be seen further on, certain aspects of both cases are uniquely Palestinian, while other facets are not. However, both demonstrate clearly the power and persistence of family institution in Palestinian society. The cohesion of the family as illustrated by the Hebron incident is closely linked, among other things, to the strength and endurance of customary law, and to the economic, social and political influence of elite families such as the al-Masris. For one, the family constitutes the nucleus and the main frame of reference within these institutions. Secondly, like other family-based organizations (inter-familial alliances, collective economic systems, Sufi orders, etc.), these institutions showed mutual influence on each other, attesting to their being part of a broader system, or as I call it, the "familial order." For example, weakening the family members' solidarity would undermine justification for using customary law to mend tears in the inter-familial fabric, and diminish its mechanisms of enforcement – and vice versa. Strong customary law reinforces the family's centralistic power, and its power in sheer numbers – as we will see in Chapter 1.

Another important characteristic common to the familial order institutions is their informality. Helmke and Levitsky define informal institutions as organizations that are based on socially shared rules, which often unwritten, are shaped, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels.[7] Often, the structures and hierarchies of informal institutions are neither clear nor rigid, and the socially shared rules such institutions are based on tend to persevere more than formal rules. While these aspects somewhat obscure informal organizations' practices and methods of integrating with each other and with outside parties, their low visibility in no way implies they are inconsequential. Informal networks are an elusive and hidden factor in every society, yet they are too important to ignore. They reflect broad social changes and the cohesion of groups, express undercurrents and latent interests, and reveal those who really wield the power behind elitist facades. Until the Arab Spring, many studies, including those of the Palestinians, tended to center on

formal structures and especially governments, often taking for granted longstanding social systems. The Arab Spring exposed the limitations of this practice and from Iraq to Morocco, revealed the force of informal networks and institutions. Unveiling the longstanding influence of such actors on Palestinian sociopolitical structures is therefore needed not only for the Palestinian case, but also for a better understanding of the mechanisms and dynamics of similar structures throughout the Middle East.

This book examines Palestinian sociopolitical history through exploring the changes in major informal networks from the nineteenth century until the present. Exploring society as a complex of social networks is a widely accepted scholarly approach; however, it should be noted that the term "network" (in Arabic, *shabaka*) is not necessarily commonly applied within Palestinian society itself and is used here largely for methodological purposes. Most of the networks examined are linked to the "familial order," whose organizations shaped all spheres of life from economy, religion and social and legal relationships to the political culture. The book highlights the impact of these networks on Palestinian society in both daily life and historical junctures, and analyzes their influence on the integration of the Palestinians into a national social and political community.

In particular, this study will focus on the Palestinian highlands – the area known today as the West Bank – and its three main centers – the Jerusalem region, the Mt. Hebron region (roughly the southern part of the West Bank, or the Judean Hills) and the Mt. Nablus region (roughly the northern part of the West Bank, or the Samaria Hills). There are several reasons for choosing as case studies the highlands in general and the three regional centers in particular. Until the early twentieth century, the highlands were the most populated area of Arab society in Palestine, while other areas, especially the coast, northern valleys and Negev desert were sparsely populated. The three regions of Jerusalem, Hebron and Nablus, therefore, were not only the main social, economic and political centers of the highlands, but also part of the most important regional hubs in Palestine as a whole – at least until the 1920s, when the coastal cities began to grow in size and economic importance. For comparative purposes, it is convenient that the three centers constituted significantly different

social, economic, political and even cultural spheres, as shall be elaborated further. However, most important for the purposes of this book is the fact that the highlands enjoyed a continuity that other areas of Palestine did not experience after 1948. Following the 1993 Oslo accords, the highlands or 'West Bank' also became the main territory designated to the (partial) rule of the PA, and earmarked for a future Palestinian state.

The discussion is guided by the questions of how the Palestinian informal networks – particularly those of the familial order – dealt with the changing realities; why they ultimately endured, and what impact their persistence has had on the Palestinian sociopolitical structures and political culture. Finally, the study considers how the familial order was incorporated into modern national politics.

The book's main argument is that the familial order receded more slowly and less dramatically than is commonly perceived; in fact, it is still extant in many arenas today, in varying degrees. I will illustrate that the key to the familial order's continuity lies not in an assumed fixed power of "tradition" but rather in its dynamic ability to redefine itself by replacing an outmoded *raison d'etre* with new justifications that meet relevant needs and contemporary concepts. For this reason, the "traditional" label often affixed to familial order organizations is incorrect, and erroneous as a methodological approach. Labeling systems in advance as "traditional" frames them as antithetic to innovation and poses difficulty in identifying changes. Insisting on this approach leads to a monolithic view of complex organizations such as the elite family or customary law that prevents them from being understood as evolving bodies coping with historical changes. This has largely required an adaptive approach to new actors and constraints, such as rising ideologies and movements, and most notably, the Palestinian Authority.

That being said, tradition – or what is perceived as "traditional" – is not insignificant to the familial order. Its main contribution is preserving conventions that kept the familial order strong, first and foremost the supremacy of the collective-familial interest over individual interests. As Chapters 4 and 5 will show, this ethos persisted throughout considerable social, economic and political upheaval. Another important function of "tradition" is providing an

ostensibly familiar and authentic style for familial order organizations, even though these are constantly changing. Paradoxically, this "traditional" image often made it easier for society to absorb these changes rather than prevent them. Change can be manifest in the goals and practices of the organization itself, as happened with customary law (Chapters 3 and 4). Or, it may be seen through a shift in the organization's interaction with outside players, such as the family-based elite's (the "traditional leadership") relations with the pan-Arab movements of the 1950s, or with Hamas in the early twenty-first century. These dynamics essentially reflect historical processes experienced by the Palestinians, and how they dealt with them.

TERMINOLOGY

Besides the "familial order" discussed above, I define another two of this order's key components. The first is the "family" in the sense of extended family, clan, or *hamula* as often used in Palestinian terminology to describe such familial frameworks. As elsewhere in the Middle East, a Palestinian "family" is not a uniform structure.[8] The "family" is not based exclusively on blood ties, and it includes imaginary and fictitious ties that incorporate external groups and individuals. Such associations stem from a wide range of motives but are ultimately driven by pragmatism, such as separate families' ambition to jointly promote common economic and political interests. In terms of the wide array of social connections that created them, families never were monolithic entities, and are largely distinct in structure, leadership characteristics and degree of cohesion. At the same time, throughout history regimes have regarded the family as the basic religious, legal and economic unit for practical and traditional purposes.

The second component is "family organization," which is a dominant group within a family or clan, and bears three distinct characteristics. The first is the objective of the "family organization," which may be political clout, economic power, or both. These goals often shape the other two features – structure and strategy. Structure includes the division of power between families' key players, and the density of connections within the family that mirrors its cohesion.

Strategy is expressed by the specific composition of the family's bases of support, whether political, economic, institutional, ceremonial and so on.[9] Typically, the "family organization" extends its influence to the point where it becomes a leadership group within the clan. Large clans may be comprised of several family organizations. As we shall see, the specific features of such family organizations have had a decisive impact on families' ability to cope with various social and political challenges.

LITERATURE, DISCOURSE AND METHODOLOGY

For decades, Albert Hourani's article "Ottoman Reforms and the Politics of Notables" shaped scholars' approach toward the socio-political systems in the Fertile Crescent.[10] Hourani described the sociopolitical arenas of the Ottoman Empire's Arab provinces as patronage-based systems within which notables mediated between the Ottoman administration that needed local influence, and the public that was tied to the notables in clientelistic relations. Numerous works, including Maʻoz, Dawn, Lesch, Khoury and others, applied the paradigm of "The Politics of Notables" in various studies of subject matters, ranging from the middle ages to the twentieth century. Starting in the early 1980s, however, Hourani's paradigm was increasingly critiqued. One of the principal arguments against it was its one-dimensional perception of the region's sociopolitical systems as being based exclusively on patronage. Another criticism was that the paradigm tended to focus on elites, while ignoring other social groups. Also criticized was Hourani's reliance on Arab sources offering a provincial perspective, while lacking balance from sources in the Ottoman center.[11] Based on the latter argument, another wave of criticism in the mid-1990s questioned the paradigm's clear division between the Ottoman elite and local elites.[12]

The issue most important to our discussion concerns the relationships on which the sociopolitical systems in the Fertile Crescent were based. As the book illustrates, indeed a large portion of ties between the Palestinian sociopolitical systems were clientelistic; nevertheless, there were also give-and-take, ideological, moral and ceremonial relationships. The scope of non-clientelistic ties

increased, especially during the second half of the twentieth century, in direct response to the appearance of ideological movements, the spread of education, and other changes. Such developments challenged the familial order organizations and as we shall see, these organizations responded in varied ways that contradicted the uniform character commonly attributed to them in numerous works.

Literature on the social and political history of the Palestinians can be divided into four main periods- the late Ottoman period, the British Mandate (1918–1948), the period of Jordanian rule (1948–1967) and the Israeli rule that began in June 1967. One of the first books to shed light on Palestinian society during the Ottoman period was written by al-Barghuthi and Tutah. Another important source for the effect of the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms is Ma'oz's book. An anthology of social and economic studies edited by Owen, which includes Schölch's important study on the European influence on Palestine, is another essential source for the late Ottoman period. Bussow's book, published in 2011, discusses in great detail rural-urban and public-government relationships. The sociopolitical situation in the late Ottoman period was addressed in several important studies, such as those by Abu Maneh and Hoexter. Other scholars have focused more exclusively on the Palestinian Highlands during the Ottoman period, such as 'Arif al-'Arif and Gerber, who focused on the Jerusalem region. Studies by al -Nimr and Doumani provide seminal sources for the Mt. Nablus region during the Ottoman era.[13]

A pioneering political study of the British Mandate period is Porath's book on the emergence of the Palestinian national movement. Following Porath came other important studies of the Palestinian weakness in the confrontation with Zionism, including books by Arnon-Ohana, al-Hout and Khalidi. The anthology edited by Migdal includes studies by Miller and Taqqu on rural Palestinian society during the Mandate period. Another important study included in Owen's anthology is Tamari's essay about factionalism and class formation in Palestinian society. Tamari criticizes the over-generalized view of Palestinian society during the Mandate period as a traditional society and points out the emergence of new social groups in the coastal cities.[14] Another source is Khalaf's book, which

maintains that Palestinian identity was highly developed during the Mandate period. Furthermore, Khalaf argues that in the later Mandate years, the family-based elite no longer represented the Palestinian social structure or had the economic means to control the population. However, Khalaf suggests elite survived because it took over the national discourse while suppressing new independent political groups.[15] According to Hilal (2002), the family-based elite was trapped by economic and political conditions the British and the Zionist movement imposed during the Mandate years. These, Hilal claims, precluded this elite from employing what he termed "modern means" to cope with the challenge of Zionism, such as efficient national organizations.[16]

Most literature on the West Bank during the Jordanian period is in consensus on the continuity and stability of society, which was composed of only a few classes, and the economy, which was based on agriculture. Tamari explained this by noting that the West Bank sustained fewer shocks during the War of 1948 than other locations in Palestine. Migdal argued that while the social structure was almost unchanged, the spread of education and migration from the West Bank did afford a limited social mobility. These trends, however, did not produce a strong middle class because educated circles had little control of economic and governmental resources.[17] A later book by Kimmerling and Migdal[18] cited the 1960s emergence of an educated class as the forerunner of an elite that would replace the family-based elite. The authors note that group derived legitimacy from its members' qualifications and education rather than their social status.[19] Hilal found that a middle class did arise during the Jordanian period but its political influence was limited. Like other scholars, Hilal tended to regard ties with the government as the key condition for preserving the social status of the elite families.[20] Mishal addressed the failed Jordanian efforts to blur the Palestinian identity in the West Bank and supplant it with a Jordanian identity. In the spirit of Hourani's paradigm, Mishal also defined the elite's relations with the public as based on the prominent families' ability to satisfy the needs of their followers.[21] Ma'oz's study on the mayors of the West Bank offers another perspective on the Jordanian period. According to Ma'oz, the West Bank political system reflected the

balance of power between the various important families, which drew their strength from their social power and authority, as well as their connections with the Jordanian government.[22]

The scarcity of research into the Jordanian period is somewhat perplexing, particularly given the otherwise keen interest in the period that began with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967. The Israeli period is perceived as an era of widespread social, cultural, economic and political upheaval, which *inter alia*, eroded the familial order institutions and deprived the "traditional leadership" of its social and political power. Studies by Heller, Ma'oz, Shemesh, Cobban, al-Jarbawi, Sahliyeh, Hilal, Hilterman, Robinson and others describe two main forces of change. The first was the socioeconomic upheaval that followed the linkage of the West Bank economy to the Israeli economy. Consequently, the West Bank employment structure changed profoundly and the standard of living rose as many Palestinians abandoned agricultural pursuits to work as laborers in Israel. In society, this change shifted the balance of power between the lower classes and social groups traditionally stronger.[23] According to Sahliyeh, Mazawi and Yogev, this upset the economic dependence on the prominent families that was believed to derive from their ownership of lands.[24] Sahliyeh also claims that transformation in the West Bank led to replacing the "traditional factors" that shaped society and the elite – loyalties to family, region of origin and religious group, respect for elders, and land ownership – with the modern notion of valuing individuals for their personal merit. This analysis was the cornerstone of his claim that a comprehensive change had swept society and especially the elite because the "traditional leadership" depended on the same "traditional factors."[25]

The second force of change cited by most studies was the spreading Palestinian nationalism after 1967 and the rise of the PLO. In view of these trends, both Shemesh and Sahliyeh argued that family considerations gradually vanished from the political arena, leading to the downfall of the "traditional leadership." According to Shemesh, this elite had no social basis or backing even during the Jordanian period, with the exception of the Hebron area.[26] Both Hilal and Hilterman pointed to the PLO as the key cause that undid the

family-based elite. Hilterman's Marxist-based analysis described West Bank society after 1967 as a class society, where the national movement mobilized to prevent a class struggle.[27] All the above studies cited the 1976 municipal elections as a turning point that marked the decline of the "traditional leadership" and the rise of a young, well-educated and national elite.

Without detracting from the above studies, this book is critical of several prevalent approaches, first and foremost the generalized approach to the familial order, with its diverse organizations, practices and bases of support. Labeling this complex system as "traditional" implies that it cannot change and rejects modernity. This attitude is reflected in the continued use of outmoded terminology and concepts to explain fluctuations in the status of "traditional leadership" by supposed shifts in its patron-client relations with the public. Another problem is the portrayal of familial order organizations as the antithesis of the new educated, politicized profile of West Bank society – especially after 1967 – and its rising forces, in terms of political orientation, social origins and degree of education. Consciously or not, this unfounded contrast reflects the modernization theory juxtaposing "modern" with the "traditional," in which the former comes at the expense of the latter.[28] This linear approach has long been abandoned.[29] However, it seems that literature on the Palestinians has not yet considered a more integrative model for the encounter between the familial order and the new players that emerged from the 1960s. An exception to this is found in Frisch's studies of institution-building in the West Bank. Frisch did not directly address the familial order, but his research paints a more nuanced picture of the familial order's encounter with the new players on the Palestinian scene.[30]

Another common tendency is to over-emphasize political and economic developments, while dismissing social and cultural factors as convention and loyalties. As noted, this too is related to the "traditional" label assigned to the familial order, obscuring subtle and latent changes, while overestimating the effect of obvious political and macroeconomic changes. This results in a discourse that seldom addresses change and continuity aspects within the vertical divisions of Palestinian society, where loyalties often crossed class divisions.

Indeed, characterizing West Bank society since the 1970s as a horizontal class-divided society is an incomplete description of its social structure.

The familial order must be regarded not as a traditional phenomenon but as a dynamic one that develops in tandem with the changing realities. Furthermore, the processes taking place in Palestinian society were not uniform and varied between locations and social institutions. This study will demonstrate the benefit of this approach in a comparative analysis of the three highland centers and the many informal organizations and networks that existed there, and still do today. The centrality of the family institution to these organizations requires research methods from the field of history of the family. Dealing with networks requires the application of concepts from the interdisciplinary study of Network Analysis, which evolved from the late twentieth century confluence between the exact, natural and social sciences. Network Analysis (aka Network Theory and Network Science) provides insight into networks of many types that are all share similar phenomena and regularity, whether they join neurons or social groups.[31] As the study of networks continues to develop as a new discipline, it also forms an alternative to the logical-mechanistic paradigm shaped by the ideas of Descartes, Newton and Darwin that has long dominated science, and applies network interactions to explain a wide range of phenomena, from social epidemics through the formation of elites.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, a growing number of humanities scholars have begun adopting Network Analysis tools and ideas. Without forgoing a close reading of documents and other historical materials, the data extracted from such sources can be processed into empirical and visual products that reflect diversified networks. The allied methods and ideas applied to these products[32] allow historians to reconstruct networks of the past, as shall be done in this book too. Network Analysis allows analysis of historical networks in innovative, exciting ways by asking and answering new types of questions regarding the position, status, functionality, cohesion/solidarity and stability of individuals and groups. One of the major advantages of this methodology is its contribution to the uncovering and examination of the degree of control of informal

actors and networks over formal systems. Another advantage, particularly for historical research, is the ability of Network Analysis to deal with complex issues in very wide temporal and spatial frames. Good examples are the works of Malkin (2003) on Greek civilization and of Wals on the information networks of the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century. The study of broad and complex informal organizations, such as those discussed in this book, indeed is appropriate for this methodology and would yield new insights on the social and political history of the Palestinians, as well as on similar issues in other areas of the Middle East.

Several of historical studies of the Middle East have focused on networks. Springborg, for example, described the influential network of Egyptian politician Sayyad Mar'i.[33] Denoeux compared informal networks in Egypt, Lebanon and Iran in his assessment of urban agitation.[34] In recent years, historical studies have begun using more innovative analytical tools. One such example is Reichmuth's book about the personal networks of eighteenth century Muslim scholar Murtada al-Zabidi.[35] Other research has employed network analysis to deepen our understanding of the functionality, stability and development of historical networks ranging from trading networks to family networks.[36] This book seeks to contribute to this emerging scholarship.

SOURCES

The sources for this book include a wide range of newspapers, oral testimonies and documents from British, American and Israeli archives. Most of the sources from Israeli archives such as the Central Zionist Archive, the Haganah Historical Archives, Israel State Archives and the Israel Defense Forces and Defense Establishment Archives are neither necessarily Zionist, nor originally Israeli. They include hundreds of Arabic documents, correspondences and transcripts as well as intercepted telephone and radio communications of Palestinian and Jordanian sources (sometimes translated to Hebrew), as well as Jordanian government and intelligence documents that Israel captured in the 1967 War. Many of these sources, especially from the British Mandate period, reflect a keen interest in Palestinian social

issues, which were typically ignored at the time by British authorities and Arab press. This interest of Zionist organizations in the structure of Palestinian society and its nuances and micro-issues such as inter-personal relations, intra and inter family issues, were highly beneficial for this study. It was not until the 1936–1939 revolt that the British began to appreciate social matters as a key to understanding the Palestinian political sphere. However, since British access to Palestinian society was limited, they relied on Zionist intelligence for assistance. These sources – as any others used in this study – are viewed with a critical eye and carefully approached.

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

As this book is intended for both professional and lay readers, I opted for an easier reading experience by dispensing with most diacritical marks used in professional transliteration, except *hamza* (when it is not final) and *'ayn*, as in *'urf* and *musha'*. For the same purpose of simplification, I did not distinguish between final *ha'* and *ta-marbuta* and simply used "a" for such finals. In certain cases, I added an "s" to Arabic terms and names, e.g., *tariqa*s or al-Masris, which are used in plural form.

CHAPTERS OVERVIEW

The book unfolds chronologically but each chapter has a distinct thematic focus, which concentrates on the key institutions and networks of each period and how these changed over time. Chapter 1 discusses the impact of the Ottoman reforms of the "long nineteenth century" on Palestinian society and its familial-order institutions — the urban and the rural family, the system of customary law, the *musha'* (communal land) institution, trade networks, Sufi networks, and sociopolitical alliances extending from the local Palestinian neighborhood to the central government in Istanbul. The Ottoman reforms challenged the ability of these informal structures to cope with the growing influence of formal state systems. I argue that despite the changes introduced by Istanbul as well as global trends, the familial order successfully maintained its power by incorporating the practices and interests of local players into collaborative

arrangements with confederates seated at the heart of the Ottoman central government. Thus, Ottoman rulers pushing reforms seemingly diametrically opposed to local stakeholders' interests, actually helped preserve informal networks by using them to control the empire's periphery. Since this occurred elsewhere in the Arab provinces as well, the Palestinian case can illuminate wider regional trends of the late Ottoman period.

Chapter 2 examines the sociopolitical developments during the British Mandate period through a comparative study of changes in urban networks, city-village relations, migration networks, alliances and other structures. The chapter – and indeed the book – challenges the common view that Palestinian society in this period experienced disintegration that contributed to its subsequent weakness in 1948. I argue that it is precisely the opposite: Palestinian societal cohesion in fact increased, despite the traumatic impact of this era, or perhaps even because of it. While small-scale networks did in fact collapse, larger, often regional ones emerged on their ruins, and provided Palestinians with more encompassing and efficient frameworks that served them better. Among these was the first – and last – nationwide sociopolitical network, which was far from being a governmental system throughout Palestine but the closest its people ever came to establishing one. The chapter analyzes the features of this network and discusses its implications for the Palestinians' nation- and state-building processes ahead of their fateful confrontation with the Jewish *Yishuv* (community).

The Jordanian period is commonly depicted as one of social and political stagnation for the West Bank. However, these years also saw a massive transformative effort by so-called traditional groups, which took advantage of the circumstances to carve out for themselves a new role vis-a-vis the well-established veteran centers of power. Chapter 3 reviews the growth of regional networks in the West Bank under Jordanian rule. In particular, the chapter studies the powerful Hebronite alliance, which controlled extensive economic and political spheres in the West Bank from the 1940s. I discuss the underlying changes in Palestinian foundational myths and circles of identity that were mirrored by the institutions subsumed in this alliance and in rival regional systems. Focusing on regional network sub-systems, I also re-

conceptualize the triangular relationship of public-elite-rulers as interrelated multidimensional ties that were highly attuned to local and inter-Arab shifts.

Chapter 4 addresses the far-reaching developments in the West Bank that stemmed from the Israeli occupation in 1967 to the late 1970s. Scholars widely regard this period as a turning point in Palestinian history, and an era in which ideology and national activity modernized political culture, and marginalized family values and loyalties. As primary evidence of the declining familial order, many observers (see *Discourse and Literature*) point to the collapse of the "traditional leadership" of powerful families that was replaced with nationalistic and ostensibly younger, better-educated and more socially diversified new elite. Analyzing the changes in the networks of influence of the Hebronite Ja'bari and the Nablus-based al-Masri families, whose prominence predates this era, the chapter demonstrates that change in the status of the elite families was significantly more moderate than commonly believed. As long as they were capable of effective networking that adapted their bases of support to the changing realities, elite families were able to retain their stature.

The fifth and final chapter offers an analysis and a comparative summary of the prime developments since 1980. The chapter focuses on the encounter between key representatives of the familial order, and political newcomers such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), left-wing movements, the Palestinian Authority, and the Hamas movement. Contrary to the prevalent interpretation of this encounter as a clash in which new overthrows old, what this chapter describes is an extensive synthesis, in which the emerging actors adopted longstanding institutions and patterns. To understand this resilience, the chapter re-examines the family as the basic unit of the familial order, and assesses the practical and cultural factors that sustained its continued relevance. A concluding review of corresponding discussions of other Middle Eastern societies suggests that the misconceptions identified in Palestinian historiography are also present elsewhere. The chapter and book conclude with an observation regarding the emergence of the Palestinian Generation Z, which combines individualism and collectivism in a new hybrid identity.

CHAPTER 1

Society, Elites and Networks in the Palestinian Highlands in the Late Ottoman Period

The long nineteenth century was a period of enormous change in the Fertile Crescent. It bound the region to the global economy, created new trade routes that transformed the old-world order, and imposed patterns of government that represented a complete novelty for the subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Throughout this century, the Ottomans implemented what was generally referred to as *tanzimat*, a series of reforms in public administration, the military, the treasury, land administration, education and law. Their primary purpose was to strengthen the Ottoman state against internal and external challenges by fitting it to the modern era in line with economic, technological and other changes in the global sphere. These reforms aspired to create more efficient mechanisms of state, which would in turn enhance the economic efficiency of Ottoman subjects and deepen their identification with the empire.[1]

As in other places, the rise of formal organizations and new practices of the centralized state challenged the ability of informal networks in the Palestinian highlands to maintain their status. The familial order played a major role in these informal networks, manifested in the activity of organizations such as the urban and rural family, the customary law (*'urf*) system, the *musha'* (communal land) institution, and the elite family, as well as a diverse range of

networks extending from the neighborhood level to the trans-imperial one. In this chapter, I introduce these key organizations and examine their responses to the developments of the nineteenth century. The main questions explored in this chapter are what circumstances forced informal networks and familial order actors to transform. Why did some survive while others failed, what changes and adaptations this required, and how these shifts shed light on the region's development in this turbulent period?

The developments of the nineteenth century forced several hegemonic players to surrender centuries-old domination while new forces emerged. This expressed the intense turmoil that affected Palestine and other areas of the Fertile Crescent, although particular settings differed from one locality to the next. Against this background, most actors of the familial order endured, primarily due to their ability to adapt and devise new ways to create value from the emerging circumstances. Local conditions in each of the three main Highland centers of Jerusalem, Mount Nablus and Mount Hebron played a key role in determining the survivability of the familial order actors. Each region responded differently to the changes according to local features, including the structures of trade networks and employment, extent of government involvement, centrality of religion, and even environmental conditions. However, in all three regions, adaptation required players and informal institutions of the familial order to adjust their practices. This was often aided by functionaries of the Ottoman administration, who sought to curb the power of informal networks, and often pursued diametrically opposed interests in the process. These seemingly contradictory relations reflected the pragmatic approach of the Ottoman Empire, which promoted reforms while simultaneously using the informal networks as another channel of influence in its remote regions. I propose that this dialectical process contributed, *inter alia*, to the gradual social and political consolidation of Palestinian society.

THE JERUSALEM REGION

Jerusalem of the early nineteenth century was a small, walled city with a population of less than 10,000. It enjoyed some prestige as a

spiritual center but was not an important administrative or economic center. The most prominent feature of its social fabric was its rich religious and ethnic diversity. Muslims made up the city's largest and relatively homogeneous community. With the exception of tiny groups of ethnic Romani and Africans, the Muslim community was comprised mainly of Sunni Arabs, which included a group of North Africans who lived in a small neighborhood on the outskirts of the Muslim Quarter. The Jews were divided into Sephardic and Ashkenazi groups that largely kept to themselves. The Christians, upon their numerous sects, factions and ethnicities, were the city's most diverse group. In addition, the city always had a resident foreign population of Western merchants, clergy, pilgrims, missionaries and wanderers, often referred to together as "Franks."

Until 1831, the Jerusalem region was ruled by the governors of the Vilayet (province) of Damascus and its sub-province, the Sanjak of Jerusalem. The Ottomans' loose control allowed local players to thrive and create a collage of dominions in this region. Bedouin tribes controlled the neglected Coastal Plains to the west and the arid mountain ridge that extended eastward toward the Jordan Valley. The mountainous area surrounding Jerusalem and containing 120 villages was controlled by powerful rural families such as the Abu Ghosh family of the village of al-'Anab, west of Jerusalem; the Darwish family from Malha in the city's south; the 'Ariqats from Abu Dis in the east, and the Barghuthis from Deir Ghassaneh in the north. Each of these families commanded a cluster of loyal villages, a structure that reflected the major significance of familial and regional circles of identity. The villages in each cluster were connected to each other through social, economic and political ties. They were also cemented by kinship myths originating in the pre-Islamic divisions of *Qays* and *Yaman*, the tribes of the northern and southern Arabian Peninsula, respectively. In line with their policy in other districts, the Ottomans acknowledged the authority of the sheikhs of leading rural families, and awarded them various privileges (the title 'sheikh' is often used to describe a religious leader but in this case denotes a prominent leader in the tribal sense). The village sheikhs collected taxes, effectively controlled the lands and often functioned as representatives (*mutasalim*) of the sanjak governor.[2]

In 1831, Ibrahim Pasha, son of Egypt's autonomous governor Muhammad 'Ali, conquered Palestine and Syria. Initially, the Egyptians were welcomed but reactions grew more complex in light of the deep social and political changes that accompanied the conquest. The Egyptians implemented a centralized government administration that improved public order. They encouraged renovation of Jerusalem's buildings, and established an Advisory Council (*Majlis al-Shura*) that was the first representational forum for the major groups in Jerusalem. However, the Egyptian conquest fundamentally altered the status of the city's Muslim community by revoking its privileges and equalizing its legal status to that of the other communities. The Egyptian rulers also relaxed construction, employment and religious restrictions previously imposed on the city's Christian and Jews (who jointly accounted for 37 per cent of the city's population in 1832). Strong Muslim objections to these changes added to other grievances regarding the taxes, now collected more efficiently, as well as forced labor, and the military conscription the Egyptians tried to impose. The rural sector was the primary target of these reforms, for better or for worse. Improved personal security enabled farmers to cultivate new plots of land, modern cultivation methods increased yields, and new markets opened up overseas. However, Ibrahim's centralized economic policy, which encouraged cultivation of market products, also restricted the farmers (*fellahin*) freedom of action and caused aggravation. Plans to situate the new ruler's administrative centers inside the cities riled the rural sheiks, who had enjoyed powers equal to those of the urban elites, if not more.[3]

These grievances erupted in May 1834 in a revolt that spread from rural sites in south Mt. Hebron to other areas, including the areas surrounding Nablus and Jerusalem. Not for the last time in Palestinian history, the revolt expressed not only outrage at the foreign conqueror but also inter-familial, inter-village and rural-urban rivalries. Within weeks, the rebels managed to conquer Jerusalem, Hebron and Nablus, and to drive the Egyptians to the coastal towns. By the end of May, villagers had flooded the streets of Jerusalem, their anger directed mainly at the city's non-Muslim residents and their property.[4] The Egyptians quickly reversed the rebels' gains and recaptured the city by June, after Ibrahim

successfully divided the region's rural leadership by promising pardons and jobs to Abu Ghosh's men. Following Jerusalem, Nablus succumbed in July, and Mt. Hebron fell the following month.[5]

After the Egyptian withdrawal in 1840, Jerusalem came under the rule of a new Ottoman governor, Hassan al-Majri.[6] Preoccupied with war in Crimea and other challenges, however, the empire did not appear in a hurry to make appointments to fill governmental voids elsewhere in Palestine. In the meantime, power struggles between the imagined *Yaman* and *Qays* communities erupted throughout the Highlands and coastal areas, tensions, which would persist for two decades. Often described as a civil war, these troubles ended when the empire resumed full control of Palestine following the Crimean War. Even then, stabilizing Ottoman rule took several years of military campaigns. Some of these took place in 1858–1859, debilitating the forces of dominant sheikhs such as Mustafa Abu Ghosh and ʻAbd al-Rahman ʻAmru of Mt. Hebron, as well as other semi-rural forces, including the ʻAbd al-Hadi family from ʻArabeh and Nablus, who were known as Ibrahim Pasha loyalists.[7] In addition to military campaigns, the Ottomans took a series of administrative moves designed to weaken, though not necessarily destroy, the rural elite. The Vilayet Law of 1864 transferred powers from sheikhs to appointed officials (s. *mukhtar*).

Many studies present this move as a drastic change, which undermined the sheikhs and positioned the *mukhtar*s as the most important individuals in each village. These newly appointed officials represented the government to the people, but no longer filled the mediating role their predecessors did and rarely represented the people before the government.[8] This perception, however, largely ignores administrative and social circumstances, which were more complex. First, as in other locations, most *mukhtar*s in the Jerusalem region were related to the families of local sheikhs, thus reflecting the continuity of the old familial order. Secondly, the *mukhtar*s were not exclusive rulers in their villages. A *mukhtar* represented only one village family, and was therefore obliged to consider the opinions and interests of other local leaders. For example, the 1887 Ottoman survey shows that the prominent families of Deir Ghassaneh, a village of 1,200 people,[9] were represented by no fewer than nine sheikhs

serving as government appointed *mukhtars*. Even the most authoritative sheikhs who predated the reforms would have difficulty taking any action without reaching inter-family understandings. The need for such agreements applied even more strongly to *mukhtars*, who were tasked with routine assignments such as filling tax quotas.[10]

Appointing *mukhtar*s from families traditionally represented by sheikhs reflected an Ottoman policy striving to redirect power to the central government while pragmatically co-opting the rural elite to guarantee acceptance of the reforms. A similar combination of centralization and pragmatism was implemented in broader circles of reference such as in the case of the regional clusters of villages. Any policy aiming to divest sheikhs of their power required directing a well-aimed blow at these networks of allied villages that constituted a major component of the sheikhs' power base. Instead, however, Ottoman efforts reinforced and perpetuated these networks, as exemplified by the establishment of local administrative sub-districts (s. *nahiya*) between 1877 and 1906. The 15 sub-districts established in the Jerusalem region during this period were strongly based on pre-*tanzimat* inter-village networks. Each nahiya was headed by a *Sheikh al-Mashaikh* ("the Sheikh of Sheikhs") or *Sheikh al-Nahiya*, representing the village and the clan that traditionally commanded the cluster. Nonetheless, the rural networks were also affected by the growth of the cities. In the second half of the nineteenth century, many such networks began establishing various ties to new regional hubs, and especially to Jerusalem, reflecting the city's growth as an economic and administrative center. As Chapter 2 shall illustrate, these new ties had a profound impact on the rural networks, their interaction with each other and their surroundings.

Jerusalem continued to flourish, unlike its rural environs. Devastation caused by the 1834 revolt and the earthquake that struck Jerusalem the same year were an opportunity for reconstruction, and increasingly the city gained recognition as the country's spiritual and administrative capital. The city's population doubled in the last three years of Egyptian rule. Egyptian incentives attracted foreigners to Jerusalem and the first foreign consulate (Britain's) was opened in 1838. Ten more countries followed in the next 12 years, reflecting the city's growing importance in the eyes of world powers

on religious grounds,[11] but also their competition for footholds overseas. New scientific associations and educational institutions were established, and the presence of Ottoman officials had also grown more visible. The growing European interest and concern that the region might fall back into Egyptian hands made Jerusalem more important yet to the Ottomans, who in 1863 established a municipality in the city, making it the first outside Istanbul to have what was then a modern institution. Municipalities were another sign of the rising status of cities compared to the rural sector, and mayors answered directly to the Sanjak governor. In 1864, the Sanjak of Jerusalem was removed from the Beirut Vilayet and attached to the Damascus Vilayet. In 1872, Jerusalem became the capital of an independent district (*mutasarriflik*) extending from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean, including most of southern Palestine. The *mutasarriflik* was directly subordinated to Istanbul,[12] highlighting the empire's recognition of the city's status as regional capital. The developments of the 1860s and 1870s also brought Jerusalem and other cities in the Palestinian highlands economic expansion.[13]

Jerusalem's prosperity sparked a population growth that drove up housing prices, and caused overcrowding. From the 1840s, new establishments were built outside the city walls. The pioneers of this outbound push were diplomats and clergymen, including the British Consul Finn and the Anglican Bishop Gobat, who established institutions and summer homes in the new areas. In the 1850s, Jews too began to settle outside the walls, followed by Muslims. In the early nineteenth century, Jews were the third largest group in Jerusalem but by the 1880s had become the city's largest religious group with a population of 9,000, compared to 7,000 Muslims and 5,000 Christians. This demographic change underscored the heterogeneity of Jerusalemite society and heightened the friction that emerged at the turn of the century between Muslims and Christians, and between competing Ottoman, Arab and Zionist identities.

THE FAMILY IN THE CITY AND THE VILLAGE

Life in rural and urban settings was markedly different, and this had tremendous impact on the already versatile character of family.

This was particularly evident in the employment structure. Rural, farming-based families required greater manpower, and a high degree of cohesion and interdependence needed to weather droughts, natural disasters and other calamities. Urban sources of income such as commerce were less susceptible to catastrophes of this type, although these too required protection – usually from rivals rather than adversities of nature. Rural living also effected the pattern of family divisions. Often, the geographic distance between villagers and their farmlands obliged families to establish remote homesteads (*'izbeh*) where farmers would spend extended periods. Over time, these *'izbeh*s sprouted new villages and clan subdivisions. From the families' perspective, such divisions were not necessarily counter-productive, as they facilitated inter-village kinship networks. These frequently proved valuable for families such as the 'Arabeh-based 'Abd al-Hadis, who became one of the two most powerful families in the Mt. Nablus region in the early nineteenth century. Obviously, *'izbeh*s were largely irrelevant in the practices of urban families.

Below, we proceed to discuss two noteworthy developments that occurred during the nineteenth century and affected the familial order in Jerusalem and other locations both urban and rural. The first was construction outside the walled city of Jerusalem, a move, which helped the city's urban clans maintain their cohesion. The second was the land reform of 1858, which challenged the rural clans' ability to maintain intra-familial economic and social control. The Jerusalem region is a typical example of these developments, which also occurred elsewhere throughout the Ottoman Empire but at varying pace and consequence, as shall be seen in the discussion of Hebron later on.

Outside the Walled City

The new neighborhoods built outside the Old City walls offered Jerusalemites far more than improved quality of life. With the walls no longer a physical barrier, Jerusalem became more accessible and open to regional and countrywide networks, which offered opportunity for comprehensive change in the city's regional status. A first telegraph station was opened in 1865, connecting Jerusalem to Cairo and later to Beirut, and through them to dozens of stations

around the empire and to Europe.[14] New roads paved between 1867 and 1889 improved Jerusalem's ties with Jaffa, Nablus and Hebron, bringing with them the boon of both merchandise and information, key conditions for the growth of cities and civilizations in general. Steamship lines also contributed to a regular flow of goods and information between Jerusalem, the coast of Palestine, Alexandria, Beirut, Istanbul and Europe. The Jerusalem-Jaffa railway, inaugurated in 1892, had a similar effect. Within a decade, commercial activity doubled in Jerusalem, which only four decades before had been in awe over the arrival of a two-wheel cart.[15] These structural, technological, and economic developments had tremendous potential as drivers of social change, especially as they evolved rapidly within only four decades.

As in other Middle Eastern cities, Jerusalem's Arab and other residents tended to concentrate in clan-based clusters for several reasons. In case of an attack, the family compound became a fortified complex, defended by protectors obeying a familial hierarchy. Sociocultural norms perpetuated boundaries between family and non-family, and between the public realm and the private sphere, where women enjoyed more freedom. However, at the most fundamental level, family-based segregation stemmed from the family's role as the basic unit in the various social, cultural and economic domains of individual activity, and from the lack of genuine separation between these spheres. Self-segregation was therefore much more than a pattern of coalescence; it was an expression of the family's centralized power. These arrangements were key for maintaining family cohesion and all related aspects such as security, employment, welfare and marriage. Living in proximity also forged close personal relations with a broad circle of relatives. Each of these aspects represented an intra-familial network that overlapped with others. Generally, the more internal networks a family had, the more cohesion it enjoyed, as this structure formed both moral commitments, and dependency on various mutual interests.

Typically, networks tend to be interdependent, and intra-familial networks are no exception. An example of such interdependence is the connection between the network of intra-familial marriages and a family's personal and economic networks. A woman marrying

outside her clan would typically move to the neighborhood of her husband's family, but remain among her family if marrying within the clan. Such marriages prevented fragmentation of personal and economic networks by reducing potential friction over inheritance, dowries, and loss of the bride's potential labor contribution, and reinforced family cohesion by creating an additional layer of overlapping internal ties. As Rosen notes, a man would think twice before divorcing his wife who was also the daughter of his uncle, whom he was obliged to respect.[16] The shared family history and culture might also make the couple feel more comfortable in general.

The departure from the walled city could have increased social integration and weakened family-based patterns of congregation, which would have in turn undermined the family's ability to maintain its cohesion and internal networks. We might make this assumption, since several factors that drove such congregation patterns became redundant as families moved to more spacious quarters outside the walls, and in light of the political stability that increased from the mid-nineteenth century onward.

A commonly heard argument is that Muslims, Christians, Jews and others lived harmoniously in the Old City in the past, and that various circumstances enforced separation at a much later stage. While the degree of interaction may have varied at different points in time, the different communities and families were often segregated of their own choice for a wide range of practical reasons. In the late Ottoman period, living, marrying and working mostly within the family was still in place as a widespread and convenient framework for protecting all family assets. This was particularly typical of the prominent families who would spearhead the move outside the walled city, such as the Dajanis who settled just west of the wall in Mamilah, and the Husaynis who moved northward to the slopes of Mt. Scopus by the Sheikh Jarah mosque.[17] The Nashashibis, Nuseibehs and other elite families settled in various areas but most would retain high social visibility, suggesting they retained their residential familial clustering into the twentieth century. Conversely, ordinary families often lacked the financial means to move, and remained within the walls to make do with the circumstances. Without the resources to control their environment, these families

were exposed to relative diversity and were less inclined to retain segregation patterns.[18] In this context, Tamari notes the diary of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, a musician who drew a lively picture of social integration in the Old City's quarters at the turn of the century, at the height of the departure from the walls and few decades after the *tanzimat* granted equal civic rights to all religious groups. Bussow suggests a limited degree of integration indeed existed inside the Old City during the late nineteenth century, mostly in economic and personal relations, and during festivities that temporarily blurred everyday hierarchies and boundaries.[19]

One must ask whether this interaction between communities in fact reflected genuine social integration, and whether this had a long-term effect. It is very likely that the departure of the elite families from the walled city created a void that was filled by a temporary shift in social patterns between communities and blurred the previous divisions to create the semblance of integration. Whether this was genuine or not, most scholars agree that the effect had dissipated by the end Ottoman rule, when the Old City was clearly divided along religious and ethnic lines (Chapter 2). Either way, emerging from the walls did not in itself undermine the centralized power of families. In fact, if one accepts that genuine social integration was already underway within the walls, then moving out would have reinforced familial collectivity.

The Rural Sphere: Challenges to the Musha'

Aimed at increasing tax revenue and tightening Ottoman control throughout its territories, the 1858 Ottoman land code called on landowners to register their plots. Ostensibly, private ownership of land (Ottoman Turkish, *mülk*,)[20] had the potential to promote comprehensive change by opening the door to de-collectivization in rural environs of Jerusalem, as well as throughout rural Palestine (which in the mid-nineteenth century had a population of 450,000 in over 700 villages).[21] The new option to establish private farms on a small scale posed a major challenge to the familial order. Such a development might have severed the economic ties binding the *fellahin* as sharecroppers, joint owners of land collectively owned by a clan, a village or even a cluster of villages. However, establishing

small private farms did not become a widespread phenomenon. Many *fellahin* preferred to relinquish the official title to their land for fear of the government, or for economic and other reasons, even if they continued to cultivate it. Instead, they sold their land, or registered it to clan notables who continued to administer the land as a collective resource.

The most common method of collective land ownership was the *musha'*, a key social institution among the *fellahin* and an integral part of the patrilineal economic system to which they belonged. The main purpose of the *musha'* was to guarantee egalitarian use of the land through cyclic allocation of plots to the cultivators of the collective. Allocation periods varied from one location to another, according to local convention. In Ottoman Palestine, the primary system was "open-ended *musha'*," in which allocations were based on factors including the number of men, animals, plows, and other property in each household.[22] This could be considered an egalitarian system, as the division of resources took into account the actual number of breadwinners. In practice, however, the method strengthened already well-established families, since they could acquire more plots. It was therefore worthwhile to belong to or join such families that could guarantee their members' interests. Furthermore, the *musha'* contributed to the preservation of the collective social structure through other features, such as shared dependency on lands and joint ownership of farm equipment and animals. The combination of these common interests wove a dense web of economic and social ties that increased family, inter-family and even inter-village cohesion, depending on the size of the *musha'* in question. Thus, these practices illuminate not only the factors uniting the family circle, but also the socioeconomic factors preserving the individual's affinity to the broader identity circles of the village and region of origin.

The Ottomans considered *musha'* an obstacle to efficient tax-collection and detrimental to productivity. However, even the 1858 land code failed to eradicate *musha'*, mainly because, the population did not see the weakness of the system, as Nadan notes. On the eve of the British Mandate, 70 per cent of all farmlands lands north of the line extending from Beersheba to Gaza were *musha'* lands, according

to Patai.[23] The British *musha'* committee of 1923 cited a smaller portion, 56 per cent. Either way, the extent of *musha'* lands was considerable, indicating that the system and its economic and social networks that upheld the rural familial order was still very much in place, despite Ottoman efforts.

Elites and their Networks

The Muslim elite of early nineteenth-century Jerusalem included several groups that reflected the key economic, social, and political role of religion and religious institutions. The first group comprised of Ashraf families (descendants of Prophet Muhammad) such as Husayni, 'Alami, Khalidi and Sharif. Pedigree (*nasab*) was often an important sociopolitical and economic factor in Muslim societies, but its significance varied by time and place.[24] Pedigree was considered evidence of an individual's inherited traits (*hasab*) and therefore, high social status and success that were not backed by an appropriate genealogical "explanation" were viewed as an anomaly.[25] As elsewhere in the Middle East, Ashraf pedigree conferred benefits in Palestine. The Ottomans granted the Ashraf privileges and resources in the form of public and religious appointments, including the position of *Naqib al-Ashraf* – head of the Ashraf families. Recognition of distinction was therefore critical for those aspiring to climb the social ladder or seeking sociocultural justification for their already growing social status. As the central government was the source of a family's recognition,[26] the family's ties to the government had a major impact on its ability to amass economic, political and social influence.

Another group in the Jerusalem elite included families with different types of pedigree. The Nuseibeh family, for example, traced its pedigree to the female warrior Nuseibeh, one of the first Muslims, while the Dajanis claimed descent from King David. Several families of this group served as trustees for important *waqf* (religious endowment) properties such as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher or King David's Tomb, a role providing both prestige and income. Merchants formed another prominent group. Although they were represented as a distinct class by the *Sheikh al-Tujar* (head of merchants),[27] in the early nineteenth century merchants appeared to be less socially and

politically important than the previously mentioned groups. This hierarchy, however, changed in the mid-nineteenth century, due to the growing significance of commerce and Jerusalem's rising role in regional trade networks. Ashraf and other distinguished families became large merchants, and the status of veteran merchant families such as the Nashashabis also increased.[28]

The leading families of Jerusalem, as in much of the Fertile Crescent, largely reflected the legacy of the Ottoman household (*kapı*). Since the seventeenth century, the institution of the household had functioned as the key organizational unit of the Ottoman elites.[29] It was, in effect, a network that connected clients to their patrons, trained them, and provided opportunities to make beneficial contacts. The primary model for the household was the Sultan's court, probably in addition to earlier influences such as the *mawla* (a tribe's protected clients). The household was a key vehicle of social mobility. Many household members gained high-ranking positions in the Ottoman administration and even established their own households.[30] As Toledano noted, at their peak in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, households were so important that society marginalized individuals who did not belong to one.[31] Households were also established in the provinces and had multi-layered ties to Istanbul, Damascus and other Ottoman centers. As we shall see, these connections served not only provincial players but also Ottoman officials of different ranks, who exploited inter-household rivalries to divide and rule.

In the early nineteenth century, the Ottoman move for reform and modern training programs eroded the household's preeminence, signaling a fundamental change, at least formally.[32] Still, informal networks with quasi-household features – such as the Malhamé family members, who filled prominent positions in the court of Abdülhamit II from the mid-nineteenth century until 1908[33] – continued to play a focal role among the elite and administration. Officially, the new position of professional clerk created by the reforms called for professional qualifications. In practice, however, candidates essentially needed the sponsorship of informal quasi-household networks. In the late nineteenth century, for example, many among the local administration of Jerusalem were individuals

whose jobs depended on their patrons' relationships with Istanbul, such as Jiryis Jawhariyyeh (father of Wasif, mentioned above), who enjoyed the Husaynis' connections. When the Husaynis' status temporarily declined at the end of the century compared to the rival groups of the Khalidis and Sheikh As'ad al-Shukiyri, Jawhariyyeh and other members of the Husayni network lost their administrative appointments.[34]

The legacy of the Ottoman household was clearly evident in the character of elite families such as the Husaynis. Like the Ottoman household, these families were based on an extended family that was joined by individuals like Jawhariyyeh recruited from outside the family. Both were familial organizations that controlled an intricate web of direct and indirect ties extending to Istanbul, and were frequently forced to compete with rival networks. However, the post-household "modern" elite family introduced a striking innovation: while Ottoman households typically depended on the government and its resources,[35] the "modern" elite family was able to diversify its bases of support, thanks to three major developments that occurred in the nineteenth century.

First, economic changes motivated the elite families to seek new sources of income. Occasionally, these efforts were a response to government moves to abolish the tax lease system (*iltizam*), whereby the government granted local notables control of land farmed by others, in return for taxes. This system was a main source of income for numerous families, although this would differ from one location to the next. For example, until the mid-nineteenth century, the Jerusalem elite owned no such tax estates, and consequently had little influence over the rural sector.[36] However, new links increasingly connecting the area to the regional and global economy created new opportunities that persuaded many Jerusalemite families to develop their commercial operations, and reduce their dependency on the government and revenues from the religious establishment. The Husaynis, for example, created a vast grain-trade network that extended from Transjordan in the east to Jaffa in the west.[37]

Second, alongside the emergence of varied bases of support, these families acquired powerful positions in the Ottoman administration. Istanbul began to make serious efforts to establish its administrative

system after passing the Vilayet Law in 1864, and completed this goal only in the early twentieth century.[38] In other words, the process was sufficiently slow and gradual to allow families to adapt, and exchange their traditional positions that now offered less power for positions in the new administration.[39] For instance, the Husaynis compensated for the diminishing powers of its old appointments – especially the Naqib al-Ashraf – by capturing various jobs in the local and imperial administration. One such post was the mayorship of Jerusalem, a position that would be held by Husayni family members almost continuously from the 1880s through 1920.[40] This was also true for the leading rural families. Based on his father's experience as *mukhtar* of Deir Ghassaneh, Barghuthi notes that in the early twentieth century, the rural elite understood that without the cooperation of government officials, a decline in family status was inevitable.[41] Ties to the central government, then, remained an essential but not exclusive source of power.

The third development was the growing influence of the urban elite on the rural sector, due to increased authority urban leaders acquired through official administrative appointments, as well as changes in the land system. The 1858 code made it possible to purchase land, but taxes and related expenses deterred many *fellahin* or cast them into debt. Consequently, many sold their land or registered it in other people's names, as noted earlier. Like many urban notables throughout the Fertile Crescent, Jerusalemite entrepreneurs exploited this situation to gain control of extensive rural holdings. Not only were Jerusalem elites attracted by the prestige offered by land ownership, they also – perhaps primarily – were interested in the economic potential of catering to global demand for produce and commodities like cotton and citrus fruit.[42] The accumulation of land in the hands of landed gentry repeated itself throughout the empire but, as we shall see in contrast to common arguments, this was not an all-encompassing process in Palestine.

The three developments described above, along with the growing status of Jerusalem and its transformation into a major hub, not only diversified the bases of support of the city's elite, but also changed its composition. One modest change was already evident prior to

World War I: the growing influence of individuals who were not members of the city's distinguished families. Among them were officials and attorneys such as Jiryis Jawhariyyeh, who had the skills required to deal with the modern Ottoman bureaucracy and filled high-ranking positions in the private and public sector. However, as we have seen, even such individuals frequently owed their advancement to patrons in the elite families.[43] The city's elite also gradually encompassed merchants who became rich by exploiting opportunities offered by ties to the global economy, as well as thinkers and educators, in particular Christians like Najib Nasar, Khalil Bids and Najib 'Azuri, whose early-twentieth century publications showcased ideas of Arab nationalism.[44]

Yet another change occurred in the power relations among the city's leading families. The failure of several families to restructure their organizational system in response to nineteenth-century challenges and opportunities frequently cost them their status in the local hierarchy. The Khalidi family, for example, was considered the *Qays* leader in Jerusalem, one of the city's two dominant families. Their main rivals were the Husaynis, who led the *Yaman* families. Unlike the Dajanis, Nuseibehs and Husaynis, the Khalidis never became landowners or big merchants. On the eve of World War I, they remained a family of intellectuals and clergymen, although several members had also obtained positions in the Ottoman administration. Conservatism combined with the waning importance of the Khalidis' bases of support, including the *Qays* myth, appeared to be the main reason for the decline in this family's sociopolitical status.

This leads to another argument regarding the development or stagnation of elite families' networks during the late Ottoman era and after. The decline of the Khalidis and other families that were similarly unresponsive to the challenges of the era cannot be exclusively attributed to their failure to acquire relevant bases of support, but should also be viewed from the broader perspective of the networks of influence the families lost as a result. While influence networks did emerge as a direct result of acquiring bases of support, they were also an indirect outcome of the need to protect these same bases. Land ownership, for instance, led directly to revenues and influence over the farmers who worked the lands. At the

same time, the urban landowner wishing to protect his investments needed to develop extensive ties to rural sheikhs, government officials and anyone who might impact his business directly or indirectly. After a few decades, the ties woven to this end ultimately assumed a life of their own and as we see throughout this book, these networks continued to serve the family beyond the original interests for which they were formed.

ALLIANCES AND NETWORKS OF INFLUENCE

Local, trans-regional and trans-imperial networks played an important role in the ability of families to promote their interests. Already in the eighteenth century, the leading Jerusalemite families of ʻAlami, Khalidi and Husayni competed locally and regionally for choice positions in the public and religious establishment. To obtain and retain these positions, the families needed good ties with Istanbul and the vilayet administration that they established through gifts and personal connections cultivated over decades. These relationship-building efforts required an investment of resources and a grasp of the intricacies of the imperial system. At times, even these were not enough. Due to the personal nature of these ties, any change of personnel in the central government triggered broad changes in local power relations, as local officials were typically tied to patronage networks that rose or declined along with their leading figures. The following account of the detrimental impact of such personnel changes in Istanbul on the Husayni network is an excellent example of this reality. In the 1840s, the Husayni family was connected to a senior Ottoman official named Najib Pasha, with whom the family became acquainted during his previous appointment as governor of Damascus. In 1842, Najib Pasha was removed from office by Sultan Abdülmecit, and nearly immediately, the Husaynis lost the position of Mufti to the ʻAlami and Jarallah families. In 1847, they also lost the position of Naqib al-Ashraf but later regained it after the intervention of Hikmat ʻArif. ʻArif was a family friend who served as *Şeyhülislam* (head of the Ottoman religious administration), with whom the Husaynis had cultivated ties since 1816, when he served as the Qadi of Jerusalem.[45]

Such networks connecting peripheral regions to the center through personal relationships did not necessarily crumble when a family's allies left the stage, and often continued through his relatives.[46] Therefore, at least some of these networks should be characterized as based on inter-familial ties, a distinction that helps understand these ties' resilience over time.

Enduring inter-familial relations also typified local and trans-regional alliances. In the mid-nineteenth century, imagined *Qays* and *Yaman* kinship ties remained a significant foundation for intra-city networks in Jerusalem and its environs, although as Hoexter demonstrates, these weakened as their geographic reach increased. The Husaynis and Nashashibis, both *Yaman* families, forged an alliance in the mid-nineteenth century when Suleiman, head of the Nashashibis, married the sister of Omar Fahmi Husayni, a future mayor of Jerusalem.[47] In more remote areas, the Husaynis had alliances with urban *Yaman* families such as the Tamimis, the Bakris and the ʻAbadins in Hebron, and the Tuqans in Nablus.[48] Alongside inter-urban alliances, Jerusalem families also entered into alliances with rural families. The *Qaysi* Khalidis formed alliances with the *Qaysi* Barghuthis, while the Husaynis allied with the *Yaman* families of Abu Ghosh, Darwish and ʻAriqat.[49] The topology of these networks reflected ties of a primarily political nature between the urban elite families and rural elite families, whose networks of influence were based on their traditionally subordinate village clusters. Most available sources on the second half of the nineteenth century do not cite direct ties, or at least no significant ones, between the urban families and less important villages in these rural clusters. In other words, ties that bypassed the hubs of the dominant rural families were not forged, therefore, the hierarchy of the rural area was not significantly changed. In the next chapter, this structure will help us understand the changes that occurred in urban-rural relations during the British Mandate period.

What benefits did the Jerusalem families expect to gain through alliances with rural families, especially at a time when the latter appeared to be weakening? Pappe suggests the Husaynis' motivation for allying with the Nashashibis in the mid-nineteenth century was the latters' ties to Mustafa Abu Ghosh, "King of the Mountains," with

whom the Husaynis wished to connect.[50] As mentioned earlier, rural sheikhs were considered powerful players prior to the Ottoman campaigns to quash the village rebellions of 1858–1859. According to Pappe, it wasn't until this campaign that the urban elite reassessed its relations with the sheikhs. He found evidence for this in the cooling of the Husaynis' relations with Abu Ghosh after the said campaign.[51] Additional evidence of the ongoing weakening of the sheikhs was the fact that by the late nineteenth century, urban elite families began arbitrating disputes in nearby villages.[52] This development expressed the growing confidence of the Jerusalem elite, which assumed one of the sheikhs' most distinctive roles. An arbitrator's ability to effectively end a dispute was and remains closely related to his social status. Nonetheless, despite their weakness in the mid-nineteenth century, the role of sheikhs in the socio-political sphere was far from over. The explanation for this is twofold. For one, the standing of powerful sheikhs derived not only from the fear they commanded but also from the social legitimacy they won from their families and allies. Such legitimacy undoubtedly prevailed in villages such as al-'Anab or Malha, where most residents belonged to the dominant Abu Ghosh and Darwish clans, respectively.

Second, the sheikhs still had plenty to offer to urban elite allies. To make the most of the opportunities of the nineteenth century, urban families in Jerusalem and elsewhere were compelled to extend their alliances, as they had become multi-functional organizations no longer exclusively dependent on government benevolence. These multilateral family organizations represented diverse economic and political interests, which they sought to protect against potential harm from any number of sources. Consequently, they were unable to dispense with the sheikhs, who provided assistance in the form of local knowledge and contacts in the rural sphere. In fact, the sheikhs often maintained their powerful independent status throughout the early twentieth century according to the specific circumstances of each village, the negotiations between the sheikhs and their urban counterparts, and even the village's distance from Jerusalem. The closer the village was to the city, the stronger the relationship became in multiple domains. Politically, such relationships were reflected in the stronger influence of urban families on village politics, as well as

the increased involvement of rural families such as the 'Ariqats and Darwishes in urban politics. Conversely, more remote villages such as al-'Anab dominated by the Abu Ghosh family, or the Nahiyat Bani Zayd villages led by the Barghuthis, maintained political and economic control in their regions.[53] Schmelz shows a correlation between the distance between Jerusalem and its neighboring villages and the extent of joint commercial operations, the villages' demographic growth and other socioeconomic indicators that improved the closer they were to the city.[54] The involvement of urban notables in resolving village disputes also illustrates this linear pattern. All the villages mentioned – Lifta (whose lands were used to expand Jerusalem to the west), 'Ein Karem, Beit Sahur and Beit Safafa – were very close to the city.

To summarize, claims of the sheikhs' declining power in the second half of the nineteenth century may have been exaggerated, but contrary arguments describing the rural and urban elites of Jerusalem as equally powerful even in the beginning of the twentieth century are probably overstated as well.[55] To provide a more realistic picture, we must further refine our analysis by region and circumstance, although the overall process points to the growing power of the city compared to the rural sector. As we shall see, comparing developments in the Jerusalem region to those in other Palestinian Highland regions, even neighboring areas as close as Mt. Hebron, calls for finer distinctions.

MT. HEBRON

Until the early nineteenth century, the city of Hebron was a station for caravans passing through Jerusalem on the hajj route from Transjordan to Mecca. The stop in Hebron gave visitors an opportunity to visit several important sites, especially al-Haram al-Ibrahimi (Tomb of the Patriarchs), considered the burial place of the Matriarchs and Patriarchs according to Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions. Hebron, the highest above sea level of Palestine's cities, was also the junction of numerous roads leading east, south, and north, although travel westward from Hebron was limited to a single steep path. These topographic constraints had a

direct impact on the city's economic, social, cultural and political networking.[56]

In the nineteenth century, Hebron underwent a process of decline that stood in sharp contrast to Jerusalem. While the latter gradually became a major crossroads, the volume of goods and information flowing through Hebron dropped dramatically. New roads to the east and west bypassed Hebron and obviated its role as a necessary stop for hajj pilgrims and merchants traveling the trade routes to and from the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt. These changes dealt a fatal blow to the local industries that sold souvenirs, leather water bags and other goods. Hebron's trademark glass industry, which needed a steady supply of firewood for production, was further crippled by Egypt's logging in the 1840s, as well as competition from Europe in the 1860s. These developments resulted in strengthening the agricultural sector, despite the damage inflicted by a series of severe droughts. Consequently, while most Highland locations enjoyed economic prosperity between the mid-1850s and the mid-1870s, Hebron experienced a prolonged economic crisis, one outcome of which was massive emigration from the city. With an estimated population of 14,000, Hebron was Palestine's third-largest city in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, after Jerusalem and Gaza. By the early twentieth century, however, nearly one third of Hebron's population had left the city.[57]

Like the Jerusalem region, the population of Mt. Hebron comprised of three main groups: a large rural sector, an urban one and a Bedouin sector. The urban and rural sectors maintained an ambivalent relationship with the Bedouins. Although locals had been subject to Bedouin incursions and protection schemes for centuries, the three groups also developed distinct ties that were stronger than relations between the three in the neighboring Jerusalem region. Bedouins assisted the rural and urban families in their rivalries, and some even settled in the city. The highly developed trade and smuggling networks in the Mt. Hebron region reflected close collaboration with the Bedouins, and the rural and urban societies were also strongly connected.[58] While a certain degree of tension existed between the two groups, it differed from the alienation characterizing urban-rural relations in other locations,[59] for several

reasons. First, the rural and urban sectors of Mt. Hebron maintained extensive longstanding social ties that significantly predated the nineteenth century developments that tightened urban-rural relations elsewhere. Many urban families had branches in the villages, and vice versa. Second, both city-dwellers and Bedouins in the region believed that Mt. Hebron villagers shared a common Bedouin heritage, an image that lent them an extra social prestige that *fellahin* in other regions lacked.[60] Third, Hebron and its surrounding villages maintained a demographic balance that prevented the city from dominating the rural sector. In fact, during the civil war that followed the Egyptian withdrawal, Hebron was firmly controlled by the ʻAmru family from the village of Dura.[61] The Mt. Hebron villages drew their strength largely from sheer numbers, the result of security considerations that encouraged residential congregation. Dura, for example, the largest village in Palestine, had a population of several thousands in the early twentieth century. Average villages typically had several hundred residents, or even fewer.[62]

The fourth and most important reason for the unique relations between Mt. Hebron's rural and urban populations were the agrarian relations in this region. In contrast to many locations throughout the Middle East, the 1858 land code did not lead to the establishment of larger estates or create a divide between urban landed gentry and a rural population of tenant farmers, complete with the residual emotions often evoked by the disparate status. These did not take place in Mt. Hebron, where the urban families were largely incapable of dominating the rural population. This rather unusual situation was mainly the outcome of the prevalent form of land holdings in Mt. Hebron. Most land in the area had been recognized as *waqf* lands at least since 1266,[63] which made it difficult for local players to sell, buy or otherwise manipulate lands as they could elsewhere in Palestine. Documents from 1642 indicate, for example, that some villagers paid rent to the *mutawali*, the city's *waqf* supervisor. Nevertheless, the Ottoman government took steps the same year to eradicate this practice, deeming it an unacceptable exploitation of *waqf* property.[64] Indeed, this status of lands in Hebron area helped preserve the equilibrium between the city and the rural sector, which did not

change significantly following the *tanzimat*. The *waqf* retained the official deeds to land (*riqaba*), but many farmers continued to hold a right of possession (*tasaruf*).[65] These circumstances limited the potential scope of land transactions and contributed to the emergence of landed gentries throughout Ottoman territories,[66] with the entailing effect on common tensions between the cities and the villagers.

The fifth reason for the special relations between the three sectors of Mt. Hebron was the *'urf*, the highly effective conflict resolution system of customary law that regulated these sectors' dealings with each other. The importance of *'urf* derived from the longstanding and extensive web of social and economic connections between the sectors. It also reflected the influence of the strong Bedouin heritage on the region. This heritage included the pre-Islamic practices of tribal law (*al-qanun al-'ashairi*) that affected the specific Hebronite variant (*shari'at al-khalil*) of *'urf*, as it probably did elsewhere. Limited government involvement in the region before the 1850s[67] also contributed to Mt. Hebron's need for an accepted mechanism of conflict resolution. Baldensperger, who visited the Palestinian highlands in the first decade of the nineteenth century, reported that variants of *'urf* law prevailed throughout the region.[68] However, the Hebronite variant was the most developed of these institutions in terms of its cultural heritage, organizational hierarchy, dominant role in society and scope of enforcement.[69] Beyond its significance as a regulating social institution, *'urf* is a notable example of a legal system that had a formative effect on society. As we shall see, its popularity had an impact on a family's size and the family's involvement in the everyday affairs of its individual members.

'Urf was anchored in two social conventions, the first being that individuals are not independent entities but rather part of a mutual-guarantee system that functions as a single legal entity responsible for its members actions. The boundaries of this entity were typically the fifth-generation (*khams*) offspring of the family's father. In other words, responsibility extended to all members of the extended family up to third cousins. The second convention was family members' obligation to solidarity (*'asabiyya*) and mutual assistance.[70] Consequently, large, cohesive families enjoyed a clear advantage in

customary law. Since *'urf* generally preferred compromise over dry justice (like many other judicial systems, including Sharia courts), decisions took into consideration the extent of litigants' familial support and the families' potential acceptance of the decisions.[71] The individual, therefore, needed a powerful family to guarantee the implementation of favorable rulings, or for defense against claimants. The resulting social, economic and legal dependencies increased the number of intra-family ties and enhanced family cohesion. This mechanism also increased the size of extended families, since a common method of ending a dispute, particularly between families of unequal size, was to incorporate the smaller family into the larger one,[72] creating a practical and ethical obstacle to continued rivalry.

Indeed, the advantage that *'urf* conferred upon large families contributed to the consolidation of several families into even larger family-based units throughout the Mt. Hebron region. In the late nineteenth century, several hundred Hebron lineages clustered into 20 large clans with hundreds of members each, and 75 smaller ones of several dozen.[73] This reality illustrated the significance of the family framework for individuals as well as the local social system.

THE DOMINANT FAMILIES: CATEGORIZATION BY PEDIGREE AND SIZE

In Hebron, pedigree was as important in determining social relations and family status as it was in Jerusalem. However, kinship relations in Hebron were based on finer distinctions that created new categories of social class. Until the late nineteenth century, Hebron's elite was made up of families belonging to one of four categories: orthodox families of distinguished pedigree, families of Sufi pedigree, large families, and merchants. The first category included 14 families mostly Ashraf, such as Hamuri, Sharif, and Dweik. Others in this group hailed from a different distinguished pedigree, like the Tahabubs who traced back to the Caliph 'Uthman bin 'Afan, or the Tamimis claiming to descend from Tamim bin Aws al-Dari, a companion of the Prophet. As elsewhere, these orthodox families enjoyed legal privileges and jobs in the religious establishment,[74] although these did not guarantee affluence. Most jobs came with

modest salaries, and families dependent on jobs in the religious establishment such as the Tahabubs and Sharifs belonged to the lower-middle economic class. In other words, high social status was not necessarily evidence of high economic status. Other orthodox families like the Tamimis and Dweiks turned to income-yielding *waqf* assets as tools for building wealth. This granted them public influence, and allowed them to extend their alliances with other families both in and out of Hebron.[75]

The second category included families that enjoyed high status among the five to eight Sufi orders (s. *tariqa*) active in the city. These families traced their *nasab* back to Sufi sheikhs. The Qawasmeh family, for example, claimed to be descendants of Sheikh Suleiman Bin-Sharf al-Din Qasim, the thirteenth-century founder of the Qasmiyya *tariqa*. The Jaʻbari family traced its lineage to Sheikh Burhan Jaʻbari (1242–1333), who was born in Jaʻber, Iraq and established a *zawiyya* (a Sufi lodge) of the *Rifaʻiyya* order in Hebron.[76]

Notably, such divisions between orthodox and Sufi families did not necessarily exist throughout the Middle East, including around Jerusalem; Sufi sheikhs were often scholars of Islamic law, while orthodox figures also engaged in Sufi practices.[77] In Hebron, the line dividing the two groups was also somewhat permeable. The Sharif family, for example, was a member of the Ashraf although some of its notable members headed the local *Khalwatiyya tariqa*. Nonetheless, divisions between Sufi and orthodox families in Ottoman Hebron significantly defined each group's sense of identity and generated occasional tension. This tension was most likely caused by competition over the allocation of religious establishment resources. In Hebron, a city replete with holy relics and sites, religious endowments served a major source of income. Although the orthodox families regarded the religious establishment as their private fiefdom, Sufi families gained some degree of access to these resources,[78] which presumably sparked tension between the two groups. Such tensions among local elites were common throughout the Ottoman Empire.[79]

The third category comprised the city's large families, including those of al-Akrad, Natsheh and Abu Snina, which derived influence from their size and more particularly, the number of male family

members (*'azwa*). Typically, *'azwa* created an advantage in *'urf* procedures in ordinary times but its potential was especially evident in times of instability, when large families were better placed to protect the physical and financial security of their members. Presumably, there was a certain degree of linkage between a family's size and its current or recent political and economic power. Families with economic and political clout could maintain highly developed internal support for their members in the form of employment networks and other mutual assistance arrangements. The more developed the networks, the less likely these were to split as members searched for livelihood or protection. Moreover, such powerful families routinely attracted new members wishing to benefit from their protection, or who were subsumed into the larger families as a result of dispute settlements. These patterns reflect the network phenomenon of preferential attachment – or "the rich get richer" – in which major hubs in a network accumulate ties in direct relation to their size. As a hub expanded, it also acquired new ties more rapidly than smaller ones, thus giving large families a fundamental advantage over smaller ones.[80]

The fourth and final category of prominent families included a small number of families headed by the Hasunas and Marqas, who were considered major merchants since the late Ottoman period. Dominant families typically had multiple bases of support. The Marqas, for instance, enjoyed economic power but were also one of the 24 lineages of the large al-Akrad clan.[81] In any case, these four categories do not represent a hierarchical structure, as the families' various bases of support such as pedigree, size and wealth, did not define power relations or status in a fixed linear manner. Orthodox families enjoyed high social status due to their pedigree but as mentioned, social status was not necessarily a sign of financial wealth or sociopolitical status. Large families such as the al-Akrads did not hesitate to challenge orthodox families such as the Tamimis, and evidence shows such clashes extended from the fifteenth century into the twentieth.[82] All in all, a family's status derived from its practical capability to promote its own interests. Such capabilities were acquired through diverse bases of support that helped the family respond to changing circumstances.

INFORMAL NETWORKS: SETTLEMENT, CEREMONIAL TIES AND SOCIOPOLITICAL ALLIANCES

The Ottoman central government's perfunctory presence in Mt. Hebron over extended periods further increased the significance of the region's informal networks. These networks filled a wide range of roles in everyday life and were suited to small locations where they could make their mark, rather than large centers with a dominant administration. Most informal networks were confined to the Mt. Hebron region, but several did extend into inter-regional and even trans-imperial spheres.

In contrast to diverse Jerusalem, Hebron's population was traditionally quite homogenous. With the exception of its Jewish community that numbered several hundred and a tiny Christian community of several dozen, Sunni Muslims formed the majority of the city's population. Consequently, Hebron's residential quarters were divided along family lines rather than the sectarian divisions that characterized residential patterns in Jerusalem. Each of Hebron's 15 quarters contained several small families living alongside one or two dominant families, the latter frequently lending their name to their neighborhood. The Bani Dar quarter was the stronghold of the Tamimi family. The al-Akrad clan, which traced its pedigree to Saladin's Kurdish soldiers, lived in the al-Akrad quarter. Masharqa al-Fawqa quarter was also known as al-Ja'bra al-'Aliyya, named after the Ja'bari family concentrated in this neighborhood.

Residential patterns also reflected social prestige and ceremonial ties. The Ashraf families resided in the Muhtasibin, Qal'a, Hidmeh and Madrasa neighborhoods encircling the Haram al-Ibrahimi where their members served in religious and administrative positions. This segregation highlighted this group's social prestige and underlined the social boundaries between it and the rest of society. However, beyond symbolic significance, segregation did not shape these families into a single interest group. On the contrary, the Ashraf showed a tendency toward fragmentation and tended to enter alliances with families of different backgrounds rather than other Ashraf families.[83] This pattern clearly contradicted horizontal class-based solidarity and expressed a vertical fragmentation of society.

This was reflected both in the structure of inter-family alliances and within the families themselves, which included members from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.[84] Similarly to the friction between Ashraf and distinguished non-Ashraf families, competition over access to religious resources was a key cause of internal divisions within the Ashraf group. These rivalries, which persisted even after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, were an outstanding reflection of the central role religion played in the city's economic, social, and political life.

The loose ties linking the Ashraf families contrasted sharply with the cohesion of other networks in Hebron, especially the Sufi orders that were important agents of social networking.[85] Due to their Sufi pedigree, the Ja'bari and Qawasmeh families, for example, became authority figures in small alliances with other local families that were members of their *tariqa*s. The Ja'baris' alliance, for instance, included the Rajbi and Shweyki families, which belonged to *Rifa'iyya* and lived near the Ja'baris.[86] Unlike Ashraf pedigree, Sufi orders frequently functioned as a basis for inter-family alliances. However, this attests less to the religious strength of the orders than to their significance as a social foundation for forging additional economic and political ties. These small Sufi-based networks, such as the alliance headed by the Ja'baris, were not necessarily confined to the local arena. Occasionally, favorable circumstances offered an opportunity to extend their local reach and connect to inter-regional and even trans-imperial networks.

One of the most noteworthy nineteenth-century networks in the Fertile Crescent was based on the *Rifa'iyya*. This network was established to promote its members' political and economic interests rather than a specifically religious agenda. Abu al-Huda al-Sayyadi, a Syrian born in 1850, brought the network to the height of its influence. Al-Sayyadi climbed the religious establishment career ladder until reaching the position of a senior advisor to the sultan through connections he cultivated with Islamic reformists on the one hand and leading *tanzimat* thinkers and policy makers on the other. While serving under Sultan Abdülhamit II, al-Sayyadi cultivated his *Rifa'iyya*-based network, which extended over considerable areas of the Fertile Crescent and included provincial notables who were

veteran or newly joined *tariqa* members. These notables enjoyed official local appointments and benefits, which gave al-Sayyadi direct ties and influence in the districts. The network first and foremost promoted al-Sayyadi's status and interests, but its strength also stemmed from its commutability with Sultan Abdülhamit's instrumental view of the Sufi *tariqa*s in reinforcing his own control of the districts. Al-Sayyadi's network was the major beneficiary of the Sultan's policy, and its members were granted an exemption from military service in 1886.[87] By their own report, the Ja'baris, who led the *Rifa'iyya* in Hebron, were also frequent visitors to the Sublime Porte during this period and received similar exemption.[88] This testimony suggests that the Ja'baris' local network was connected to the al-Sayyadi trans-imperial network.

This *Rifa'iyya* network of the late nineteenth century was not a traditional institution *per se* but rather a system that was created by an ambitious politician and declined with his demise. Nonetheless, it reflected a centuries-long structure in which the Sufi orders served as the foundation for social networks and the promotion of diverse interests. Hebron, for example, was also an important center of the *Khalwatiyya tariqa*, which similarly to the *Rifa'iyya* maintained vast inter-regional networks.[89] Such networks reflected, among other things, the central government's desire to maintain influence in the periphery through informal means, usually controlled by the provincial elites who aspired to establish beneficial connections with the government for their own interests. As Barkey convincingly shows, this Ottoman approach was evident since the eighteenth century and initially leaned on networks created by commercialization and tax faming.[90] These networks involved new actors from the provincial elites, including their local and regional ties, thereby increasing integration of the periphery with the center and creating "enclaves of modernity."[91]

This situation suggests that Istanbul retained sufficient influence in its remote provinces even in times of decentralization preceding the *tanzimat* and even more so, during the era that followed the reforms. Moreover, the topology of these trans-imperial networks reveals not only the links between Palestinian regions and Imperial hubs such as Istanbul and Damascus, but also the internal hierarchy

among Palestinian centers. For instance, in communicating with Istanbul, most of the Hebron elite required the brokerage of Jerusalem-based families such as the Husaynis, the ʻAlamis, and the Khalidis, whose direct ties helped Hebronites bypass the district governors. The Jerusalem elite may not have been more powerful than that of other Palestinian locations such as Nablus before the mid-nineteenth century, but it was more powerful than Hebron's because it served a unique mediating role for the Hebronite elite. As noted earlier, these inter-regional networks should be viewed as long-term inter-familial alliances rather than personal alliances. Hebronite families such as the Tamimis, the Bakris, the ʻAbadins, and the ʻArafeh, had generations-long ties to Jerusalemite families,[92] and the intensity of their relationships would remain solid after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Several inter-regional networks were based on ties between a parent-clan and the families that split from it over time. A common cause of such splintering was economically motivated migration. Forced exile (*tashmis*) resulting from *ʻurf* rulings was another cause, and one relevant for many families in the Mt. Hebron area, where the *ʻurf* held considerable power. In some cases, the benefits of networks created by the above patterns were evident immediately. In others, as will be noted in Chapter 3, advantages would become apparent only several generations later.

The unique equilibrium between Hebron and its rural surroundings was also reflected in the regional networks. At the end of the Ottoman period, the Mt. Hebron region contained three centers of more or less equal power – the city of Hebron, and two villages, Bayt Jibrin and Dura. These two villages, bitter rivals, divided control over the rural sector between themselves. Similar to the situation in Jerusalem's rural sector, each of the two villages was a hub that controlled a cluster of loyal villages through its access to sources of commerce and other power bases. Each cluster was headed by a local family, whose power of recruitment was equivalent to the mobilization potential of the urban elite families. The cluster headed by the al-ʻAza family of Bayt Jibrin was based on the nahiya of Qaysiyya al-Tahta and included villages such as Bayt Jibrin, Tel al-Safi, ʻAjur, and Kafin – all affiliated with *Yaman* origin. This cluster's

geographic location along the western slopes of Mt. Hebron produced close social and economic ties with the Bedouin tribes of the northern Negev desert.[93] The second cluster, headed by the ʻAmru family of Dura, included Dura, Yatta, Saʻir, Bani Naʻim, al-Sheikh, al-Dueiyma, ʻIdna and Samuʻa, which belonged to the nahiya of Qaysiyya al-Fawqa and identified with the *Qays* origin.[94] These imaginary *Qays* and *Yaman* identities of the villages played a significant sociopolitical role in the Mt. Hebron region throughout the entire nineteenth century.[95] In the civil war of the 1850s, battles erupted between the two camps and devastated both the rural rival clusters and the city.[96] Hebron's failure to control the two village clusters resonated in its economic networks, among other areas. Unlike other cities, Hebron did not develop as an important commercial hub. The large markets in Dura, Bayt Jibrin, Yatta and Zahariya demonstrated that at least for certain products, the villages mediated between city and the commercial sources rather than the other way around.[97]

Thus, the situation in Mt. Hebron during the late nineteenth century differed sharply from the situation and developments in other Palestinian locations. Ottoman administrative and land reforms had less impact in Mt. Hebron, especially regarding urban-rural relations. New ties to the global economy had a strong but adverse impact on the Mt. Hebron region, which reverted into an agrarian-based labor market. As a result, and unlike Jerusalem and other cities, Hebron was ill-positioned to benefit from the new opportunities, and repercussions of the region's economic stagnation lingered long after the dust of the crumbling Ottoman Empire settled.

MT. NABLUS

If Mt. Hebron was a conservative, peripheral area, Mt. Nablus was a bustling regional economic center. Since the thirteen century, travelers described Mt. Nablus as a fertile region with abundant markets, a regional junction located on the pilgrimage route to Mecca.[98] Its position as a hub through which large volumes of goods and information passed continuously shaped the region's social structure, elites and networks.

In the early seventeenth century, Mt. Nablus was an economically, socially and politically decentralized region. It was dominated by several local power centers that were comprised of the city of Nablus and seven to nine main villages, each serving in turn as a hub for its own cluster of loyal villages. As in the Jerusalem and Mt. Hebron regions, each rural hub was headed by a strong family that enjoyed military and political power and income from tax farms (lands in which strong families were allowed to collect taxes from the local *fellahin* for the government, while keeping some of the revenue for themselves) and lands. These prominent families included the Jayusis, Riyans, al-Ahmads and Ghazis.[99] An Ottoman military campaign in 1657 brought the decline of these families, which were supplanted by newcomers, such as the Nimr, Jarar and Tuqan families who came equipped with Ottoman military and administrative appointments.[100] In the 1760s, the urban Tuqans dislodged the rural Jayusis from their administrative appointments, upsetting the existing power balance between Nablus and its rural environs. This development prompted the rural Jarar family to cooperate with Daher al-ʻOmar, the autonomous ruler of the Galilee who coveted the Tuqan-controlled lands of Mt. Nablus.[101] With the Jarars' assistance, al-ʻOmar repeatedly placed blockades on Nablus (1771, 1773) but soon after disappeared from the stage; The new governor, Ahmad Pasha al-Jazar (1775–1804), reinforced the Tuqans' control and took steps to weaken the Jarars.[102]

In the early nineteenth century, the *mutasalim* of Nablus, who was a member of the Tuqans, aggressively inflamed the family's rivalry with rural families Jarar and al-Ahmad and with its urban neighbor, the Nimr family. The three families responded in 1816 by initiating a revolt that last seven years and ended in their victory. However, this urban-rural alliance suffered a series of setbacks that erased their achievements within several short years and ultimately bolstered the city's dominance over its rural sector. In 1831, the Jarars' base in Sanur was destroyed by Acre governor Abdullah Pasha, and the family never regained its status. In the summer of 1834, it was the al-Ahmads' turn: the leaders of the family that led the revolt against Ibrahim Pasha in the Mt. Nablus area were beheaded by an Egyptian task force.[103]

The 1834 revolt clearly expressed mounting tensions between the villages and the increasingly dominant city, as the latter grew more dominant. As in other locations, plans of the new Egyptian rulers in Nablus to base their administration on local urban families embittered rural elites, especially the al-Ahmad family. The al-Ahmads were extremely frustrated by the ascent of the rival ‘Abd al-Hadi family,[104] which had supported Ibrahim Pasha in exchange for his sponsorship. The ‘Abd al-Hadis, originally from the village of ‘Arabeh, were one of many rural families in the Mt. Nablus region migrating to the city during the nineteenth century. A similar development occurred in other areas as well, such as Tulkarem, where the town's increasing political and economic status attracted the powerful Jayusis and other families from surrounding villages.[105] Such moves proved the ability of rural families to retain power despite the city's growing dominance.

THE RISE OF THE MERCHANTS

Alongside the political processes that led to Nablus' increasing dominance over its rural environs, the region was also changed considerably by economic developments. In the mid-eighteenth century, the Mt. Nablus region became the largest cotton producer in the Fertile Crescent, forging links with the industrializing European economy and its demand for raw materials. This commercial activity was coordinated by the city of Nablus, which had already become Palestine's largest center of traditional industry and had now become the most commercial important hub in Palestine and northern Transjordan. The subsequent emergence of the merchant class also played a formative role in the region's social structure and the organization of its elites.

As elsewhere in Palestine after the Egyptian withdrawal in 1840, the Ottomans did not supervise Mt. Nablus particularly closely. Until the Ottoman returned to the region in 1858, the governmental void was filled by the local elite that controlled the Advisory Council. This largely urban elite was comprised of three main groups. The most important of these was a group of landed families including the Tuqans and Nimrs, who had military power, land titles, administrative positions and tax-collecting authorities.[106] These families were

the most authentic vestige of the Ottoman *kapı* in the Nablus area, and their ties with the empire constituted one of the major elements of their power. The Tuqans, for example, maintained direct, continuous ties with Istanbul, while the Nimrs benefited from the sponsorship of the al-ʻAzm family that intermittently ruled the vilayet of Damascus.[107]

Another elite group in the Mt. Nablus area centered on the city's Ashraf families, including those of Hanbali, Khamash and Tamimi. Relations within this group were generally good and not subject to the same degree of fragmentation that beset the Ashraf families in Hebron. As in other locations, members of Nablus Ashraf families were given appointments as *naqib al-ashraf*, *mufti*, and *qadi*, and benefited from their city being a scholarly center of the Hanbal, Hanafi and Shafʻi schools. However, despite their social prestige, the Ashraf families of Nablus had little political impact. The local *mutasalim* occasionally consulted with them, but that was more or less the extent of their political influence.[108]

The third elite group included merchant families such as the Shahins, ʻArafats and Kimhawis. The merchants were organized in a guild that was administered by the Sheikh al-Tujar, an appointment filled by members of the city's major merchant families in succession. Prior to the Egyptian conquest, the merchants distanced themselves from political activity[109] and like the *ʻulama*, left this arena to the landed families.

When the Ottomans returned to the region in 1859, they settled score with errant families that were disloyal during the Egyptian occupation. The most prominent family that suffered from Ottoman retribution was ʻAbd al-Hadi; their longstanding stronghold in ʻArabeh was razed, and they were prohibited from serving in any government office. When passions subsided, however, the Ottomans pragmatically shifted to a policy of cooptation.[110] According to pastor John Mills and Mary Rogers, who was the sister of the British consul in Damascus, the ʻAbd al-Hadis had regained their status as a dominant player in the Mt. Nablus area by the 1860s[111] and family members continued to head the camp rivaling the Tuqans. While landed families continued to govern the Nablus elite in the 1860s, change was already in the making.

Although the Mt. Nablus Advisory Council had been an Egyptian initiative, it was put in place effectively only after the Egyptian withdrawal and with Ottoman endorsement. The merchants' inclusion in the council signaled their growing involvement in political affairs, as well as their diminishing dependency on the landed families. Both were facilitated by the political stability, which allowed the merchants to develop their economic networks since 1860. At the same time, the increasing centralization of the Ottoman administration curtailed the autonomy landed families enjoyed since the seventeenth century by cancelling their control of taxes, farming and *mutasalim* appointments. These restrictions on the landed families allowed the merchant families to amass power and meshed with an earlier process described by Doumani. Since the early nineteenth century, both landed and *'ulama* families began to extend their commercial bases at the expense of their traditional sources of income – taxes, agriculture and religious institutions. Their efforts were prompted by two key developments: the cancellation of the *iltizam* and burgeoning regional commercial that offered a more attractive source of income. The growth of commerce and industry sparked competition over markets and resources, especially among the Nablus elite, but also triggered joint interests that enhanced regional cohesiveness. For example, the soap industry attracted most elite families. Ties between the industrialist families, as well as their class-consciousness, grew stronger as they joined efforts to guarantee raw materials and confront outside competition.[112]

Adapting to developments throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, landed families continued to control the regional leadership. However, a gradual economic decline was steadily eroding their power, compared to the merchants. Nimr and others attribute this decline to two main causes: the loss of tax collection rights, and a strong dependency on agricultural income. Landed families still owned most of the region's large estates, whether these were acquired before the 1858 reforms or as a result of them. While they succeeded in expanding their commercial and industrial activities, the dependence of landed families on agriculture[113] left them vulnerable when revenues in that sector dropped compared to industry and commerce.[114] This and other reasons forced families such as

'Abd al-Hadi, Tuqan, Nimr, and Jarar to sell off lands to merchant families such as Shak'a, 'Abd al-Majid, and Nabulsi, who sought farming lands to grow raw materials for their industries in the late nineteenth century.[115] Although land ownership no longer guaranteed stable profit, it remained a symbol of status and elevated social prestige, which most likely factored into families' decisions on the matter. This process would continue well into the twentieth century and would ultimately reshape the entire sociopolitical structure of the Mt. Nablus region.

From the mid-nineteenth century onward, this competition over economic foothold and success became the main driver of social mobility in the Nablus region. Cultural factors of pedigree and religious status carried less weight in the region compared to Jerusalem or Hebron, but were still highly prized and coveted by merchant families as a means of enhancing the cohesion of their networks. Such prestige provided social and political legitimacy, and allowed merchant families to enhance the cohesion of their trade networks through membership in Sufi orders, marriage with *'ulama* families and clerical training for their sons. Several merchant families began claiming descent from distinguished pedigree in order to "explain" their success to their environment – and sometimes to themselves.[116]

POISED BETWEEN CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

The decentralized structure that characterized Mt. Nablus until the seventeenth century was gradually replaced by a more centralized regional network manifest on two levels- a reduction in the number of dominant power players in the region, and the city's rising status compared to surrounding rural power centers. The Tuqan, Nimr and Jarar families, which appeared on the scene in the second half of the seventeenth century, wielded considerable influence and displaced local families. This process intensified during the eighteenth century, as growing ties with the European economy required more centralized control over means of production. These developments were accompanied by the city's transformation into the region's primary hub, and were enhanced by Ottoman reforms that granted

administrative powers to urban families, and enabled them to increase their ownership of rural lands.[117] Trade networks too offered urban families increased influence over the rural sphere. The structure of these networks reflected the city's growing status. At its peak, Nablus was the commercial center for products from 300 villages around Mt. Nablus, 'Ajlun and Balqa' that were shipped to destinations throughout the Fertile Crescent.[118] While these trade networks were mobile and dynamic, they typically matched the areas of influence where their businesses, alliances, marriage and other ties were focused.[119] Landed families controlled some of these networks, while others were dominated by merchant families that could use them to break the landed families' monopoly on inter-regional and trans-imperial connections.

As the city of Nablus grew steadily stronger, the concentration of power in the hands of a few families proceeded less consistently, and even reversed. In effect, centralization trends that began in the late seventeenth century shifted when new families, mostly merchants, entered the sociopolitical arena in the second half of the nineteenth century and diversified the distribution of power. The landed families of Tuqan and 'Abd al-Hadi continued to lead this arena and divided it between them, but by the second half of the nineteenth century their camps included powerful merchant families whose interests and expectations also had to be considered. 'Abd al-Hadi's allies included the Khamash, Tamimi, 'Ashur, Khayat, Zu'aytar, 'Anabtawi, Kana'an and Shak'a families. The Tuqans' alliance included the Nabulsi, Hanbali, Nimr, Shaf'i and Shurabi families. These two sociopolitical networks, called "associations" (*jam'iyat*) in official Ottoman documents, sought influence in public institutions, especially in the Nablus municipality established in 1869. The municipality and mayor answered to the *mutasarif* and had considerable impact on the economic interests of the elites, making it a most coveted appointment.[120] Occasionally, the mayor belonged to neither the Tuqans nor the al-Hadis, reflecting a further decline in these families' power.

During the long nineteenth century, the ties of the Nablus elite continued to extend beyond the *mutasarif*'s office to Damascus and Istanbul. According to Mary in the 1850s and 1860s the vilayet

governors and their aides were showered with gifts and came under immense pressure to award government appointments to members of the Nablus elite. Pastor John Mills recounted that the families did not hesitate to bribe vilayet governors and other senior officials in order to unseat an unfriendly *mutasarif*.[121] These testimonies underline the importance of the informal networks that continued to crisscross the empire and remain relevant despite the region's transformations during that period. Although these networks persevered, an increasing number of families with trans-imperial ties of their own were now involved in the political arena. This offers additional evidence of the decentralization of power in Mt. Nablus and specifically the decline of landed families' power. These developments were also manifest in the Nablus elite's relations with the public. Previously, the local elite wielded influence in all spheres of everyday life, largely due to actual powers of enforcement. After the equalizing *tanzimat* reforms, however, this relationship would change and remain on a voluntary basis. A similar transformation in elite-public relations took place in several other Middle Eastern societies in the late nineteenth century, and intensified as representational politics took hold in the Ottoman systems.[122]

Cities were on the rise throughout the empire in the nineteenth century. In the case of Nablus, however, this began at least a full century before the nineteenth century reforms, which merely served as a catalyst to processes driven by local circumstances. By the early twentieth century, the city dominated its surrounding villages through a range of diverse networks. Still, the nature and topology of these networks were significantly less centralized than they were in the eighteenth century.

THE PALESTINE HIGHLANDS: A COMPARATIVE VIEW

Since the 1830s, the three centers of the Palestinian highlands were subject to successive efforts to impose comprehensive reforms on the entire region. Whether Egyptian or Ottoman, the rulers of Palestine implemented changes designed to consolidate the existing patch-work of political, social and economic structures into a unified, more

centralized system. At the same time, the region's increasing ties to global markets became an important factor in shaping local societies and economies, for better or for worse. Local responses to these developments varied considerably from one center to another, ultimately placing each of the three mountain societies in an entirely different starting position on the eve of World War I and the British occupation.

Throughout the Highlands, the rural sector resisted reforms the Egyptians sought to implement. In Mt. Nablus, rural leaders made a last-ditch effort to crush these initiatives during the revolt of 1834. The failure of the revolt finalized the dominance that Nablus steadily gained since the eighteenth century. In Jerusalem, the city's evolvement as a social, economic and political center lagged behind that of Nablus by several decades. It was not until the 1830s – and more markedly after the 1860s – that Jerusalem began to amass power compared to the region's strong rural sector. Ottoman reforms also played a more significant role in the transformation of Jerusalem than in that of Nablus. Hebron, on the other hand, was a full century behind Jerusalem in this process, and the equilibrium between the city and the surrounding villages paralyzed Hebron's potential control of its rural environment. Furthermore, Hebron did not attract the same international interest or enjoy the political and administrative government support Jerusalem did. The unique land regime in the Mt. Hebron region prevented the city from leveraging the 1858 land code to grow at the expense of its surrounding villages, as did other cities and their elites. Global economic opportunities that drove expansionary aspirations in Nablus also bypassed Hebron. While Nablus grew as a center of commerce and industry, Hebron's industries gradually disappeared and the city's employment structure reverted back to reliance on agriculture. Hebron did not benefit from the economic prosperity enjoyed by most Palestinian cities in the 1860s and 1870s, and was held back by ongoing economic crisis. From a sociocultural perspective, Hebron did not differ significantly from its rural surroundings, and assimilated into the rural sector and adopted its institutions rather than the other way around. In many respects, Hebron was no more than a large village, incapable of developing a genuine advantage over its neighboring villages.

Hebron's particular experience directly affected its social structure, which came to reflect the familial order to a greater extent than the other cities. Several factors contributed to this outcome, such as the Hebron's agricultural employment structure that reinforced the family unit as the main source of manpower. Additional factors were the city's homogenous religious composition, conservative character and confining topography, as well as the fact that Hebron was no longer a junction for information and resources. Headed by the *'urf* customary law, the region's key social institutions also enhanced the centrality of the family-based order. Together, these conditions prevented external change agents from penetrating Hebron, which became the standard bearer of the familial order.

The three Highland regions also differed in the composition of their elite groups. All three were dominated by leading families but these varied from one region to another in hierarchical structure, bases of support and even stylistic features such as dress. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the hierarchy of Jerusalem's elite mirrored the Ashraf preeminence. It is tempting to assume that the official status of these families actually generated their power. In reality, they derived their power from the ability to exploit all bases of support at their disposal – from government resources to myths that placed them at the head of the *Qays* or *Yaman* camps. In Hebron, such skills were even more strongly pronounced. According to the longstanding institutional approach that identifies elites by their status in official institutions, Hebron's orthodox families would probably be considered as those with the highest status which is, in fact, how later observers viewed them.[123] Nevertheless, more recent approaches also take into account informal power, which can include non-institutional elements provided they are politically relevant.[124] According to this perception, several large and powerful Hebron families should be considered part of the city's elite although they held no formal positions. In Nablus, the disjunction between formal and effective status was even more evident. The Ashraf families' pedigree never placed them at the top of the local hierarchy. Indeed, Gilsenan notes that the status of *'ulama* families commonly varied throughout the Middle East.[125]

The rise of the merchant class in the late Ottoman period was a widespread phenomenon in throughout the eastern Mediterranean Basin. The merchants' ascent essentially stemmed from global developments, although local economic circumstances created different aspects of these developments in each region. In Nablus and Jerusalem, elites were compelled to build commercial bases of support to maintain or elevate their status. In Hebron, incorporation into the global economy had an unfavorable impact, and the religious establishment continued to set the tone in all arenas. In other words, the specific economic and political changes in each of the three Highland regions affected their structure of employment and their social and political hierarchies. Adaptability to changing realities played a decisive role in helping players retain their status. While certain families declined, others rose successfully. A similar process occurred in other locations in the Fertile Crescent during this period.[126]

The Hebronite elite differed from that of Nablus and Jerusalem in other respects as well. One of the marked differences was the fact that no landed gentry emerged in Hebron in the late Ottoman period. Generally, the formation of large estates, which occurred in Iraq, Syria and Egypt in response to the 1858 land code, did not appear in Palestine on the same scale.[127] Only a few families, such as the Husaynis of Jerusalem, the Tuqans and 'Abd al-Hadis of Nablus, the al-Shawas of Gaza, the Baytars of Jaffa and the Fahums of Nazareth, controlled estates of thousands of hectares,[128] often empty lands in remote locations. Officially, the Tamimi family of Hebron administered extensive *waqf* estates and properties,[129] but its attempts to translate formal status into practical control encountered fierce resistance from the *fellahin* who cultivated these lands.[130] It follows that assumptions that land ownership and relations with tenant farmers were a major source of power for the "traditional" Palestinian elites should be tempered, especially with regards to Mt. Hebron.[131]

ORIENTATION AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The networks examined in this chapter offer an additional comparative prism for analyzing continuity and change in the

three Highland centers of Palestine in the late Ottoman period. The adverse impact of the developments on Mt. Hebron's regional commercial and hajj networks is critical to explaining the social, economic, and political stagnation of this region. At the same time, regional and global circumstances transformed Nablus into a major commercial hub, dramatically impacting its social structure and making the city the first of the three Highland centers to dominate its rural environs. The networks in the Jerusalem region also reflect the changes in the city's ties with its surrounding villages, following its mid-nineteenth-century transformation into a prominent regional hub.

In view of these dramatic changes, the continuity of other social networks that remained relevant despite changing times is noteworthy. Both rural and urban families preserved patterns of residential segregation,[132] as well as the internal networks that guaranteed their cohesion. In the rural sector, challenges such as changes in the land regime did not undermine the *musha'* institution or the diverse collective networks that this institution created. Similarly, the challenge of leaving the confines of the walled city did not hasten the disintegration of urban families; on the contrary, it triggered an opposite trend. In broader circles outside the family institution, ceremonial networks continued to function as a convenient foundation for economic and political networks ranging from the neighborhood to the trans-imperial level. Abu al-Huda al-Sayyadi's *Rifa'iyya* network illustrates how traditional institutions such as Sufi orders were appropriated by various stakeholders, while also being able to take advantage of developments and adapt to new realities.

The networks of the Palestinian elites demonstrated similar flexibility and adaptability to change. At the family level, these networks reflected the legacy of the Ottoman household, but at the same time showed how they changed to become multi-faceted organizations. Outside the family, the elite networks were instrumental in connecting families from the empire's most remote corners to the Sublime Porte, and served parties on both ends of these connections. The fact that such informal trans-imperial networks continued to operate in the late nineteenth century (and deep into

the twentieth century) attests to their resilience and ability to bypass and even overrule from inside the bureaucratic elites created by the Ottoman reforms. This also points to conditions in the Ottoman state that were not unnecessarily unfavorable. Despite its institution-building efforts, the state never stopped being an important party to informal networks, which enabled the Ottomans to control the empire's provinces even when its formal grip on them was weak. In the nineteenth century, many of these informal networks were appropriated to promote the government's centralization goals.

The distinct network structures in the three Highland regions reveal a multi-layered picture of Palestinian integration during the late nineteenth century. Social and political integration took place in two of these three regions in the late Ottoman period, especially in the cities and their surrounding villages. The earliest integration process took place in Mt. Nablus and was manifest in the ties that linked numerous villages to a dominant urban hub. A similar process took place in the Jerusalem region, although integration here was less inclusive and occurred later. Even in the early twentieth century, several villages around Jerusalem remained outside the city's powerful influence, and clusters of loyal villages still reflected some degree of traditional internal hierarchy. Nonetheless, integration in Nablus and Jerusalem proceeded in a similar manner, and differed from the fragmentation that continued to characterize Mt. Hebron. Although it maintained ties with its neighboring villages and Bedouins, Hebron failed to grow in power and remained merely one of three hubs sharing economic and political power in the region.

The existence of dense networks involving the Highlands' three centers might have offered an empirical expression of supra-regional integration, but this was not the case. While Hebron was increasingly connected to Jerusalem, its ties to Mt. Nablus (see Chapter 3) were weak, and much weaker than its horizontal ties to the east. This reality was reinforced by the fact that in the early nineteenth century, Hebron was no longer a stop on the hajj route, a role that it had shared with Nablus until then. In the early twentieth century, commerce and transportation ties linked Jerusalem to Nablus but the social and political ties between the two cities were not particularly strong. This lack of strong inter-regional ties is supported by the small number

of alliances between Jerusalem and Nablus families, compared to the many links that connected Jerusalem and Hebron families. The networks of Nablus were clearly oriented toward the northern parts of Palestine, and especially to the areas bordering on Transjordan and Syria/Lebanon. The first evidence we have of Nablusi desire to change this orientation is a 1906 petition sent by Nablus notables to Istanbul, requesting to be separated from the Beirut Vilayet and adjoined to the *mutasarriflik* of Jerusalem. The petition did not cite strong emotional ties to Jerusalem, but rather what its authors described as the "anti-Nabulsian reputation" of the Beirut district.[133]

All in all, one must not overstate the overall impact of the changing circumstances to determine that supra-familial organizations and ideas of this period posed a significant challenge to the familial order institutions in general, and to the family's powerful influence over the individual in particular. Undoubtedly, new challenges such as the departure from the walls and changes in the land regime potentially threatened the familial order. However, the ability of the family in particular and informal networks in general to maintain their status proves that top-down aspirations or broad structural changes were insufficient in themselves to change reality. Like any institution, familial order organizations craved continuity and perpetuation. Ultimately, their survivability depended on their ability to embrace a changing reality, make themselves useful and even benefit from the new opportunities.

CHAPTER 2

Re-Networking Palestine: 1917–1947

World War I put an end to four centuries of Ottoman rule in the Arab Middle East and fractured its vast dominion into new states that came under the colonial empires of Britain and France. This fragmentation led to an intensive re-networking of a wide range of formal and informal connections, which were affected by the new boundaries and constraints imposed by the division. In addition to influencing inter-regional ties, this re-networking deeply impacted intra-regional networks that changed when previously unrelated locations were merged into new state units. As the particular developments in the different newborn states affected reality throughout the Arab Middle East, all were forced to adjust.

For the Palestinians, the three decades of British rule between December 1917 and May 1948 were marked by intense changes that included far-reaching socioeconomic developments, increasing challenges posed by the Zionist movement and the emergence of a national movement. A major development Palestinian society experienced was the rise of new social and political groups that included energetic entrepreneurs, laborers, vibrant youth, and various social and political organizations. As mentioned, several scholars suggested these emerging groups were ostensibly operating outside the boundaries of the familial order and seriously challenged its hegemony. Khalaf even claims that in face of these changes the "traditional leadership" could survived mainly because it took over

the national discourse and suppressed the emerging groups.[1] Another pillar of the discourse on the Mandate period was its effect on Palestinian societal cohesion. Numerous authors claims that a British colonial policy of "divide and conquer" as well as the devastating implications of the 1936–1939 revolt on the Palestinians led to their social disintegration and directly impacted their ability to confront the *Yishuv* in 1947–1948.[2]

In light of these two major sociopolitical themes, the chapter focuses on the response of Palestinian highlands society to the Mandate period through two lenses. One, how the period's developments affected the familial order networks and organizations, and the extent to which their practices continued to shape local, regional and national sociopolitical spheres. Two, what a network-based examination of the period can contribute to our understanding of processes of disintegration and integration of the Palestinians into a social and political community.

The main argument in this chapter is that most familial order institutions showed resilience during the Mandate period, despite its far-reaching shifts and upheavals. Moreover, many of them functioned as key change agents in the hands of actors who took advantage of the changing realties. The family – the keystone that encompassed all social, economic, legal and political organizations of the familial order – ultimately emerged triumphant, proving its practical and cultural strength. Still, continuity was challenged and marked by profound structural shifts in major systems of Palestinian society and politics. Several key familial order organizations experienced serious challenges, such as the *musha'* institution (Chapter 1) that faced a hostile British land policy, and the elite families that were forced to comprehensively update their networks of bases of support. Consequentially, the complex of organizations and informal networks that embodied the familial order underwent dramatic upheaval that directly impacted the major sociopolitical structures in the Highlands. The small, longstanding networks based on the local arena collapsed as their sociopolitical roles and founding ethos became irrelevant. These local networks were replaced by new, large-scale and often regional networks that were based on a *raison d'etre* firmly planted in contemporary regional, national, pan-Arab

and Islamic developments. The network-based approach of this chapter offers an original contribution to the current discourse; the observation that the new large networks supplanting the smaller ones of the past reflect increased sociopolitical integration in Palestinian society, rather than the disintegration suggested by many scholars. The value of this insight extends beyond the pinpointed academic argument. Recognizing the continuity of the familial order and its remarkable resilience provides a better, more integrated and holistic understanding of the Mandate period as a whole.

The chapter unfolds chronologically to present a comparative analysis of the three centers of the Highlands – the regions of Jerusalem, Mt. Hebron and Mt. Nablus. The first section examines the direct impact of the Mandatory administration on the familial order in Jerusalem and its rural environs. This section studies the role of the British development policy in Jerusalem and attempts to dismantle the *musha'* institution in preserving the rural familial order. Section two discusses the mechanisms and political culture that the Husayni family of Jerusalem sought to design in the national sphere using their countrywide network of influence. The Husayni network played a considerable role in the changes that occurred in the internal hierarchies of Jerusalem's rural environs. Section two discusses the Husayni family of Jerusalem, whose network played a key role in changing internal hierarchies in Jerusalem's rural environs. In particular, this section studies the nationwide political culture and mechanisms the influential Husaynis sought to advance. In many respects, these developments reflect a comprehensive readjustment other regions experienced in the post-World War I Middle East. Section five analyzes the major changes in the social, economic and political networks of the Mt. Nablus area, as well as the local leadership's response to these changes.

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN THE FAMILIAL ORDER IN THE URBAN AND RURAL SECTORS OF JERUSALEM

Jerusalem continued to flourish under British rule to become the national capital, for reasons both practical as well as romantic and

religious. As the city prospered, a wealth of new jobs evolved, as did new tensions. Christians enjoyed preference over Muslims in employment, the Jerusalem elite grew stronger at the expense of other local elites, and Muslims competed among themselves over the new economic and political resources. While the British imposed certain restrictions to check Jerusalem's economic development (see below), the city continued to draw migrants from all denominations. The Arab population, both Muslim and Christian, more than doubled during the British Mandate and reached 67,000 in 1948. During the same period, the Jewish population of Jerusalem grew threefold and at 100,000, formed 60 per cent of the city's residents in 1948. The demographic growth drove massive geographic expansion too, encouraged further by improvements in roads, water and electricity infrastructure. New railway connections linked Jerusalem to the north, west and south, further expanding the city's reach. Jerusalem's Palestinian population now enjoyed far more possibilities of education, from elementary and church schools to the innovative Al-Dusturiyyah school of Khalil al-Skakini and the Arab College of Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyya, regarded as the best Arab high school in Mandatory Palestine.[3]

Based on the memoires of musician Wasif Jawhariyyeh, Tamari argues that religious divisions deepened from the early twentieth century onward, in part as a response to the rising nationalist movements both Arab and Zionist, but more so due to British discouragement of religious mixing.[4] Robson places this policy within a broader understanding of British innovation, which she describes as "introducing an inflexible sectarianism as a major organizing principle of the new state."[5] Whether we accept the British responsibility for sectarian boundaries or the suggestion that the city's interreligious integration was a temporary late-Ottoman phenomenon (Chapter 1), Mandatory Jerusalem was indisputably divided by religious boundaries under British Rule. Alongside extensive Jewish construction in the west, the Muslim neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah, Wadi Joz and Bab al-Zahra expanded to the city's north and north-east, while Katamon and Talbiya in the southwest attracted mostly Christian residents. The

neighborhood of Musrara, with a more diverse religious fabric, was an exception.

Religious boundaries encouraged the preservation of the familial order. Residential segregation in religiously homogeneous quarters, and even more so in family-based neighborhoods,[6] limited exposure to external influences that might have strengthened supra-familial identification. Segregation was reinforced by the absence of significant economic developments that could have triggered social changes. Such economic development was deliberately restrained by the British, who sought to preserve the city's beauty and unique nature, according to Ronald Storrs, Jerusalem's first governor.[7] A more recent study suggests this policy stemmed not just from historical, religious and romantic reasons but rather because of broader motives of the colonial power that wished to promote the interests of Jerusalem's Jewish community at the expense of its Arab population.[8] Intentionally or not, British policy effectively blocked the development of Jerusalem's Arab population. Heavy industries were banned altogether and light industry was permitted only in the city's new area, which had a solid Jewish majority. Home to nearly half of the city's Arab population, Jerusalem's Old City had a strong Arab majority (77 per cent in 1922, 93 per cent in 1948) and was the main target of the British conservation efforts. The British separated the Old City from the new neighbourhoods by leaving parks and other unbuilt areas between them. The Old City was also subject to stricter building regulations, including restrictions that preserved its character as a center of retail trade and traditional artisanship. Jerusalem's hinterland location, surrounded by villages that offered no significant market, also had a detrimental impact on the city's economic development. It kept Jerusalem from utilizing its advantages as Palestine's now-official political and administrative capital.[9] The British policy hampered Jerusalem's growth as an economic hub – a process that had begun in the nineteenth century – and limited its potential for social transformation during the Mandate.

Nonetheless, there were seeds of modest change in Jerusalem. As we see below, Jerusalem's integration with its rural environs

increased, leading to a greater inflow of villagers into the city's daily life as well as many Hebronite immigrants. New social and political groups and organizations began to operate in the public sphere. One such group that emerged in the late Ottoman period included Arab nationalist thinkers and activists, like educators and publicists Khalil Baydas and Khalil al-Sakakini (founder of Al-Dusturiyyah school), Akram Zu'aytar, who was editor of *Mir'at al-Sharq* newspaper, and researcher and publicist George Antonius. These figures gained some public attention and prestige but were not immune to the clout of families comprising the local elite and did not threaten their dominance.[10] Although established only in 1946, the most significant of new organizations to emerge in Jerusalem during the Mandate period was the Palestinian headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood. Within two years, it efficiently established several military units (including foreign volunteers, mainly from Egypt), which fought in the War of 1948. Despite the Brotherhood's supra-familial agenda, its Palestinian office was established and controlled by the elite families.[11]

Although British policy did not directly target the familial order, it appears to have had an effect on it. One example of British policy that could have undermined the familial order is the effort to eradicate the *musha'*, one of the familial order's major institutions in rural Jerusalem (with a population of 41,000 in 1922), and in rural Palestine in general. The British viewed the *musha'* as a source of economic inefficiency and an obstacle to rural development. Starting in 1923, they translated this view into a practical policy that encouraged permanent partitioning of plots and registration of private ownership (*mafruz*). Atran and Nadan demonstrate, however, that this negative view of the *musha'* was misplaced. The cyclic allocation of land parcels did not necessarily result in overworked soil, since many crops required long-term cultivation. The collectivist nature of the *musha'* was compatible with seasonal need for large numbers of laborers, and spread man-made and natural risks between the many owners. Communal ownership also reduced conflicts over inheritance, forcing farmers to settle their disputes. These interactions expressed the numerous

dimensions of the *musha'* networks that helped maintain community cohesion.[12]

British efforts to dismantle the *musha'* met with considerable opposition, which may have prevented a more significant upheaval of the familial order in the villages. In 1923, the *musha'* committee established by the British to review land holdings in Palestine estimated that 56 per cent of the country's lands were communally owned. By 1947, only 473 of the approximately 1,000 villages had settled the titles to their lands, and registration was pending in an additional 102 villages. In other words, by the end of the British Mandate, 50 per cent of the country's arable land remained *musha'* land. Moreover, the official percentage of communal land was sometimes smaller than what groups actually owned – under-declared in order to avoid taxes. Many *musha'*-based communities had difficulty reaching agreements on permanent divisions of land, deterred in part by a settlement fee of 3 per cent of the land value. In fact, Nadan found no evidence of subdivision applications filed by villagers, suggesting that British efforts to dismantle the *musha'* did not meet a grassroots desire to abolish the institution, which was much more than an economic system for the villagers.[13] The limited success of the British land policy arguably contributed to preserving key familial order networks, at least in substantial parts of the rural Highlands. Even today, more than two thirds of the Highlands' land remains unregistered, partly due to the high proportion of *musha'* lands.[14] The extensive purchasing of lands in the lowlands and the coastal plain by Jews, who preferred to buy privately owned plots, also suggests most *musha'* lands were located in the Highlands, including Jerusalem.

JERUSALEM AS A SOCIOPOLITICAL CENTER AND THE WIDE REACH OF THE HUSAYNI NETWORK

A fundamental problem for Palestinians during the Mandate years was the weakness of their sociopolitical institutions that impeded Palestinian state-building efforts, and had a destructive impact on the internal Palestinian sphere. In part, the problem derived from a legal and political catch, which Khalidi calls the 'iron cage' that barred the

Palestinians from establishing recognized political institutions, such as those formed by the Zionist movement. The British made recognition of such institutions conditional upon Palestinian acceptance of the legal basis for the Mandate, which was the 1917 Balfour Declaration that called for a Jewish national home in Palestine. The Palestinians rejected this firmly,[15] and were therefore forced to resort to two main tactics: one was to establish political institutions such as the Arab Executive Committee (AEC), and the other was using bureaucratic mechanisms of the British Mandate as platforms for informal leadership bodies. Such was the case with the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC) established by the British in 1922 to oversee and manage the Muslim religious establishment. Under Haj Amin al-Husayni, the SMC became a leadership entity that provided the inter-family sociopolitical network run by Amin and his family with many resources. The Husayni network was influential mostly during the first two decades of British rule, but its importance in this context stems from the broader lessons it teaches about the Palestinian sociopolitical arena on the whole and the familial order in particular, as well as the organizational and ideological difficulties that challenged the Palestinians throughout this period. The Husayni network offered the first – and arguably last – attempt at a pan-Palestinian leadership, and came as close to an in-house nationwide governing system as the Palestinians were to come until the PA, nearly a century later. As such, the Husayni network provides a valuable and unique case study.

Although the British government was a key factor in undermining Palestinian representational politics, Mandatory bureaucracy played an important role as an alternative to the weak Palestinian institutional sphere. Through their administration, the British tried to promote integration of the new political entity of Palestine that they created, with inconsistent results. On the one hand, new links in administration, communication and other fields connected communities that had little or no ties before World War I.[16] On the other hand, the British arrangements often clashed with longstanding arrangements that regulated allocation of public resources among local power players. As we shall see, this resulted in economic, social and political unrest that ignited fierce local rivalries. Additional

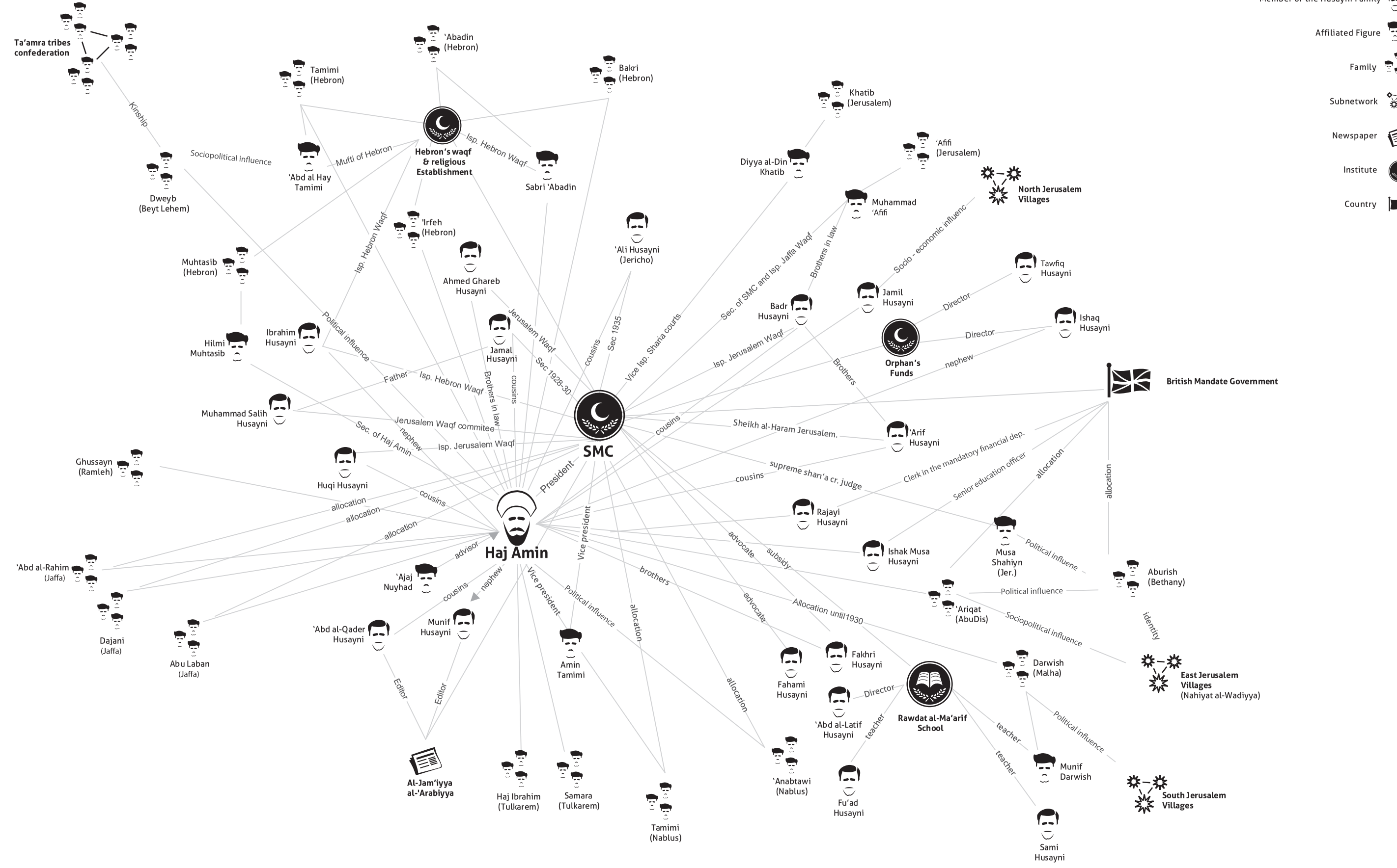

DIAGRAM 1 The Husayni Influence Network: 1920s – early 1930s.

competition arose over control of new resources and positions created in the national sphere. In this new realm, the Jerusalem elite played a key role. Within a few short years, its influence grew beyond its immediate area and extended throughout the country.

To avoid direct control of the religious establishment by non-Muslims, the British appointed Jerusalem Mufti Kamil al-Husayni as Grand Mufti in 1919, a newly invented position giving him national authority that did not exist under the Ottomans. After his death in March 1921, Kamil was succeeded by his younger brother, Haj Amin. The latter was appointed by Palestine's first High Commissioner Herbert Samuel, despite coming in fourth in elections for the post, trailing candidates identified with the Nashashibis. The year before, Amin had been sentenced in absentia to prison for involvement in the 1920 Nebi Musa riots, in which several people were killed, mostly Jews. Paradoxically, it was Amin's involvement in this event that proved his influence, leading the British to believe that failure to appoint him would trigger unrest.[17] As we shall see, similar reasoning also guided other appointments by the British, who preferred candidates with a strong public influence even over enthusiastically pro-British candidates.

1922 marked the next step in Amin's growing power when the British established the SMC which drove the expanding influence of the Husayni network. This network encompassed most parts of the official SMC hierarchy, although several SMC members were not Husayni loyalists.[18] The Husayni network, or the *majlisiyyun* ("council members"), as it was called due to its identification with the SMC, also included several individuals outside the council who occupied governmental and party positions that were controlled by the Husaynis. The main opposition to the council were the *mu'aridun* ("opposition" in Arabic) led mostly by the Nashashibi family of Jerusalem (Chapter 1). As we shall see, the core of the conflict between the two camps was competition over political and economic resources. This would prove to be the main sociopolitical rift dividing Palestinians under British rule, and the SMC – and thus the Husaynis – played a key role in the matter. If Amin's loyalists were driven by various interests, his own ultimate goal was clear: achieving national political hegemony.

The SMC represented an extremely large resource center for its time. Until 1937, its powers included control over the substantial budget of the *awqaf* (s. *waqf*, a religious endowment), and authority to appoint and dismiss members of the *waqf* committees throughout Palestine. In 1924, the SMC employed at least 552 *waqf* clerks and general workers. The 15 Sharia courts also operated under the SMC and employed 91 qadis, muftis, and clerks, as well as an additional 550 marriage registration officers. According to these figures, the SMC employed around 1,200 people, making it one of the largest employers in the Palestinian economy. Kupferschmidt notes that temporary positions and undocumented projects probably put the number of employees even higher.[19] Any assessment of the SMC's influence should also take into account the adjunct institutions and resources that it controlled. For example, the Orphans' Fund (Diagram 1) had an annual budget of BP 50,000, allowing the SMC to allocate funds to various uses. The SMC also enjoyed the annual income accruing on *waqf* properties, estimated at BP 67,000 in 1936.[20] As mentioned earlier, these assets traditionally provided a source of income for numerous families.

Haj Amin and the SMC comprised the innermost circle of the Husayni network, with the SMC functioning as its main, although not exclusive, economic core. The SMC's conduct reflected what Sharabi describes as a neo-patriarchal pattern, meaning a political structure, usually governmental, donning the modern façade of institutions and functionaries while acting as a quasi-family in practice. The "patriarch" heading the "family" controls his people with a mix of propaganda and power while systematically weakening its institutions and individuals he perceives as potential rivals. Consequently, the importance of various actors is determined not by their formal institutional status, however senior it may be theoretically, but by their informal relations with the leader (or "patriarch") and his cronies.[21] Indeed, Amin's actions within the SMC and the broader political sphere echoed neo-patriarchal patterns. From the time of his appointment to his flight from Palestine in 1937, Amin was never required to stand for re-election. The power both he and the SMC wielded did not go unnoticed by the British, but they left the task of reforming the SMC to a committee made by the Mufti and

his associates. Instead of reforms, the committee instituted regulations that granted the Mufti vast authorities and made it extremely difficult to remove him from office.[22]

In keeping with neo-patriarchal patterns, the Mufti systematically weakened seniors who might threaten his position, and rarely delegated any authority to the four council members serving under him. Kupferschmidt suggests that in the 1930s, Amin used a combination of threats and cooptation to subdue senior SMC members less supportive of his goals. At the same time, the Mufti's unofficial but close personal advisors such as ʻAjaj Nuyhad (Diagram 1),[23] played a far more important role in decision-making, despite their informal status. This pattern is also a typical feature of neo-patriarchal systems.[24]

The second circle of the network was based on the Husayni clan and figures affiliated with it, such as Muhammad ʻAfifi, Secretary of the SMC and inspector of the Jaffa *waqf* office, tied to the Husaynis through marriage and patronage links that often spanned generations.[25] Although the Husayni clan was indisputably the network's cornerstone, not all clan members automatically belonged to the network. ʻArif and Badr al-Husayni, for example, were senior *majlisiyyun* (Diagram 1), while their brother Muhammad Yunes was a *muʻaridun* supporter and therefore remained outside the network.[26] Another example is the well-known rivalry between Haj Amin and his distant cousin Musa Kazim al-Husayni, who was chairman of the Arab Executive Committee (AEC), the main Palestinian leadership body between 1920 and 1933. The rivalry was triggered by Amin's ambition to replace Musa Kazim as the senior leader in the Palestinian political sphere. After the 1929 Wailing Wall events, which sparked politicization and radicalization among the Palestinians, Musa Kazim's standing began to decline. This placed the two figures in dispute, and Musa Kazim moved closer to the *muʻaridun*.[27]

As will be further discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, such intra-family tensions were an almost inevitable feature of family organizations whose goal was political power- typically the result of leaders' reluctance to share power with others, even relatives. After Musa Kazim died in 1934, Amin presented himself as the primary leader in both familial and national arenas.[28] Further tension within the

Husaynis emerged when Jamal al-Husayni, the Mufti's cousin and a member of his network, rose to prominence in the 1940s, during the Mufti's exile. This clashed with the Mufti's centralistic approach and belief that he was the supreme Palestinian leader, and he was yet further displeased by Jamal's moderate approach to the British. Khalaf noted that the Mufti even denounced his cousin as a tool of British imperialism.[29]

The Husayni network's neo-patriarchal features were also manifest in the second circle, with frequent reshuffling of family members in official appointments. For example, in 1920, Jamal al-Husayni served as secretary of the Christian-Muslim Association in Jerusalem. The next year, he became secretary of the AEC until 1928, when he became secretary of the SMC, a post he filled only until 1930. As the Mufti's term in office lasted 15 years, frequent reshuffling of loyalists appeared to be a strategy designed to prevent any individual from gaining too much power or standing. This was also evident from the limited authority granted to these officeholders. Ibrahim al-Husayni, for example, was appointed director of the Hebron *awqaf* office in 1930. Officially, the position afforded him extensive authority over the local families benefiting from the *waqf's* resources. In practice, Ibrahim was unable to serve as broker between these families and the SMC leadership because the Hebronite families with direct links to the Grand Mufti (Diagram 1) circumvented his authority.[30]

The third circle in the Husayni network was based on alliances with prominent urban and rural families throughout the country. This circle underwent a certain evolution over the years. At first, during the 1920s, the Husaynis relied on families that were longstanding allies such as Dajani and Abu Laban of Jaffa, Samara and Haj Ibrahim in Tulkarem, Tamimi and ʻAnabtawi in Nablus, and Bakri, ʻAbadin and Tamimi in Hebron (Diagram 1). [31] Notables from these families gained positions in the religious establishment, replacing members of other families who lost their positions and longstanding sources of income. These SMC-directed moves sparked bitterness that drove many families to the *muʻaridun*.[32] In late 1931, the Supreme Court of Palestine rejected appeals from several Hebronite families who were removed from their traditional posts by the SMC.[33]

Before the *majlisiyyun* could celebrate their victory, however, High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope announced his intention to hold new elections for the SMC. This announcement had a decisive impact on the Husaynis' attempt to further boost their influence,[34] by intensified efforts to tie additional dominant figures and large families to their network. In Hebron, for example, the Husaynis mobilized the Muhtasib family by distributing jobs to its members.[35] In Ramleh, the al-Taji al-Faruqi family was incorporated into the network after Haj Amin managed to co-opt one of its leaders, 'Abd al-Rahman, a senior SMC member and a former Amin opponent. The Mufti also became associated with Amin 'Abd al-Hadi, another SMC oppositionist,[36] but did not secure the allegiance of his clan, which split into rival groups during the Mandate period. A growth in the number of SMC employees offers proof of the Husayni network's expansion. With 522 employees in 1924, *awqaf* increased the number of its workers by nearly 10 per cent within a decade,[37] despite dire financial distress from the late 1920s onward. During this period, the Husaynis also replaced representatives of small families like Ansari from Jerusalem and Tahabub of Hebron with longstanding or recently acquired supporters.[38]

With a few exceptions, the Husaynis focused their strategy on forging ties with families that functioned as significant sociopolitical hubs, and disregarded families of little influence. With finite economic resources, the Husaynis were forced to forgo efforts to mobilize several powerful families. Maintaining bases of support usually required investing economic and political resources. This required network builders to compromise and make strategic decisions on which bases to adopt or drop, in order to free up resources or eliminate political contradictions hindering acquisition of more effective bases. The composition of their network, as illustrated in Diagram 1, reflects clearly the Husaynis' preference for social bases of support built on ties with dominant families over creating modern institutional organizations.[39] Moreover, the loyalty of network members was guaranteed primarily through resource allocations.[40]

The analysis of the Husayni network provides evidence of both the extent and the endurance of a patronage-based traditional political culture. Still, the network was not monolithic. Although clearly

reliant on patronage, other Husayni ties also reflected the advent of political ideology, and other novelties that re-networked the sociopolitical systems in the rural environs of Jerusalem.

CHANGES IN THE SOCIOPOLITICAL NETWORKS IN THE RURAL ENVIRONS OF JERUSALEM

The Aburish (Abu Rish) family of the village of *al-'Izariyya* was one of the end nodes recruited into the Husayni network in the villages east of Jerusalem (Diagram 1). Known as Nahiyat al-Wadiyya, this area had been under the influence of the 'Ariqat family of Abu Dis in the late Ottoman period. According to a history of the Aburish family authored by Said Aburish, power relations between the Aburish and 'Ariqat families underwent a significant shift during the British Mandate. At the beginning of this period, the 'Ariqats still enjoyed privileges based more on their old prestige than on actual economic or political leverage. A few years into British rule, Khalil, head of the Aburish family, no longer needed the 'Ariqats to obtain resources or authority. Up to the mid-1920s (before the British modified administration of the rural areas), the British acknowledged Khalil as the leader of his village and granted him resources and jobs in which he placed his relatives and fellow villagers. The new Mandatory government also recognized Khalil's authority as an *'urf* arbitrator (*Qadi*), and it was to him that the British turned with issues concerning fellow villagers (e.g., non-payment of taxes, building code violations). This direct contact reinforced his social, economic and political status, and Khalil even adopted certain British mannerisms, such as drinking English tea, as an expression of the transformation of the time.[41]

No longer mediated by the 'Ariqat, the increasingly direct ties between the Aburishs, the city and the state government marked the ripening of a process that began in the late Ottoman period and intensified during the early British Mandate. In the late British Mandate, some observers still viewed Palestinian society as a hierarchical network headed by large urban centers controlling rural hubs, which in turn, dominated clusters of subordinate villages.[42] However, the story of the Aburish family suggests that

hierarchical topology of this type was becoming less relevant by the early years of the British Mandate. This significant change reflected more than a replacement of one important family with another, and was in fact the direct result of new state-society relations. The ‘Ariqats continued to enjoy political influence in the al-Wadiyya area but their status was in constant decline. Evidence of this may be seen as early as 1921, when Khalil Aburish built his house at the same height as that belonging to the head of the ‘Ariqats – a bold challenge in social-symbolic terms. Aburish did, however, revise his original plans of an even higher house, for fear of igniting an inter-family feud.[43]

Despite these changes around al-Wadiyya, the region remained one of Khalil Aburish’s main circles of identity. He remained loyal to the notion of clear boundaries between villagers and urban dwellers, even though he lived only several minutes walking distance from Jerusalem. His grandson and family historian claimed Khalil had no interest in the 1920 Nebi Musa riots, which he viewed as town, not village, problems. Khalil even urged several village leaders in his region to agree that they “liked the British better than the bourgeoisie (effendis)”.[44]

Nevertheless, rural-urban alienation diminished during the 1930s. Palestinians became increasingly politicized after the 1929 events and villagers too began to identify with wider circles of identity. For Aburish, this also stemmed from his need for a broad-based coalition to respond to British centralization efforts. Aburish began reassessing his support for the British in the mid-1920s when he learned of government plans to delegate some of his powers to three *mukhtars*. Adopting nationalistic rhetoric could help him connect to a broader coalition that could support him, such as the Husayni network, and serve as an argument among his village people against the British intentions to reform the rural administration. Still, Palestinian nationalism was a vague idea for Aburish. He was, therefore, introduced to the nationalist agenda through urban members of the Husayni network such as the historian ‘Aref al-‘Aref and the supreme Sharia judge Sheikh Musa Shahin (Diagram 1). According to Said Aburish, ‘Arif and Shahin explained the conflict with the British and Jews to the leader of Bethany “in terms Aburish could understand” from the Quran and other holy scripture, not in modern nationalist terms.[45] Aburish’s self-image as the exclusive authority in his village

was apparently one of his main motives for connecting to the Husayni network. The *majlisiyyun* supported his leadership, while he enforced their policy on the ground.[46]

Bethany's direct incorporation into the Husayni network was a significant stage in the re-networking of the al-Wadiyya region. The transformation was fueled by the dissipation of the 'Ariqats' economic leverage, and ripened further when the family's political status was undermined by urban leaders who contacted local leaders like Aburish directly. The ties of Sheikh Musa Shahin of the Husayni camp with the Aburishs were strengthened through Khalil's sons, who showed a stronger sense of national identity than their father did. One of them, Muhammad, became Shahin's envoy in the surrounding villages. In this capacity, Muhammad performed several significant tasks, including organizing local activists for the 1936–1939 revolt. Muhammad's marriage to Shahin's daughter in 1934 further reinforced the political ties between Shahin and Aburish. In 1938, Muhammad moved to Lebanon with his father-in-law and the Mufti Haj Amin, and from there continued organizing the revolt in al-Wadiyya area. These relations further reflected the deepening ties between the Aburishs and the urban and national centers, as well as the family's urbanization. Several of its members moved to Jerusalem where they discarded their village accent and adopted urban ways.[47] These moves echoed the impact of the increasing flow of information and material resources in the region's networks of influence.

The Aburish family history, although evidently documented only by the family itself, highlights two important developments in this context. The first is the leveling of old village hierarchies in favor of more direct ties between villagers and the government, and between villagers and the city and its leaders. The second is the emergence of an ideological dimension of the Husayni network, somewhat tempering its patronage-based nature. For the second generation of the Aburishs, links to the Husaynis/*majlisiyyun* were based largely on a shared ideology, albeit superficial and underdeveloped, according to Said Aburish. In his version of the family history, most of the Mufti's rural followers lacked profound understanding of the leaders' political agendas and based their support of the Mufti and his men on their religious prestige, social status, experience and education.[48]

These ties created a loose ideological platform that was insufficient for a political system with nationwide aspirations. It was the economic framework of the Husaynis that was the main reason for their coherence as an interest group. They could have taken advantage of their position to set up institutional organizations appropriate for nationwide needs. Instead, under Amin's dominance, the Husaynis tried to replicate the local practices and political culture of the familial order in the national sphere. This further impaired the public sphere, which remained divided into multiple local theaters fraught with inter-familial rivalries as threats to the Husaynis' economic and sociopolitical status took precedence over broader national concerns. Even at the height of the Husaynis' power, families failing to secure a piece of the pie abandoned the network.[49] This became particularly true when the British changed their policy toward the *majlisiyyun* after the assassination of Galilee district commissioner Lewis Andrews in 1937. The Mufti fled the country, many of his loyalists were arrested[50] and the Husaynis' access to government resources declined significantly. The powers and clout of the SMC diminished, and control over the *awqaf* – the organization's main cash cow – was transferred to one Arab and two British clerks. The British also urged previously dispossessed *mu'aridun* families to reclaim their rights in the *awqaf*.[51]

These moves resulted in the disintegration of broad sections of the Husayni network from top to bottom, and many who had joined the *majlisiyyun* in the early 1930s abandoned the Husaynis in 1937.[52] When the Husaynis' institutional leverage weakened, they tried to retain control through violent means. This exacerbated internal tensions dividing Palestinian society in the 1930s and impeded ongoing processes of politicization and integration. The *mu'aridun* could hardly be considered as an alternative. Consisting of numerous local and sometimes mutually hostile interest groups, they were unified primarily by their opposition to the *majlisiyyun*. Although their ranks outnumbered the *majlisiyyun*, the composition of the *mu'aridun* hindered its potential for effective collective action. British refusal to take the *mu'aridun* seriously during the 1940s further undermined their strength.[53]

This state of affairs was symptomatic of the Palestinian sociopolitical arena, and reflects an internal weakness that impeded sustainable political institutions regardless of the British restrictions. Some Palestinian actors did, however, succeed in overcoming this obstacle, and used the unfavourable circumstances to better their positions.

MT. HEBRON

During the Mandate period, the Mt. Hebron region continued to languish, plagued by a prolonged economic recession that began in the mid-nineteenth century. An industrial survey in 1928 showed this area as the least developed in all of Palestine. The region's economic slump was also evident in its double-digit unemployment.[54] Economic stagnation and massive migration to the Jerusalem region, Egypt and Transjordan undermined the potential rise of local players who might have challenged existing sociopolitical forces.[55] As seen in Chapter 1, these migration patterns generally corresponded to Mt. Hebron's traditional geographic links that extended north, east and south, but less so to the coastal cities in the west that attracted immigrants from other areas of Palestine. These patterns contribute to our understanding of the conservatism that characterized substantial parts of the social and political spheres of Mt. Hebron throughout the Mandate period. Thus, the region was hardly exposed to the innovation of coastal cities, where intellectuals, political parties and working masses converged.[56] Indeed, with the exception of new religious movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, there was no significant political party organization or other association in Mt. Hebron in 1946; even the popular youth movements *Najjada* and *Futuwa* had no serious foothold in Hebron.[57] Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the familial order was preserved, and the regional elite continued to rely mainly on the same families and social groups that led the area in the nineteenth century.

That being said, the Mandate period was not one of stagnation on all fronts for Mt. Hebron. The region underwent dramatic social,

cultural and political changes due to three main developments. Each of these developments shocked the system and triggered a comprehensive adjustment that profoundly transformed social networking patterns and – at a considerable delay – bolstered the city's power compared to its rural environs.

The Hebron arena was heavily affected by the changes the British enforced in religious and civil administrations. Hebron's society, especially the urban population, was torn between the local *majlisiyyun* families who continued to benefit from their traditional privileges in the religious establishment (Chapter 1), and local *mu'aridun* families, whose privileges had been revoked or significantly curtailed by the Husaynis. The Hebronite *mu'aridun* voiced their complaints most vehemently, and their concerns were even heard by the Supreme Court, as noted earlier. This unrest lasted at least until the British implemented their reforms of the SMC after the Mufti's exile in 1937. The changing fortunes of both the *majlisiyyun* and *mu'aridun* camps were the inevitable result of aggressively imposed changes on a region rich with religious institutions and endowments, which were a major component of the local economy and a factor in its political and social stratification.[58] Therefore, while society and its urban elite appeared to remain the same and continued to rely on the same groups for support, the challenges and opportunities of the times did in fact trigger significant changes in local power relations.

Another important trigger involved Sufi Islam, which traditionally enjoyed influential status in Mt. Hebron. As described in Chapter 1, Sufi orders served as major networking agents on the local, regional (including city-village relations), trans-regional and even the trans-imperial levels. The Hebronite orders flourished in the political stability of the second half of the nineteenth century. However, this trend was interrupted by the post-World War I rise of modernist Islam. Its spokesmen, such as Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Bana, denounced Sufism as a cause of Islam's degeneration.[59] Echoes of this attack reached as far as the city of Hebron and reshaped the networks in its sociopolitical sphere. Families were compelled to discard their Sufi lineage, as we see below, and search for alternative bases of support. Several orders were also targets of British harassment, motivated by the role some Sufi leaders played in the

1929 massacre of Hebron's Jews and in the 1936–1939 revolt.[60] As a result, several orders effectively ceased operating, while others kept a low profile. At the same time, new movements were established in the spirit of modernist Islam. In 1928, a branch of the Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA) opened in Hebron, only a year after the association was founded in Cairo. In 1944, the YMMA's popularity waned with the death of its Egyptian founder ʻAbd al-Hamid Said, and its function was effectively replaced by the rising Muslim Brotherhood. Many Hebron leaders took part in founding and leading the local branch of the movement, which began operating in Palestine in 1946. As we shall see, these developments had a formative impact on the sociopolitical networks in and outside of Hebron. The *tariqa*-based, usually small alliances were no longer justifiable and some gave way to the modernist movements offering a platform for ceremonial, social and political networks of unprecedented scale in the country.

The most dramatic development of all was the collapse of the two major sociopolitical networks in Mt. Hebron's rural sector (whose population reached 65,000 in 1942).[61] In the mid-1930s, the rural sector was still under the leadership of the al-ʻAza family of Bayt Jibrin and the ʻAmru family of Dura, as it had been in the nineteenth century (Chapter 1). The persistent rivalry between the two families and the clusters of villages dominated by each continued to divide the rural region along ties of *Qays* and *Yaman*, even though the ethos upon which they were established had long become irrelevant. Animosity was aggravated when the struggle between the *majlisiyyun* and the *muʻaridun* injected a new dimension into the feud. Both families tried to exploit the situation to their advantage but in effect created the conditions for the collapse of their own hegemony in the rural sector, and for the rising influence of urban interests. As in other locations, the split widened during the 1936–1939 revolt. In the early stages of the revolt, the al-ʻAza family supported the *muʻaridun*, but quickly shifted its support to the *majlisiyyun* in response to the growing strength of the armed pro-Husayni groups and other considerations.[62] In response, ʻAmru family members joined the "Peace Gangs" (*Fasa'il al-Salam*) established by Fakhri Nashashibi, a prominent *muʻaridun* figure, to battle the pro-Husayni bands.[63]

The confrontation gravely damaged the fabric of life in the rural sector. Power relations shifted frequently and dramatically, causing rapid changes in the affiliations of villages and families intent on surviving. Villages were split and longstanding loyalties were shattered. The fierce fighting in the Mt. Hebron region ended the area's division into two clusters of villages, destroying its social fabric. Both camps collapsed as internal cracks undid netgworks that had stood for generations and sparked blood feuds, some of which would continue to involve future generations.[64]

The chaotic conditions undermined not only the status of the al-'Aza and 'Amru families, but also that of other members of the rural elite who had played a key role in the Mt. Hebron social institutions before the revolt. Rashid Abu 'Aram, head of the large village of Yatta, was considered the region's supreme *'urf* arbitrator. Many families of the rural and urban elite aspired to enter his family through marriage ties.[65] In November 1938, Abu 'Aram fled his village after his life was threatened by a commander of a pro-Husayni band, 'Abd al-Halim al-Julani. Yatta, Abu 'Aram's village was no longer his stronghold after it split between his supporters and those of the 'Amru family of Dura, with whom Abu 'Aram himself sought refuge.[66] After the revolt, Abu 'Aram failed to regain his former status; like other rural leaders, he had been deeply involved in the revolt and consequently made many enemies, causing his loss of legitimacy among large sections of the mountain's population. He was marginalized and urban notables took over his roles.

The Rise of the Hebronite Urban Elite

While these shifts were major, they did not change the basic features of Mt. Hebron's society and political culture that continued to reflect the familial order's patterns. The new circumstances did, however, affect two fundamental arrangements. First, they facilitated the rise of urban leaders who did not traditionally belong to the top tier of elite families. More importantly, the collapse of the old networks in Hebron and its rural environs sparked the growth of an even larger network, which increased the power of the urban elite and provided fertile ground for the region-wide consolidation discussed in Chapter 3.

More than any other player in the southern part of the Palestinian highlands, the Ja'bari family exemplifies these changes in Mt. Hebron, and the ability of familial order structures to adapt to these changes. During the Mandate era, the Ja'bari clan numbered several hundred. It was not particularly large by local standards, nor did it enjoy extraordinary economic privileges or a tradition of political dominance.[67] Its longstanding power base was a local alliance with the Rajbi and Shweyki families, which belonged to the *tariqa* of the *Rifa'iyya*.[68] As seen in Chapter 1, in the late nineteenth century, the family's Sufi ties eased its way into the trans-imperial network of Sultan Abdülhamit's close advisor, Abu al-Huda al-Sayyadi. Still, the Ja'baris were not traditionally among the top tier of the urban elite. This began to change in the 1930s with the emergence of Sheikh Muhammad 'Ali al-Ja'bari (1900–1980), a graduate of Sharia studies at al-Azhar.[69] Ja'bari, one of the less-studied yet important Palestinian historical figures, transformed his family into a dominant player in both local and regional spheres. He achieved this by creating an efficient family organization dedicated to acquiring political power on his behalf.

Sheikh Ja'bari was a gifted political leader, whose rise to prominence was helped by the absence of worthy competitors in both intra-family and public spheres during the early stages of his career. In taking over his clan's leadership, he signaled a shift of the privilege previously reserved for the Sha'ib lineage (s. *fakhd*) rather than his own Darwish lineage, which was regarded as a late appendage to the family and not an original branch.[70] Sheikh Ja'bari was a charismatic figure. His unique attire – a cape and *'imama* headdress – combined the appearance of the *'alim* (religious leader) with that of an attorney's sophistication and pragmatism. In conservative Hebron, his religious appearance gave him an advantage over the educated effendis of Nablus, Jerusalem and the coastal cities, who carried themselves with modern airs. The smiling, blue-eyed and short-statured sheikh was soft spoken to the point of whispering,[71] but his disarming appearance cloaked a fierce ambition.

Ja'bari's moves illustrate how Hebron's urban elite leveraged contemporary developments as a vehicle of growth by using familial-order practices. His strategy was based on the fundamental political

FIGURE 2.1 Jaʿbari (front, second from the right) with the Hebron YMMA members, 1936.

need for alliances in order to consolidate his power, which called for networking with Hebron's powerful families. Ja'bari's starting point was not strong, given the city's divisions in general and his family's status in particular. The Ja'baris' Sufi lineage was not only a disadvantage at this point but also a pretext for their de-legitimization by rival orthodox families (Chapter 1).[72] The *majlisiyyun* and *mu'aridun* split hampered Ja'bari's ability to establish new alliances. In addition, the old power structures of the rural sector remained stable until 1936–1939 revolt, and limited his ability to extend his influence beyond the city.

In the face of these challenges, Ja'bari demonstrated flexible adaptability and turned these weaknesses into advantages. As a graduate of al-Azhar, he himself was the product of an orthodox education. However, regardless of his education, social boundaries drawn by Sufi identification prevailed and undermined his ability to establish alliances outside the *Rifa'iyya*. Modernist ideas, on the other hand, were useful for creating increasingly broad sociopolitical

FIGURE 2.2 A meeting of Mt. Hebron's notables with the Jerusalem District Governor, Edward Keith-Roach (center), Ja'bari on his right (courtesy of the Library of Congress).

coalitions on the ruins of the older, smaller networks. Therefore, Ja'bari responded to developments in the Islamic world by playing down his family's Sufi legacy, once an asset but now a major liability.[73] First, he joined modernist movements. In 1928, he was a founding member and head of the Hebron branch of the Young Men's Muslim Association (*al-Jam'iyyat al-Shubban al-Muslimin*). In 1946, two years after the decline of the YMMA, Ja'bari was among the founders of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.[74] Membership in the executive committee enabled him to strengthen his ties with the heads of leading Hebron families such as the Tamimis, 'Abadins and Natshehs, who were also members of the movement's management.[75] Ja'bari also took part in the Brotherhood's charitable societies and activities that allowed him to establish ties with broad sections of Mt. Hebron's population.[76] The second step he took to obliterate his family's Sufi heritage was to concoct a Sharifi pedigree for his family, which he claimed could be traced to Hasan and Husayn, grandsons of the Prophet Muhammad. Ja'bari made it difficult to challenge his version by claiming the family genealogy was closely guarded by a family elder and that

revealing this genealogy would bring calamities on the family. The orthodox families rejected Ja'bari's version[77] but his efforts succeeded partly, and upgraded the family's genealogy from categorically "inadequate" to arguably "debatable." As Shryrock notes,[78] inventing pedigrees was and remains a common pattern in the Middle East, often used by upcoming actors to bridge a gap between their effective power and the absence of a cultural "explanation" or genealogical "justification" for it.

Undaunted by changes in the religious administration and the split between *majlisiyyun* and *mu'aridun*, Ja'bari labored to build consensual status for himself by establishing ties with families on both sides of the divide. Like most Hebron families, the Ja'baris initially identified with *mu'aridun*. The Husaynis' moves to extend their network in the 1930s, however, prompted Ja'bari to transfer his family's declared support to the *majlisiyyun*. This newfound allegiance apparently led the SMC to appoint him as general Imam of Mt. Hebron and secretary of Hebron's Sharia court.[79] An equally important outcome was the opportunity to establish contacts with major *majlisiyyun* families who held a formidable combination of bases of support, especially the Tamimis. With 17 lineages numbering several thousand members, the Tamimis enjoyed considerable economic power as one of the wealthiest families of Mt. Hebron, and high religious and social status.[80] External ties also bolstered the family's importance. They had branches throughout Palestine and Syria, as well as Transjordan, where their powerful relatives, the Majali family, held considerable social and political influence. The Tamimis had close ties to the Dweyb family – also *majlisiyyun* supporters – who headed the confederation of the Ta'amra tribes of the Hebron-Jerusalem region (Diagram 1).[81]

Ja'bari took advantage of the political instability of the 1930s and 1940s to establish ties with the Khatib lineage that led the Tamimi clan and controlled its main assets. Ja'bari connected with Rashad (b. 1909), who was the son of 'Abd al-Hay al-Khatib, head of the Tamimis, and a prominent activist in his own right. The Haganah Information Service (HIS) described Rashad as the Husaynis' chief link to Hebron.[82] In 1935, Rashad and Ja'bari were among the founders of the pro-Husayni Palestinian Arab Party. In the 1940s,

Rashad filled various roles in the Arab Higher Committee (AHC),[83] and in 1945 he was elected alongside Ja'bari to the executive group of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jerusalem. Rashad's brother Anwar (b. 1917) also rose to prominence. He was exiled to Iraq with the Husaynis (after a brief stay in Beirut) and filled a series of senior positions in the AHC. Political ties between the Khatib and Ja'bari families were swiftly sealed by Anwar's marriage to Ja'bari's daughter.[84] From this point onward, the triumvirate of Ja'bari and the two Khatib brothers would control the sociopolitical arenas of Mt. Hebron and other areas for years.

Early in the 1936–1939 revolt, Ja'bari was a member of Hebron's National Committee, one of many committees the AHC established throughout the country in order to organize the revolt.[85] He was arrested in 1936 along with other *majlisiyyun* figures and spent several months in British detention camps in Palestine.[86] With the British removal of the Mufti in 1937, the pendulum swung back to favor the *mu'aridun*. Within a year, they enjoyed the support of 80 per cent of Hebron, claimed a Palestinian source of the HIS. These developments prompted Ja'bari's return to the folds of the *mu'aridun*, although officially he remained part of the Husayni party. This move allowed him to retain the ties he built with *majlisiyyun* families[87] while remaining politically relevant, a necessary preparation for the opportunity that would come his way.

Like elsewhere in the Palestinian highlands, instability persisted in Hebron after the revolt in the form of high unemployment rates, deep-seated inter-family rivalry and a municipality ineptly managed by a succession of British government officials.[88] In 1940, Hebronites repeatedly petitioned the British government to rehabilitate the municipality and allow the election of a mayor from Hebron. The British response underlines an important, recurring feature of their rule in the districts. While forbidding elections at this point, they agreed to appoint a Hebronite as both the district officer and acting mayor.[89] Ja'bari may not have been the first choice. In 1935, the British favored Mufti Sheikh Abdullah Tahabub for the role of mayor, but recognizing that the pro-British official lacked sufficient local support, they appointed Nasser al-Din, whom they described as "almost illiterate." He enjoyed strong local support but was

assassinated in 1937 by a pro-Husayni group.[90] In 1940, Ja'bari maintained relations with families on both sides of the split and came into favor with the British, who sought harmony in the power discord of Hebron[91] (this contradicts the prevalent notion that the British applied a policy of "divide and rule").[92] In October, Ja'bari assumed his position at the municipality and swiftly manipulated its resources to strengthen ties with additional families, prompting numerous complaints as well as a British investigation. However, maintaining the same attitude they had to the Husayni network before 1937, the British preferred to overlook the Sheikh's conduct for the sake of maintaining the peace.[93]

Ja'bari's new ties were put to their first test by the municipal elections of December 1946. Local observers reported that the candidates offered no real ideological or social platform.[94] All eight candidates elected for the city council belonged to the top tier of the local elite, including six on Ja'bari's list.[95] His main rival, Sheikh 'Abd al-Hay 'Arafeh, was dealt a stinging defeat[96] and Ja'bari's dominance in the city became uncontested fact. Although his connections did not yet extend to all Hebron families, Ja'bari was rapidly approaching this goal.

And then, the Villages

As Ja'bari consolidated his power in Hebron, dramatic developments were underway in the city's rural environs, as sociopolitical structures and foundational myths were shattered in the crescendo of the Arab Revolt. Even when the violence subsided, blood feuds within and between villages threatened to entangle the region in an endless cycle of retribution. Proud yet exhausted, the rural elite understood the urgent need to end this situation. The *'urf* was the villagers' preferred method of conflict resolution. However, the rural leadership, including the region's former supreme arbitrator Sheikh Abu 'Aram, lacked public legitimacy to lead settlement procedures. This presented an opportunity for supposedly objective urban notables to fill this function and rehabilitate the mountain society. Ja'bari was the natural choice for this role: he had religious and civil legal qualifications, he was a native of the region and familiar with its cultural norms and customs, and he had played an important role in

restoring British recognition of *'urf* as a legitimate conflict resolution mechanism.[97] In addition, Ja'bari also enjoyed good relations with the rural sector thanks to the positions he filled in the 1930s as property tax inspector and as the region's Imam.[98] All these advantages allowed him to succeed Abu 'Aram as supreme arbitrator of the mountain area. The fact that he also served as arbitrator in Yatta, Abu 'Aram's own feud-filled village, is an indication of his status.[99]

By the mid-1940s, the rural sector's decline had become a *fait accompli*. Mt. Hebron's longstanding dichotomy was shattered, leaving a void that was filled by Sheikh Ja'bari and his urban associates, who mostly employed sociocultural tools typical of the family order. The collapse of the Mt. Hebron system not only reinforced Ja'bari as leader of the transformation, but also allowed him to build a new sociopolitical system on its ruins. The networks and founding ethos of this new system were grounded in the preexisting regional Mt. Hebron identity, but were more encompassing than the former networks based on *Qays* and *Yaman* identities. Thus, on the verge of the War of 1948, Ja'bari was poised as the indisputable leader of the entire Mt. Hebron region. Not only did the villagers begin to view him a regional authority, but the Bedouin tribes of Mt. Hebron and the northern Negev also sought his arbitration services, and together with Ja'bari's family, they formed a broad web of trade and smuggling networks operating from Egypt to Transjordan.[100]

Despite significant structural changes in Mt. Hebron during the Mandate period, the fundamental family-based features and patterns of society largely remained intact. The familial order continued to shape the economic and social dimensions of individual existence, and the elite continued to rely on powerful families and inter-family arrangements.

MT. NABLUS: POLITICIZATION, INSTITUTION BUILDING AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Like Mt. Hebron, Mt. Nablus also suffered lingering economic hardship. The 1929 global crisis severely hit this area, which was heavily dependent on regional and global commerce.[101] Many

people, including affluent businessmen, left the region for the coastal cities, further depleting the local economy.[102] A Hebrew newspaper correspondent who visited the city in 1934 wrote, “Nablus is no longer the city of gold and commerce, rather the city of darkness and suffering [...] almost one-half of its population has left it.”[103] Unlike Hebron, however, economic conditions around Mt. Nablus showed significant signs of recovery in the early 1940s. The city’s population grew from 15,947 in 1922 to 23,300 in 1943. Nablus itself expanded, resuming the city’s previous growth after an earthquake destroyed large sections of the old city in 1927. The increase in local income and an influx of capital during the 1940s allowed residents to leave the confines of the old city into new neighborhoods, a trend that softened yet preserved status- and family-based patterns of residence.[104]

Despite the economic crisis and migration that characterized both Hebron and Nablus during much of the Mandate period, the cities differed in several important aspects. Religion, for example, was not as significant in Nablus as it was in Hebron. The bars that opened in Nablus during the early 1940s would not have met with approval in Hebron.[105] Also, if the family institution played a significant role in the Nablus public sphere, it was even more important in Hebron. The institutional sector of Nablus was more developed and included organizations and groups, which maintained a partially supra-familial character. Among the most important of these was the municipality, which had become one of the few places where politicians could actively pursue issues extending beyond municipal matters. The Nablus municipality became a daily platform for airing national issues, and a place of assembly for residents who wanted to hear their leaders and to sound their own voices.[106]

Several institutions and organizations started out in the early 1930s as supra-familial settings. The Communist party and al-Istiqlal party,[107] for example, represented a pioneering effort to create ideological organizations with a supra-familial character.[108] In the mid-1930s, a youth movement named after Khalid Ibn al-Walid (one of the Prophet’s talented commanders) was established in Nablus. This movement appealed to urban and rural members alike, and went underground during the 1936–1939 revolt.[109] Social

organizations, including the Women's Association of Nablus and the Arab Women's League, were also established during this eventful decade.[110] These two associations actively campaigned for women's rights and were involved in a variety of social activities, although their main effort was political mobilization for demonstrations and other forms of protest against the British.[111] Also established in the 1940s were the youth movements of *Najjada* and *Futuwa*, sports clubs and labor organizations.[112]

Alongside these developments, a prominent group of high school and university-educated intellectuals that sympathized with the al-Istiqlal party became politically active.[113] This group showed a certain degree of cohesion by promoting joint goals like employment for the educated sector,[114] and was active against the backdrop of accelerated politicization and radicalization in Nablus after 1929, as happened in other places. One anti-British group known as al-Jam'iyya al-Rahiba (The Frightful Society) was formed in 1922, later described in a British report as "self-sacrificing group." The group was tiny but within a few years, several of its leaders such as Jamil Kamal, 'Izzat Darwaza and Anis Tamimi became well-known political activists in al-Istiqlal and the *majlisiyyun*.[115] Politicization was also evident among the city's youth, or al-shabab, who formed a distinct and active group from the late 1920s on; there was no corresponding phenomenon in Hebron. These youths identified with the radical nationalist rhetoric they heard in school from their teachers, the intellectuals of their era,[116] and organized riots, disrupted commerce and pressured local leadership.[117] In August 1931, for example, hundreds of young Palestinians participated in riots and were extolled by local press as the "liberated youth of Nablus."[118]

One manifestation of the politicization of Nablus was its people's sensitivity to events in the Arab world. Developments such as the 1943 Lebanon uprisings against the French colonial rule evoked heated demonstrations in Nablus, which sent volunteers and donations to support the "brothers across the border."[119] In this passionately nationalist climate, some groups paid a price. The Christian community of Nablus was repeatedly charged with disloyalty to the Arab cause. Christians were also accused of

benefiting from British discrimination in the allocation of government jobs. Such nationalist pressure, as well as the economic crisis, ultimately led to the decline of the city's Christian community.[120]

Shifting Hubs: Emigrant, Economic and Sociopolitical Networks in Mt. Nablus

What caused Nablus to develop differently from Hebron? Historically, Hebron was a conservative, religious city of secondary importance, whereas Nablus was a major crossroads exposed to external influence. At the same time, aggressive invaders such as Daher al-'Omar, Ibrahim Pasha (Chapter 1) and others stoked the region's desire for autonomy and contributed to its self-image as energetic and insubordinate. During the Mandate Period, the region's residents considered *Jabal al-Nar* ("the mountain of fire") – a Mt. Nablus epithet – to be the vibrant center of Arab and Palestinian nationalities.[121] Restiveness was, therefore, an integral part of local heritage, socialization and identity. Other external influences distinguishing between the two regions can be traced to migration. Unlike Mt. Hebron, the people of Mt. Nablus migrated massively to the coastal cities.[122] The proximity and accessibility of these cities to Mt. Nablus – particularly Haifa – increased the speed and volume of ideas and resources that flowed through the migrants' networks to their native city. In the coastal cities, migrants were exposed to vigorous social and political activities and ideas that they imported to Mt. Nablus. Haifa and Nablus became linked through numerous ties. In 1922, the Nablus-based al-Jam'iyya al-Rahiba merged into a larger organization in Haifa.[123] In the 1930s and 1940s, Sheikh Muhammad Bustami headed another organization of 800 members from Haifa and Nablus, and engaged in extensive armed and other activities against the British and the Jewish *Yishuv*.[124] The strong ties between the two centers were also evident in the activities of the Nablus-based parties, which held conventions in Haifa geared to emigrants from Nablus.[125]

Beyond introducing social and political influences, migration ties constituted one of several layers of the larger Nablus economic networks, which underwent a significant shift in orientation. During the Ottoman rule, these networks, much like those of Hebron, faced

east and north, with particularly strong links to the Transjordan districts of ʻAjlun and Balqaʼ. As discussed in the previous chapter, Nablus served as a key hub, and its far-reaching political and administrative influence positioned it as the regional capital. However, while Hebron maintained its networks' orientation during the Mandate period, Nablus-based ones turned mainly to the west. This shift was largely a result of the political circumstances after World War I that re-networked all Middle Eastern territories, including Palestine. As these already prosperous coastal cities transformed into centers of export, industry, and services, this weakened Nablus as an economic, administrative and political center.

The sociopolitical networks of Nablus underwent far-reaching changes both during and after World War I. The landed families, already in decline since the early nineteenth century (Chapter 1) were eventually supplanted by families whose fortunes were fueled mainly by trade and commerce. The sociopolitical pattern of inter-familial alliances that dominated the nineteenth century survived, as did the dichotomous division of the political sphere into two rival camps. However, the composition of these alliances changed fundamentally during the Mandate period. Instead of the nineteenth-century alliances of the Tuqan and ʻAbd al-Hadi families, two new camps formed around the *muʻaridun* and *majlisiyyun*, uniting longstanding rivals and dividing former allies. This change derived in part from cancelling by the Ottomans of the representational political system during World War I, thus obviating the motives for the divide during the nineteenth century. Moreover, following the war, ʻAbd al-Hadi's influence waned because of fierce internal disputes, growing detachment from the public[126] and the increasing power of other families. The Tuqans continued to fill senior administrative positions but this obscured the considerable change in power relations that affected the urban elite.

The most powerful person in post-World War I Nablus was not mayor Haydar Tuqan but Ahmad Shakʻa (b. 1880), a grain-trader and industrialist who controlled economic activities throughout the city and much of its rural environs. Shakʻa wielded considerable influence in the local political scene through several channels, including the *Fellahin* Party established at the initiative of the Zionist Executive in 1920.[127] Shakʻa usually preferred to leave the stage to his

protégés, and especially his son-in-law, Suleiman Tuqan. In the 1920s, the Zionist movement maintained strong ties with Tuqan; they supported him financially and advocated with the British to appoint him mayor.[128] In exchange, Tuqan was expected to use his influence to persuade his own circles to adopt a moderate attitude toward the Zionists. David Miller, Zionist emissary, reported that Tuqan was financially supported by his father-in-law, Ahmad Shak'a. The latter, well-aware of Zionist efforts on Tuqan's behalf, teased Miller and said the Zionists "are pushing away the big ones, and drawing the small ones close." Miller interpreted his words as mocking the Zionist investment in Tuqan instead of the real influential Shak'a.[129] Suleiman Tuqan remained a prominent leader in Mandatory Nablus. Nevertheless, his father-in-law's comment became more pertinent as merchant families headed by the Shak'a and al-Masri families gradually gained economic and sociopolitical power at the Tuqans' expense.

In the early 1920s, the old rivalry between 'Abd al-Hadi and Tuqan was supplanted by a divide between the *mu'aridun* and *majlisiyyun*,

FIGURE 2.3 The al-Masri safety matches factory, 1940 (courtesy of the Library of Congress).

although these new camps did not overlap with the nineteenth-century alliances. The ʻAbd al-Hadis and Tuqans became allies and members of the *muʻaridun*[130] while other former allies, especially *ʻulama* families like the Tamimis, joined the *majlisiyyun*. Throughout British rule, the *muʻaridun* were consistently identified with wealthy merchant families such as Shakʻa, al-Masri, Nabulsi and Tuqan (the latter also a landed family) who shared an interest in maintaining the stability that allowed them to pursue their commercial activities.[131]

By contrast, *majlisiyyun* and al-Istiqlal supporters represented a different phenomenon. They too were dominated by members of influential families such as Akram Zuʻaytar of al-Istiqlal, or Dr. Sidqi Milhem and Dr. Mustafa Bushnaq of the *majlisiyyun*. However, their leaders were not merchants but intellectuals and religious figures with strong national and religious messages.[132] This distinction was valid in the 1920s and the 1930s but faded in the 1940s after the 1936–1939 revolt that debilitated the Husayni camp. The ongoing economic crisis worsened during the revolt, diverting the population's attention from grander visions of the future to a narrower focus on livelihood. Seeking security in the uncertain economic conditions, individuals withdrew into their nuclear and extended families. Consequently, the influence of nationalist ideologues over the local sphere declined significantly, blurring the differences between the *muʻaridun* and *majlisiyyun*. Families often moved from one camp to another during the 1940s for local economic and political reasons or disputes that had little to do with nationalist political doctrines and were rather parochial.[133] A similar fate was shared by the al-Istiklal party, whose promise of supra-familial modern politics crumbled in the late 1930s.

Ties within the *muʻaridun* and *majlisiyyun* camps of Nablus were often solidified through marriages, reflecting their members' desire to establish inter-familial alliances.[134] Until the late 1930s, *majlisiyyun* families were more cohesively connected than the *muʻaridun* camp. This, as noted before, was also true on the national level. The ʻAbd al-Hadi and al-Masri families, for example, were considered rivals during the Mandate period, even though both belonged to the *muʻaridun*.[135] This lack of cohesion was also reflected in the

mu'aridun's poor ability to execute collective actions. They failed to provide even basic mutual protection, and during the revolt their leaders were forced to entrust their families' security to police or mercenary militias.[136] At the same time, Mt. Nablus had mixed alliances that included urban *mu'aridun* families such as the al-Masris, and rural *majlisiyyun* families such as the al-Fares clan. In other words, the sociopolitical networks in Nablus at the time did not necessarily align along *mu'aridun-majlisiyyun* boundaries, and often reflected local pragmatic considerations rather than nationalist ideologies. The existence of mixed alliances highlights the tenacity of old ties involving the urban and rural sectors (the latter had a population of 64,000 in 1947), and the vertical split they reflected. In 1938, for example, Suleiman Tuqan, the Mayor of Nablus and a *mu'aridun* leader, was asked by 'Abd al-Rahim Haj Muhammad, General Commander of the 1936–1939 revolt to allow villagers traditionally under his family's influence to participate in the revolt. He agreed, but stressed this should be not construed as support for the Mufti's opinions.[137]

Responding to New Circumstances: The Meteoric Rise of the Al-Masris

The region's families were challenged by the turbulent events in Mt. Nablus – unfamiliar rulers, a persistent economic crisis, the emergence of rival economic hubs and supra-familial institutions, widespread emigration, radicalization, a traumatic revolt, and the looming world war. All these impacted the internal workings of each family, their inter-generational tensions, cohesiveness and focus on survival. The history of the al-Masris, the dominant family of the northern West Bank from the late Mandate period to the present, is a remarkable account of these challenges.

The al-Masris offer a typical example of the growing power of the Mt. Nablus merchant class. The family was already well-known enough in the early nineteenth century but was not among the 29 families with representatives in the municipal council between 1869 and 1914.[138] The family's rise largely coincided with the British occupation, and can be traced to Haj Taher al-Masri (1859–1943), a businessman who established a family organization with economic

goals and interests that called for financial and political protection. To this end, Haj Taher pursued a strategy of acquiring diverse bases of support that served his interests in different theaters. This was not a new idea, but the al-Masris implemented it with remarkable effectiveness. They had ample resources to facilitate broad networking, to cultivate talented familial leaders and to create a flexible family organizational structure that allowed adapting to change.

Prior to the British occupation, the Taher al-Masri Company owned orchards, and engaged in the manufacture and distribution of soap.[139] After the British occupied Palestine, the family's commercial and industrial sources of income increased as it established a series of fuel, food, and construction businesses and became a large military contractor. After a temporary slump caused by the 1930s' economic crisis, the al-Masris continued to expand in the 1940s and acquired new businesses.[140] The family's development was a microcosmic reflection of the broad regional shift whereby commerce and industry overtook agriculture. In 1918, there were 1,236 factories in Palestine. By 1927, this number had grown by 283 per cent to 3,505. Of the 2,269 new factories established during this period, 65 per cent were owned by Arabs.[141] Growing government demand, reduced import during World War II and an influx of capital from the Jewish economy accelerated the industrialization of the Palestinian economy. This fueled the developing banking sector and attracted new investments to the modernizing industrial sector. In 1945, Arab employment in private industries remained low (6 per cent of a total of 303,000 employees), yet this sector's revenues surpassed all others and drew a growing number of entrepreneurs. Industrialization was especially pronounced in the coastal cities but was evident also in Ramallah and Nablus, where factories were established through large investments.[142]

Several studies consider industrialization as a vehicle of social change, triggering the emergence of a middle class and a new stratum of entrepreneurs in Palestine, especially in the coastal cities.[143] In his comprehensive study on the Palestinian economy, Avraham Cohen suggested that these entrepreneurs accounted for a small part of the industrial sector. According to his findings, the major players in the emerging industrial scene were the veteran elite families that set up

branches in the coastal cities. Several reasons drew them to industrialization, primarily diminishing agricultural revenues. Farmers' insolvency led to the collapse of the money-lending sector, in which many of the urban elite were involved.[144] The affluent families, therefore, were the main beneficiaries of industrialization, while changes affecting broader social groups were more limited.[145] A similar process occurred in Syria at the same time. Price regulation imposed on agricultural produce by the French and British during World War II resulted in losses for the previously prosperous landed families of Syria and led to their decline while families that relied on trade and industry reaped the profits of wartime demand. As a result, an increasing number of families developed industrial and commercial sources of income that bolstered their economic position and within a short time, reinforced their political position as well. Upon Syria's independence, these families became the most influential political actors in the country.[146]

Like these Syrian families, the al-Masris translated their economic success into political and institutional power. Haj Taher's flourishing businesses prompted him to secure political protection for them. He became a member of the Nablus city council in 1925, and joined the leadership of the *mu'aridun* Defense Party when it was established in 1934. Both institutions gave him political power but, unlike Sheikh Ja'bari, Haj Taher considered his participation in such institutions and organizations as a means rather than a goal. While he and his men did hold their own political views, they regarded politics primarily as an instrument to serve the family organization's economic goals. This principle was proven correct on several occasions during the Ottoman period, when prominent families involved in the Nablus municipality helped avert threats such as taxes and competition.[147] During the Mandate period, such economic concerns were compounded by ideological threats to the interests of Haj Taher and his associates, who sought to maintain the political stability necessary to sustain manufacturing and commercial enterprises, cultivate good relations with the British, and counter socialist and communist ideas threatening to change labor relations. Haj Taher's identification with the *mu'aridun*, whose leadership throughout Palestine expressed similar agendas,[148] was therefore not surprising.

This difference between Haj Taher's functional perception of the municipality and Ja'bari's strategy, which considered control of political institutions an end in itself, reflected broader inter-regional differences. The political cultures of Nablus and Hebron were different, although both were family-centered. Hebron's rigid patriarchic structure allowed Ja'bari to resolve most concerns through his ties with the leaders of local families. Control of the municipality was essential, but more as a center of resources and allocations that could be exploited to extend and fortify Ja'bari's alliances than as a political platform. Similar methods in Nablus would not have led to the same results, for several reasons. First, interaction between varied social groups in Nablus was more extensive than in Hebron. An example of this is the minor, almost transparent presence of women in the Hebron public sphere compared to Nablus, where women were able to mobilize hundreds to stormy demonstrations, petitions and fundraisers.[149] Second, the Nablus arena was more diverse and despite their dominance, elite families were not its sole actors. Therefore, there was no substitute for direct contact between the Nablus leadership and the public through assemblies in city hall, cafes and other locations that offered a stage for discussion that genuinely shape public opinion.[150]

This distinct political culture made membership in the Nablus municipality an important source of prestige, and a useful platform for moderating public pressure. An important role in reinforcing council members' status was played by the British, who tended to involve the local leadership, although such power-sharing was not automatic. Much depended on the British "man on the spot," not always culturally equipped to appreciate the significance of the local elite. During the 1929 riots, for example, a British representative in Nablus reported the impressive ability of Haj Taher al-Masri and other notables to restrain the masses. The representative admitted that he had not sufficiently appreciated the influence of the local urban and rural leaders.[151]

Municipal membership also helped the elite families protect their economic interests. In 1932, for example, the Nablus municipality proposed to follow the city of Tulkarem and connect to the Palestine Electric Company's grid, even though the company was identified

with the Zionist project. The initiative met with objection from two councilmen, Haj Taher al-Masri and ‘Abd al-Rahim Tamimi, who owned franchises of Shell and Socony-Vacuum oil companies, respectively. Electricity supply in Nablus was based on generators, and connection to the grid would have slashed these families’ revenues. An HIS informer accurately predicted that the two councilmen would defeat the initiative by framing it as a national issue.[152] The proposal was defeated. When it re-emerged 14 years later, it was again rejected on national grounds.[153]

Similarly, membership in the *mu‘aridun* leadership allowed the al-Masris to protect their interests. The National Committee of the Nablus region was established at the beginning of the revolt to enforce the general strike that started in April 1936.[154] Hikmat, Haj Taher’s son, was appointed one of several *mu‘aridun* representatives to the committee. One result of his appointment was that the al-Masri flourmill was the only business permitted to operate during the strike,[155] presumably to ensure the steady supply of staple goods. The permit was evidence of the al-Masris’ political influence, which simultaneously allowed them to protect their businesses and their relationship with the British army, one of the mills’ major customers.

The Familial Arena as a Mirror of Broad Regional and Palestinian Changes

Similar to the rise of the Ja‘baris, the al-Masris’ family history also tells a broader story, reflecting both conditions typical to the Mt. Nablus region as well as broader circumstances that applied to Palestinians in general. From the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s, the al-Masri clan successfully united around the organizational goals of Haj Taher and his heirs. This unity was driven by two factors- the turbulent of events of the period, and the ability of Haj Taher and his heirs to incorporate an increasing number of relatives into their economic networks. This increased the clan’s cohesion and reinforced the status of Haj Taher and his heirs as its leaders.

Occasionally, the dominance of economic considerations in the political arena clashed with family members’ ideology. The growing radicalization of Nablus youth affected all classes and caused inter-generational tension. In the case of the Nabulsi family, for example,

these tensions had dire results. The Nabulsis were divided between a *mu'aridun* faction led by older, affluent merchants, and a *majlisiyyun* faction dominated mostly by young family members, usually with no obligations to familial economic considerations. In the 1940s, the political divide was aggravated by an inheritance dispute, as both sides tried to rally the support of their political cohorts against their rivals in the family.[156] The al-Masris, who officially identified with the *mu'aridun*, were not immune to such tensions.[157] Born at the turn of the century, its youth matured under the influence of the formative events surrounding the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and like others, they too were captivated by the national cause, especially its pan-Arab aspect. Haj Taher's control over these young family members largely depended on whether they were connected to his economic networks. In the 1930s, he employed dozens of Palestinians. This made him a powerful figure in the family but he did not have exclusive control. Many relatives remained outside his influence, and quite a few migrated overseas in response to the grave economic conditions.[158] As'ad and 'Adel al-Masri were two young prominent pro-Husayni leaders in Nablus, but Haj Taher failed to secure their allegiance to the *mu'aridun* in exchange for benefits.[159] Even Haj Taher's oldest son Hikmat was suspected of hidden sympathy for the *majlisiyyun* in the 1930s, despite his membership in the *mu'aridun's* Defense Party.[160]

The clan leaders' tolerance for intra-familial political pluralism stemmed from the fact that until 1936, political identification in Nablus did not have the same acute socioeconomic implications as it had in Hebron, where politics were enmeshed in fierce competition over religious economic resources. This tolerance changed after the revolt erupted, when threats to security and economic stability made it increasingly difficult for Nablus families to contain diverging political opinions. The people of Nablus were preoccupied with concerns of livelihood and immediate survival and the political debate was pushed to the sidelines, further consolidating the family around Haj Taher and his heirs. Several factors that contributed to the al-Masris' cohesion overlapped with general Palestinian concerns. First was a growing realization of the revolt's devastating effects. In 1938, economic conditions in the Nablus area deteriorated to the

point of hunger. Arab informers of the HIS reported growing despair, apathy and de-politicization.[161] In this chaotic climate, the urban actors who played a key role in organizing the revolt were gradually weakened economically, socially and politically and supplanted by rural activists – primarily armed band members who threatened the city's daily life and regional status. This shift derailed a century of undisputed urban hegemony, and consequently frustrated both *majlisiyyun* and *mu'aridun* families.[162] Even after the revolt, the area suffered harsh economic and security conditions[163] and attacks by armed groups and robbers. Global developments also contributed to the climate of uncertainty. Until 1943, the events of World War II directly impacted the area, repeatedly inundating it with rumors that triggered panicked reactions including property sales and massive acquisitions of firearms.[164] In this persisting uncertainty, more craved the extended family's safety net. In the al-Masris' case, the expanding intra-family networks centered around the businesses of Haj Taher and his heirs, uniting the clan through strong shared interests and effectively eliminating any motivation for political diversity.[165]

Family cohesion was not merely the result of shared economic and political interests, however; cohesion also increased in response to challenges to cultural values and norms that sanctified family solidarity (*'asabiyya*). It was difficult to ignore the repeated threats and attempted assassinations targeting Haj Taher, or the injuries and property damage inflicted upon other family members by *majlisiyyun* supporters. A serious incident occurred in 1939, when armed perpetrators, suspected as *majlisiyyun*, murdered three members of the al-Masri family. Despite the *majlisiyyun* leaders' efforts, the younger family members rejected any talk of reconciliation. After conducting their own investigation, the al-Masris captured the killers, who included some of their own neighbors and friends – not a rare phenomenon in the chaotic conditions that existed during the revolt. Hundreds of al-Masris embarked on a brutal campaign of vengeance against anyone identified with the *majlisiyyun*. Pro-Husayni business owners closed their stores for five days, and the police were forced to arrest a large number of al-Masris until passions subsided.[166] The incident offered clear evidence of the family's solidarity and its ability to execute significant collective action.

Another major development in the intra-familial sphere of the 1940s was the emergence of multi-headed leadership, in contrast to hierarchical one-man leadership. From Haj Taher's rise to power in the early 1920s to his death in 1943, he operated as a sole leader and groomed only his son Hikmat to be his successor. Nonetheless, after his death, the leadership that appeared on the scene included Hikmat, his brother Nashat and two of their cousins, Na'if and Haj Ma'azuz, showing that father-to-son patterns of inheritance were at play, but so were other considerations. All four were senior managers in the Taher al-Masri Company, enhancing their legitimacy as leaders of the fundamentally economic family organization that needed their skills, and in exchange allowed them to extend their reach into social, political and other spheres of influence. Hikmat managed several family businesses and represented the al-Masris in the municipality and other political and civil organizations in the public sphere.[167] Nashat was less prominent in the public sphere but was one of the family's senior decision makers.[168] Na'if, with his business skills and impressive personality, became an arbitrator and an influential authority for Nablus youth who frequently congregated at his house to debate political issues.[169] The last of the four, Ma'azuz (b. 1901), came from a modest financial background and was initially employed as a cashier in one of the family's companies. In 1940, he won 15,000 BP (approximately worth $ 1 million in 2015) in a British lottery. Keeping half the sum as personal assets, he transferred the other half to the *sanduq al-'ai'la* (family treasury), making a significant contribution to the family's growing fortune,[170] and gaining a substantial promotion for himself. Ma'azuz married Rashda, his cousin and Hikmat and Nashat's sister, and soon made his mark as the family's most talented businessman.

After Haj Taher's death in 1943, the al-Masris' determination to maintain sociopolitical status was put to the test by their associates in the *mu'aridun*. Immediately after Haj Taher's death, the National Bloc that represented the *mu'aridun* in the city council, endorsed Hikmat for his father's seat.[171] This was conventional practice and a typical and clear expression of the familial political culture. The appointment, however, required British approval. In line with British policy to support the local elites, the British representative in Nablus

advised the district administration against holding elections for the position but to appoint Hikmat, who enjoyed significant public support.[172] Hikmat's appointment guaranteed a stable position for the *mu'aridun* bloc on the city council but did not ensure similar stability for the family's status in the informal social sphere. A month after Haj Taher's death, the *mu'aridun* mayor, Suleiman Tuqan, held a reception in honor of the Mansur bin 'Abd al-'Aziz Saudi Emir Mansur. Most members of the local elite were invited – with the exception of the al-Masris, who were ordinarily considered Tuqan allies. This blatant insult implied that the status of Haj Taher's family was no longer an unassailable fact after his death. The new al-Masri leadership responded immediately by dispatching the family's young contingent to demonstrate against Tuqan and even voice their support for Mufti Haj Amin, an act that illustrated the occasional instrumental use of national affiliations as levers for gains in the local sphere. The al-Masris' message was received, and the Tuqans quickly reconciled with their allies and held a celebration in honor of Hikmat's appointment.[173]

Institutions and Political Culture: Continuation of the Familial Order by Other Means

Like Qadri Tuqan, the manager of the Al-Najah College in the 1930s, future Nablus mayor Hamadi Kana'an and other local figures, Hikmat al-Masri represented the young, educated generation that absorbed the spirit of Arab nationalism at the universities of Cairo and Beirut. They remained conscious of their families' broad interests, yet their ideology and rhetoric authentically matched the zeitgeist of the Palestinian street.[174] This combined awareness of these young public figures was key to the "traditional" leadership's ability to adapt to the changing circumstances, particularly in the institutional arena. Organizations and institutions were important to the Nablus elite due to their impact on diverse local groups, and because they served as another area of competition between the local *mu'aridun* and the *majlisiyyun*. The Nablus elite families responded to the increased institution-building of the 1930s and 1940s by seizing control of existing organizations and establishing others of their own.

As seen, the al-Masris maintained a foothold in various institutions and organizations since the 1920s. In the 1940s, the

family extended its involvement to additional institutions, mostly new. In 1945, Jaffa-based attorney Muhammad Nimer al-Hawari founded the paramilitary youth movement *Najjada*, which formally rejected political or familial affiliation,[175] although the movement's hundreds of young members in Nablus were effectively controlled by the city's *mu'aridun* families. Hikmat al-Masri headed the movement's Nablus branch and served as the organization's deputy general commander. Using his family's resources, he paid for uniforms and activities and cultivated the local branch as his personal and familial power base, assigning relatives to several key posts, such as his cousin 'Adel, who was the logistics officer of the Nablus branch.[176] In 1946, in response to Haj Amin's demand to merge the *al-Najjada* and the competing youth group *Futuwa*, Hikmat announced that the Nablus branch of *al-Najjada* would remain independent even if the movements united. Eventually, he and the other *mu'aridun* patrons of the *al-Najjada* agreed to a merger in June 1947, but withdrew their financial support. The new united Arab Youth Organization (*Munzamat al-Shabab al-'Arabi*) collapsed shortly after that.[177] Another youth organization of which the al-Masris gained control was the Nablus Sports Club, which was founded in the 1930s in response to calls in the Palestinian public sphere to establish paramilitary youth associations. In 1946, Wasfi al-Masri, a cousin of Haj Taher's heirs and a functionary in their organization, was elected chairperson of the club, after defeating the *majlisiyyun* candidate.[178]

The al-Masris also became active in the Nablus Chamber of Commerce (NCC), another important organization. Hikmat was the al-Masris' first representative to the NCC; in 1944, he was elected secretary alongside his father-in-law Ahmad Shak'a, who was elected as chairman.[179] It was no coincidence that the NCC was dominated by wealthy *mu'aridun* merchant families. By seizing senior NCC posts, Nablus' elite families were able to protect their own interests and assume a powerful mediating role between the government and the merchants. Generally, merchants played an important role in Palestinian society,[180] but this varied significantly from one location to another. As an interest group, the merchants of Nablus held more powerful and prominent positions than their counterparts in Jerusalem or Hebron.[181] The NCC also played an important role in

major public activities, including organizing the economic aspects of the 1936–1939 revolt and adjusting the local industry to the changes caused by World War II, such as the governmental demand for workers and the growing demands for industrial products.[182] Over the years, the NCC would prove to be the most important institution serving al-Masri interests (Chapter 4).

A particularly interesting aspect of the al-Masris' institutional involvement concerns the women of the family, who were active in the Nablus Women's Association. The first among them was Haj Taher's wife La'iqa, who was one of the NWA founders and leaders.[183] La'iqa's daughter Rashda (wife of Haj Ma'azuz) and other women from the family followed her footsteps and led the NWA. The energetic political participation of these women in the association's public activities in the public sphere stood in stark contrast to the moderate views that their husbands espoused on the same political issues. Beyond the authentic motives of the women themselves, an explanation to this contradiction might be traced back to the public styles of Nablus' elite families that allowed them to engage in spirited public campaigns, while simultaneously maintaining a moderate façade for the British. The women filled this important function, which would reappear several decades later.

The 1946 municipal elections offer an opportunity to examine the changes that occurred in the Palestinian institutional sphere and political culture after three decades of British rule. Labor organizations throughout Palestine, which grew stronger since the early 1940s following the changes that occurred during World War II, hoped to gain political representation for the first time. The Arab Labor Association of Nablus, representing hundreds of members from the city and its environs, demanded canceling the stipulation that voting was conditional upon paying taxes, meaning only the city's affluent residents could vote (1,619 people out of a total population of 23,250).[184] This condition undermined fair representation of public opinion and gave a clear advantage to the elite families, who could consequently impose their own interests on the municipal agenda.[185] While the association's demand seemed to be an expression of political modernity, presented by a supra-familial interest group, it too was subject to the influence of *majlisiyyun*

families.[186] When the authorities rejected the Association's demand, its leaders retracted their plan to run for election independently, and endorsed the *majlisiyyun* list instead. The HIS, which had more than a few informers among members of the labor association reported that its leaders received considerable sums of money as election bribes, a tactic also allegedly used by the *mu'aridun* camp.[187] The events exposed the elite families' intense involvement in the dynamic labor union scene. According to several HIS sources, their involvement began much earlier: the *mu'aridun* had gained a foothold in the labor union scene as early as 1932, when they dominated a labor organization founded by the Young Men's Muslim Association.[188] The HIS reported that even the Association's establishment in 1944 was driven by the *majlisiyyun* desire to present an alternative to a *mu'aridun* labor organization controlled by Ahmad Shak'a.[189] By 1946, the elite families controlled all the labor organizations in Mt. Nablus region, putting an end to the labor unions' attempts to gain independent representation in the political theater.

The HIS reports on the labor associations' failed attempt to integrate into the municipal political sphere suggests the service viewed this issue through the *mu'aridun-majlisiyyun* struggle, which did not reflect its full complexity. Nevertheless, this struggle was not the only factor at play. Rural-urban tensions, as well as struggles between affluent and poorer families also impacted the political conflicts of the 1940s. However, in order to overcome the chronic weakness of Palestinian institutions and forge larger and more effective political alliances, such friction often fell along the lines of the *mu'aridun-majlisiyyun* dichotomy, although it often had little to do with the early 1930s political-ideological rivalry between these two camps. Indeed, in the wake of the 1946 municipal elections, Mt. Nablus was once again engulfed by violent inter-familial clashes. The Palestinian press wondered how familial politics once again superseded the national interest of unity.[190]

Two key observations can be extracted from this account. The first is that while new organizations did emerge, they failed to effect genuine change in the institutional sphere, which continued to reflect the interests of eight families. This was the result of several factors mentioned earlier, such as privileges grounded in

legal and administrative realities, circumstances that reinforced the family institution's vital role as an economic and security safety net, and the validity of cultural norms sanctifying the collective over the individual. The second insight is that the families' ability to adapt to new circumstances was the strongest single factor in resilience. The al-Masri family offers an excellent example of the ability to assess wisely the risks and opportunities of the new political, institutional and economic spheres, and to integrate into them for their own benefit. It was this skill that made the al-Masri dynasty one of the two most powerful families (Shak'a was the second) in the entire Nablus region by 1947, which only marked the beginning of their unmatched international success.

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE HIGHLANDS

The events of the Mandate period challenged Palestinian society's longstanding hierarchies and reshaped many of its networks. Yet, the major social institutions remained relevant by adapting to changing circumstances. As the basic social unit, the family continued to play an important, powerful role. In locations such as Nablus, the family's cohesion was challenged by the emergence of supra-familial foci of identity and growing politicization, but the effect of these trends – at least during the Mandate period – was almost always transient. The primacy of the familial order at the end of the Mandate Period can be traced to several factors: the British contributed by discouraging inter-sectarian integration, while the intra-Palestinian struggle and arduous confrontation with the British and the Zionist movement propelled individuals to seek the physical and economic security that their families continued to offer. Cultural norms played an equally important role and continued to reinforce collective family interests over individual aspirations. Ultimately, these norms proved to be stronger than competing political identities when these were forced to confront each other.

British efforts to eliminate the *musha'* institution, an integral part of the familial order in the villages, met with partial success only, and were not matched by corresponding grassroots ambitions. The elite family, another familial order institution, also

withstood the vicissitudes of time much better than previously appreciated by scholars. It would not be accurate to state that the Palestinian elite maintained its relevance at the end of the Mandate period solely by controlling the national discourse and various means of enforcement, as sometimes suggested.[191] In fact, some families clearly used the period's major changes to elevate their own sociopolitical status. The most persuasive evidence in support of this argument was Hebron, where no threats emerged against the powerful position of the city's elite families. Nablus was a more complex case: its elite families were challenged by fierce competition by emerging forces, competition which ended in the 1930s when the families gained the upper hand, due in part to the region's growing despair and political indifference. The next time new actors appeared was toward the mid-1940s but this time the "traditional" leaders quickly subdued them and appropriated their resources, usually for their own interests. By the end of the Mandate period, the Ja'baris of Hebron and the al-Masris of Nablus had attained the status of regional leaders. The accounts of these two families proved once again the ability of familial institutions to regard turbulence as an opportunity, not merely a difficult challenge.

On the Ruins of the Networks of Yesteryear: Disintegration and Integration

During the Mandate period, Palestine became a denser network space, albeit a more clearly defined one. This change occurred through accelerated growth of ostensibly distinct, mutually influential, physical, economic, social and political networks. Improved road systems and transportation networks reduced the distances between centers, and eliminated sources of livelihood of intermediate nodes such as Bethany.[192] At the same time, transportation improvements allowed these nodes to link directly with urban centers and bypass former rural hubs such as Abu Dis. Jerusalem continued to grow as a regional administrative and political center, but now the city not only overshadowed the surrounding villages in economic and political clout, it controlled them through a web of direct ties. Several of these changes can be

traced back to the late Ottoman period, particularly increased state centralization and the collapsed of *Qays* and *Yaman* ethos, which previously united clusters of villages under hubs such as Abu Dis and Malha. Corresponding processes of a change in ethos also affected sociopolitical networks in the intra-urban and inter-city spheres. In the early Mandate period, *Yaman* families such as the Husaynis became rivals of former allies such as the Jerusalem Nashashibis, the rural Abu Ghosh family and the Nablus Tuqans, who were also considered *Yaman*. By contrast, the Husaynis' relationship with *Qays* families such as Khalidi and 'Alami significantly improved after centuries of rivalry.

In the later 1930s, an accelerated version of the collapse of a longstanding ethos took place in Mt. Hebron, approximately one century after it occurred elsewhere in the Highlands. Although the collapse of *Qays* and *Yaman* identities was one of the main reasons for the restructuring of Hebronite rural networks, Mt. Hebron differed in several respects from other Highland regions. First, the city of Hebron did not play an active role in binding the rural area to the city, as did Nablus and Jerusalem. Hebronite penetration into the rural sector can therefore be described as an almost voluntary response to the need of Mt. Hebron's rural sector for peacemaking and alternative leadership. Second, in contrast to the political and economic developments over time that tied Jerusalem's surrounding villages to its urban networks of influence, Hebron's ascent to dominance was relatively swift. The main reason for this was the ability of urban leaders in Hebron to fill the vacuum in rural leadership caused by the 1936–1939 revolt. Only after penetrating the rural arena in this non-aggressive manner could the urban elite offer a united Hebronite identity for the entire region as an alternative to the destroyed split of *Qays* and *Yaman* camps. As we shall see in the next chapter, within a few short years the concept of a Hebronite identity gained a clear foothold in the region.

In Mt. Nablus, the urban center's growth compared to its rural environs had a longer history compared to the Jerusalem and Mt. Hebron regions, and yet it was in Mt. Nablus that city-village relations underwent some reversal. This regression was fed by the instability during the revolt and the rumble of the approaching

World War II. However, its more direct causes were deep changes that undermined the city's status as an important social and economic hub in the early Mandate period, and perhaps slightly earlier. In the 1920s and 1930s, the city experienced several catastrophes, including a devastating earthquake and a grave economic crisis. Together, these circumstances were fertile soil for radical ideas that originated in the coastal cities and reached Nablus through its extensive migration networks. From the late 1920s onward, Nablus witnessed the emergence of new players such as political parties and other groups that offered alternatives to family-based loyalties. Only in the early 1940s did the city regain its regional dominance as a result of several new developments, including the decline of these new players.

A comparative perspective highlights the differences in the three Highlands regions. The British Mandate era is commonly viewed as a period of disintegration and factionalism that brought Palestinian society to its confrontation with the Zionist movement at the ebb of the former's powers. The Mt. Nablus region fits this description to some degree, while the Jerusalem and Hebron regions experienced a more complex transformation during the Mandate period – yet the outcome was ultimately similar. The dissolution of old social networks in the regions of Jerusalem and Hebron was extensive yet did not lead to social fragmentation, as the above view contends. Instead, dissolution of the small networks served an essential stage in the formation of larger social networks that were built on their ruins. In this process, pan-Islamic organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood replaced neighborhood-based Sufi alliances and other small, usually inter-family, social organizations.[193] This was also the case with the village clusters in the Jerusalem region that gave way to direct ties with the city. The three sociopolitical systems (Hebron and the two village clusters headed by the ʻal-Aza and ʻAmru families) dividing Mt. Hebron were also replaced by a regional identity and a single unifying sociopolitical network dominated by the region's urban center, Hebron. All these processes are clearly identifiable in the mid-1940s, and resulted in social integration rather than disintegration.

This process of integration, and the practical connections that created it, had a distinctly regional character, as did the resulting

integrated framework of identity. Regional integration was a stage on the path to national integration, but it was also an obstacle to this end. Efforts made by the national leadership to merge local and regional systems into a unified national framework were generally unsuccessful. Occasionally, the national leadership managed to impose its will but as demonstrated by the collapse of the youth organizations, the drawbacks exceeded any benefits gained. Leaders like Sheikh Ja'bari or Hikmat al-Masri considered the public and the institutions they controlled as their private fiefdoms, to be manipulated as they pleased. This clash between strong local and regional leaders and the national leadership of Haj Amin and his associates, undoubtedly contributed to the latters' failure to create strong national organizations. Instead, functioning local organizations were replaced by a feeble national framework that collapsed before the first shot was fired in the decisive War of 1948.

The only system with national reach that survived most of the Mandate period, albeit inconsistently, was the Husayni network of influence. Even this network, however, did not signal clear intent of establishing institutional foundations that could serve as a solid basis for a future national framework. On the contrary, the Husayni network shaped itself as a neo-patriarchal leadership, which mostly based its mobilization potential on patronage and coercion. Still, the network's conduct, structure and practices were not an inevitable product of the familial order. During the same period in Lebanon, movements such as the Jumayyil family's Phalange or the Pioneers Movement of the Beirut-based Za'im (a family-based leader in Lebanese terminology), Rashid Beidun developed organizations of a popular nature, which were largely supra-familial, although factional.[194] Mufti Haj Amin's centralized approach reflected not only a national perspective but also a rejection of political pluralism; still, he does not bear sole responsibility for this failure. The British contributed to the Palestinian failure to establish viable political institutions but additional issues were at play. One of them was the rapid transformation of the Jerusalem elite from a regional leadership group at the end of World War I to a national leadership. The fast-paced events prevented it from adapting practices appropriate for the national sphere without

reproducing inappropriate features and practices of local political culture (such as the supremacy of domestic and familial interests over broad visions). Furthermore, the Mufti's initiatives against free enterprise and other developments in the institutional sphere were matched with similar actions by local elites, who curtailed the growth of new organizations by gaining control over them and appropriating their resources.

Despite the conservatism that characterized the Husayni network in many areas, the network embodied several novel features of modern governance. To some degree, the leaders that shaped it understood the need to communicate directly with the public rather than rely exclusively on agreements with the local elite groups. More importantly, the network reflected the aspiration to establish a central leadership that controlled all state organs directly, even if its often forceful approach did more harm than good. The Husaynis focused on recruiting influential families but did not limit their efforts to mobilizing the hubs that controlled the old local alliances. Occasionally, they helped dismantle local networks in order to gain direct control over middle level players of the local elites. Through such tactics, the Husaynis presented a model of control that was more centralistic than that of the Ottoman administration, which continued to recognize traditional rural alliances even after the nineteenth century *tanzimat*.

The Mandate years had a far-reaching impact on Palestinian society. The re-networking of Palestine was less the product of a planned British policy but rather the result of inconsistent and occasionally contradicting policies. On one hand, the British acknowledged the familial structure of Palestinian society and consciously or not, reinforced it by perpetuating religious divisions (section 1). The British rule also preserved the familial order by recognizing some of its key institutions such as the *'urf* and supporting its continued role in conflict resolution. The British also supported sociopolitical elites such as the Husaynis, who enjoyed privileges and a significant degree of autonomy. At the same time, the British implemented a contradictory policy that used state agencies and institutions to undermine the authority of local leaders (section 3). Consistently, the British took steps to eradicate the

musha' institution, and established new economic and political channels that circumvented the exchange relations and hierarchical structure of existing social networks. Especially detrimental were British actions in the Palestinian sociopolitical spheres and in particular, their support for the Husaynis until 1937 that greatly upset the balance of power. The imbalance was not created merely by the *majlisiyyun/mu'aridun* dichotomy. As noted in Chapter 1, the division into two camps had existed already under the Ottomans, who manipulated both camps in a manner that preserved the balance between them. By contrast, the British helped the *majlisiyyun* amass power by limiting British supervision. Intentionally or not, the result was debilitating internal tension and instability that was evident in the frequent moves of families from one camp to the other that had not been a characteristic feature of the nineteenth-century division into camps. Clearly, the British did not bear exclusive responsibility for the state of the Palestinian social and political sphere. Nevertheless, the situation was aggravated by their failure to understand this arena, which undermined Palestinian state-building activities and possibly prevented the Palestinians from attaining a better position ahead of the fateful confrontation ahead awaiting them.

CHAPTER 3

South and North: 1947–1967

The UN resolution of November 29, 1947 on the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states launched the most fateful period of all for the Palestinians. The inter-communal war erupted the next day and within six months led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and the destruction of hundreds of towns and villages. The second part of the war commenced on May 15, 1948 with the invasion of neighboring Arab armies, and ended on July 20, 1949, with most of the country in control of the recently established State of Israel. The Gaza Strip remained under Egyptian rule, and the Highlands – the largest Mandate territory that remained outside Israeli domination – were controlled by Transjordan. The response of Highland Palestinians to the new rule ranged largely from hostility around Jerusalem and Mt. Nablus to enthusiastic collaboration in Mt. Hebron. These different attitudes persisted throughout most of the Jordanian rule over the territory that would become known as the West Bank from 1950. They were manifest in the political orientation of Palestinians regarding Jordan and the conflicted inter-Arab sphere, and were clearly evident in processes of social and political integration in the region during the 1950s and 1960s.

As in previous chapters, our analysis begins with the broad regional framework and moves in to the local and intra-family arena. Four main questions guide us as we negotiate these frames of reference: Why did the three Highland regions hold such different attitudes toward the Jordanians? How did regional integration that

began during the Mandate, proceed in this period, if at all? What was the nature of the triangular relationship involving the general public, its leaders and the Jordanian government? Finally, how did this period affect the familial order, and how did this impact Palestinian society and its political culture?

This chapter illustrates how historical inter-regional networks linking each of the three Highland centers to Transjordan since the nineteenth century bred varying attitudes toward the Kingdom that persevered even after 1948, thus proving their resilience. Similarly influential on Palestinian-Jordanian relations in the 1950s and 1960s were two largely rival regional systems – the cohesive "Hebronite alliance" that emerged in the late Mandate period, and the looser northern network that evolved after 1948 and was headed by Nablus politicians. The emergence of these two regional systems marked a new historically significant stage in Palestinian integration, and eroded the superior political status of Jerusalem. Scholarship largely regards Jordanian rule as a period of social and political shock that caused Palestinian stagnation. In reality, however, many groups had took advantage of the new circumstances to realign and transform. At the same time, the Jordanian period reflected the stable hegemony of the familial order, albeit with a caveat. While key institutions and practices of the familial order remained in place during this period, it did not necessarily reflect "traditionalism." Rather, it once again emerged as an evolving system, which adapted to the social and political circumstances of the times. Relations in the public-elite-government triangle exemplified this evolution. During the Jordanian period, relations between the three elements were based on ties that were more reciprocal and balanced than what is commonly considered a traditional hierarchical structure of patrons, brokers and clients. The ability of familial order organizations such as the *'urf* to modify longstanding practices and adopt new power bases offers yet another example of this evolution.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the structure of economic networks in the three Highland centers prior to 1948, and how these would result in different vulnerabilities and strengths that ultimately determined their ability to cope with the repercussions of the war. The second and third sections analyze the historical ties that

linked each of the centers to Transjordan, and their impact on the varying attitudes toward King Abdullah's aspirations in Palestine, before and during the War of 1948. The fourth section of this chapter discusses the ties between the West Bank public and its leaders, as well as the relations between these leaders and the Jordanian government. Section five examines the "Hebronite alliance" and how it evolved as a powerful social, economic and political network that expanded its control to Jerusalem. In the sixth section I discuss the political rivalry between the two regional networks that divided the West Bank into respective spheres of influence. Section seven compares the development of the al-Ja'bari and al-Masri families' networks of influence during the Jordanian period.

HIGHLAND NETWORKS AND THE OUTCOME OF THE WAR OF 1948

The structure and strength of the socioeconomic networks in the three Highland centers of Palestine on the eve of the War of 1948 would have significant impact on the condition of each region at the end of the war. In general, the Highlands were less devastated by the war than other parts of Palestine. Most of the region remained outside Israeli control, and the majority of its population was not displaced. Nonetheless, the area was not immune to the effects of the war.

The military confrontation dealt the Jerusalem and Nablus regions a harsh blow. Numerous villages along the road climbing from the city of Ramleh to Jerusalem were destroyed, and all Arab neighborhoods in the west and south parts of Jerusalem were occupied. Many refugees abandoned the area, and as many as 70,000 displaced persons concentrated in the Jerusalem region.[1] Among those leaving the area were most of Jerusalem's urban leadership,[2] who experienced the war in person due to the fierce battles that took place in the city since 1947. Around Mt. Nablus, many had lost property, which remained on the other side of the ceasefire lines, and the region was flooded with tens of thousands of refugees. Nablus itself nearly doubled in population between 1946 and 1952 (from 23,250 to 42,500). Many of the displaced concentrated in refugee camps established outside the city but the crisis was felt by all, from

the many who remained without work to powerful families that lost lands and property.[3]

For Jerusalem and Mt. Nablus, one of the war's most disastrous results was the elimination of the socioeconomic networks that linked them to the coastal cities and the West in general during the Mandate period. In the 1940s, the HIS estimated that 40,000 of the 69,000 employed Palestinians in the coastal cities were originally Highland residents (19,000 worked in private industries and another 50,000 were government employees). According to British estimates, of the total Highlands population – 450,000 excluding refugees – 120,000 had lost jobs in industry and services, or as a result of losing their land.[4] It would take Jerusalem seven years to recover from the economic crisis it suffered as a result of the war.[5] In Nablus, the situation was equally grave, as its economy was apparently even more dependent than Jerusalem on the income from its émigrés in the coastal centers. For example, a British decision in 1943 to cancel government projects in Haifa had slowed down the Nablus economy, albeit temporarily. The loss of its emigration networks in 1948, however, dealt Nablus a decidedly harsher blow. Commerce too was debilitated throughout the Mt. Nablus region, as exporters and merchants lost access to the seaports and other gateways to the west.[6]

Still, the effects of the war were not exclusively detrimental. The occupation of the coastal cities offered Nablus an opportunity to recover its late-Ottoman position as the major economic and administrative hub of the northern West Bank. Under Jordanian rule, Nablus had once again become a center for leading merchants and rose to the position of district capital, on equal footing with Hebron and Jerusalem. Nablus managed the economic and administrative activities in the northern West Bank, and channeled them eastward,[7] and swiftly translated its economic power into considerable political clout that strengthened the city's elite.

The Mt. Hebron region suffered less damage than the other two Highland centers.[8] It took in a relatively small number of refugees in the two small camps of al-ʻArub and al-Fawar, without dramatically straining the local economy. The war did sever Mt. Hebron from its commercial and smuggling routes that ran through the Israeli Negev

to Egypt.[9] However, the region still retained its main economic and social network ties to the north and east, and unlike other centers, had little connection to the west to lose. In some cases, the war even allowed Mt. Hebron networks to expand, bolstering local players. One such example is the *Khalwatiyya*, a Sufi order that like other *tariqa*s was weakened after World War I but remained extant. The War of 1948 had destroyed the *Khalwatiyya* networks that connected Hebron to west Palestine. However, new *Khalwatiyya*-based networks were reinstated in the East Bank (and the Gaza Strip), allowing the Hebronite Qawasmeh and Sharif families that led the order, to develop new and strong ties to Transjordan.[10]

WEST AND EAST

The integration that began in Mt. Hebron of the early 1940s intensified as the scheduled British departure drew near. The Mt. Hebron National Committee – the local coordinator for the Arab Higher Committee's (AHC) activities in the region – was reinstated in November 1947. In practice, the Hebron National Committee really focused on coordinating relations between the region's dominant families, under the undisputed leadership of Sheikh Ja'bari.[11] In his memoirs, the Sheikh wrote that he was concerned the impending war would cause anarchy in Mt. Hebron, so he used the Committee as a means of preserving unity in the region.[12] This was a typical example of how institutional organizations became assimilated in the familial order, a practice that was not limited to Mt. Hebron. For example, the Holy Jihad Army militia (*Jaysh al-Jihad al-Muqadas*), which the Husaynis established in the Jerusalem area – with branches in Jaffa and the Galilee, numbered around 4,500 – was based more on family and inter-family hierarchies than pure military merit.[13] This pattern was also evident in the social profile of the candidates selected by the National Committee of Jerusalem in March 1948 for officers' training in Damascus, all of whom were members of the local urban elite families.[14] Ja'bari's conduct was not unusual when he succeeded in steering the Hebron National Committee to achieve goals he deemed locally important but did not necessarily correspond with those of the AHC.

Since the 1920s, Emir Abdullah of Transjordan maintained extensive ties with the main groups in Palestinian society and politics. In particular, the Mt. Hebron elite played a key role in achieving the Emir's aspirations to extend his rule to Palestinian territory. Such assistance was not out of line with the general pro-Hashemite climate in Mt. Hebron,[15] which was based on a broad range of longstanding ties across the River Jordan. Nearly every family around Mt. Hebron had a branch in Transjordan, connected by marriage and business ties.[16] A prominent example of such connections was the Transjordanian al-Majali family, originally from the Hebronite Tamimi clan. A protracted blood feud between the Tamimis and the al-Akrad clan[17] drove the Majalis to leave Hebron for the area of Karak in 1724. By the early twentieth century, the Majalis had become a central pillar of support for the Jordanian royal family.[18]

During the Mandate years, the Hebronite community in Transjordan played a dominant role in the country's economy and attracted Hebronites who preferred to emigrate to Transjordan rather than to the coastal cities. In 1948, the Hebronite community in Transjordan was estimated to number between 12,000 and 20,000, accounting for 3–5 per cent of the kingdom's total population.[19] Hebronites were treated more favorably than other Palestinian immigrants both by Transjordanian society and government.[20] The special relations between the two regions were also evident in sociocultural aspects of life, where involvement called for a high degree of trust. In 1938, for example, the exiled Haj Amin al-Husayni asked Mithqal al-Fayiz, who led the confederation of the Transjordanian Bani Sakhr tribes linked to Mt. Hebron, to arbitrate in a local blood feud.[21] This indicated the good standing of Transjordanian actors in Mt. Hebron, as well as the local weakness of the Husaynis and *majlisiyyun*, who needed external mediation.

The ties between Mt. Hebron and Transjordan also had a political aspect. From the mid-1930s, both regions frequently hosted mutual delegations,[22] allowing Mt. Hebron leaders to tighten their ties with the senior military, political and social figures in Transjordan.[23] The affinity of Mt. Hebron residents for Transjordan and Abdullah was expressed in different ways. When Abdullah visited Mt. Hebron in

FIGURE 3.1 Visit of Emir Abdullah in Hebron, 1936 (Ja'bari is second from the right).

1936, 1943 and 1946, he received a warm welcome from the residents crowding the route of his entourage.[24] A letter written by a Palestinian in 1938 described the long line at the local post office where Hebronites queued up to send holiday greetings to the Emir.[25] The Husaynis of Jerusalem were concerned by these continuous historical ties. By the mid-1930s, they had sent threatening letters to local leaders, including Sheikh Ja'bari, who was an ardent supporter of Abdullah, despite his formal affiliation with the Husayni party.[26]

Historically, Transjordan and Mt. Nablus were also linked through extensive ties but these were less developed during the years in question. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the Sanjak of Nablus included the district of Balqa' in northern Transjordan. In the seventeenth century, numerous Nablus families immigrated to this district and settled in Irbid and in Salt, which was a twin city of sorts with Nablus due to strong social and economic relations. Some families such as the Tuqans, Nabulsis and Nimrs even became part of the local elites.[27] As previously noted, Nablus was an important economic hub for Transjordan until the early nineteenth century. However, in the late Ottoman period, ties between the two regions diminished gradually as more accessible alternatives emerged.

The coastal cities attracted most of Nablus' economic and social networks. A 1930s British initiative for road development aimed to tighten the connections between Mt. Nablus and Transjordan. By the time it was implemented in the 1950s, however, the entire area was under Jordanian control anyway.[28]

The complex political relationship between Abdullah and the Mt. Nablus region largely mirrored the evolution of these various social and economic ties. Abdullah had to work much harder in the Mt. Nablus region than he did around Mt. Hebron. Mt. Nablus was a stronghold of some of his opponents, who typically identified with al-Istiqlal and the *majlisiyyun*. Even Abdullah's supporters in this region did not always agree with his plans, such as annexing Palestine to Transjordan. Aware of the ambivalent relationship, Abdullah's men were often mistrustful of Nablus and even of the Transjordan communities of Nablusi origin.[29]

One demonstration of the complex relations between Mt. Nablus and Transjordan took place following the Peel Commission Report, published in July 1937. The report called to partition Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab zone that will be annexed to Transjordan. The Husaynis rejected these recommendations, and Abdullah's involvement in the committee's discussions[30] seriously upset relations between the Emir and Haj Amin. In order to exert domestic pressure on Abdullah, the Mufti tried to incite tribesmen in Salt and in the southern part of the Hashemite emirate. Abdullah responded with a propaganda campaign of his own. His efforts included the rural environs of Mt. Nablus, where *majlisiyyun* issued *fatwa*s (religious rulings) against the Emir, denouncing him as an infidel for consenting to the partition. Abdullah retaliated with a *fatwa* by Sheikh As'ad Shuqairy – the Qadi of Acre – that stressed the Emir's legitimacy as a descendent of the Prophet.[31] Despite Abdullah's efforts, many Mt. Nablus villagers remained adamantly opposed to annexation to Transjordan, a British survey indicated.[32] The tension between the parties eased only in June 1938, when Abdullah intervened with the British authorities for the release of Palestinian leaders arrested when the AHC was dissolved in October 1937.[33]

The Emir's staunchest ally in the Mt. Nablus region was Suleiman Tuqan, who was mayor of Nablus and the deputy of Ragheb

Nashashibi in the *mu'aridun*'s Defense Party, which most of his family belonged to.[34] According to HIS, Tuqan told Harold Macmillan, the British Under-Secretary of State and War and the Colonies in 1943 that "Our main demands are the realization of the White Paper [. . .] and to include our country in the anticipated Arab federation [unification with Transjordan]."[35] However, while many of Abdullah's supporters in Nablus considered him an important ally against the Husaynis, they did not necessarily identify with his vision of Arab unification. In March 1942, it became known that Abdullah planned to establish a pan-Arab party with public figures from several Arab countries. Tuqan favored the initiative but other senior *mu'aridun* from Mt. Nablus, such as the leaders of the al-Masri family, were concerned the new party would erode their own influence. Abdullah increased his pressure and sent them a letter demanding their cooperation.[36]

AT WAR

The Palestinian contribution to the war effort after the May 15 invasion of Arab armies is commonly considered insignificant, especially in the context of the Transjordanian Arab Legion's efforts in Jerusalem, Gush Etzion and other areas, and King Abdullah's moves in the pan-Arab arena and his contacts with the Zionist Movement.[37] However, the developments examined below highlight the role of Palestinian individuals and groups in shaping the conditions that would ultimately influence the course of the war.

When the war erupted, the Mt. Hebron leaders and particularly Sheikh Ja'bari were central to Abdullah's military and diplomatic efforts to annex sections of Palestine. Initially, Mt. Hebron's support for Transjordan aimed to block the Husayni-led Holy Jihad militia trying to infiltrate the area. In early 1947, Ja'bari had told an informer of the HIS of his plan to lead a Mt. Hebron revolt against the Husayni leadership.[38] In March 1948, Ismail Safwat, head of the Arab League's Military Committee, asked Abdullah to instruct Ja'bari to permit 'Abd al-Qader al-Husayni to recruit combatants for his Holy Jihad Army. Until then, 'Abd al-Qader encountered what the HIS defined as grassroots rejection – a phenomenon already familiar to him from

the 1936 revolt.[39] Safwat's request was denied. In April, the HIS reported that the Arab Central Command (spanning from Herzliya-Qalqiliya in the north to Jura-Hebron in the south) remained divided between the Jerusalem and Hebron regions due to "its [Mt. Hebron] clear orientation in support of the Transjordanian king."[40] Hebronite reluctance to enlist in the Holy Jihad militias did not reflect misgivings about joining the fighting, they simply preferred to do so alongside Abdullah. Hebronite forces played a key role in several battles such as those of Bayt Jibrin and Gush Etzion (and mainly in Kfar Etzion on May 13, 1948), where they fought together with the Arab Legion forces.[41]

This support of Transjordan was also manifest on other levels. In May 1948, Mt. Hebron was occupied by an Egyptian brigade and became the site of a confrontation with the smaller Transjordanian force. Both countries nominated governors and set out to win the support of the locals.[42] Several public figures from the region who traditionally identified with the *majlisiyyun* tried to aid the Egyptians and the Husaynis, their local allies.[43] However, relations with the local population deteriorated quickly and fierce clashes erupted in July when the Egyptians attempted to collect taxes.[44] On August 10, Transjordan announced plans to reinstate its forces in Mt. Hebron after obtaining consent from Ja'bari, the region's leader.[45] Egyptian-Husayni pressure on Ja'bari increased and two days after the announcement, he appeared to agree to recruit 1,000 Mt. Hebron residents for the Holy Jihad militia.[46] However, the Egyptians and the Husaynis quickly understood the sheik's promise was an empty one and that he was still working on Abdullah's behalf. Although the Egyptian governor had cautioned Ja'bari not to meddle in politics, on August 16 the Holy Jihad headquarters reported to Mufti Haj Amin that the sheikh was continuing to mislead the Egyptians. The Mufti apparently ordered action to be taken against Ja'bari, and the Holy Jihad headquarters reported that Ja'bari fled toward the Arab Legion forces the very same day.[47] At Abdullah's intervention,[48] Ja'bari returned to Mt. Hebron several days later and reconciled with the Egyptians.[49] In October, the Egyptian dominance in Mt. Hebron came to an end with the Israeli Yoav Operation that cut off supplies to the Egyptian forces and left

them dependent on Abdullah. In April 1949, the King instructed them to leave the region.[50]

Around Jerusalem and Mt. Nablus, cooperation with Transjordan was shaped by an entirely different constellation of events. Said Aburish, a young boy from the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem during the war, later wrote:

> There were innumerable incidents of violence between the Palestinians and Jordanians, for the Palestinians [in Jerusalem area] thought the Jordanians crude Bedouin mercenaries in the service of a corrupt government. They joked about their dialect, their homosexual tendencies and their demands in restaurants that green salad should be heated up. On the other hand, the Jordanians resented the Palestinians and would secretly say that they deserved everything they got because they had sold land to the Jews.[51]

In Mt. Nablus to the north, the Mountain of Fire loomed as the heartbeat of national sentiment. In July 1948, the IDF defeated the small Arab Legion force that defended the enclave of Ramleh and Lydda, displacing 30,000–45,000 of the cities' residents. The enclave's fall triggered unprecedented mass demonstrations from Nablus to Amman throughout the summer. In Amman, resident Palestinians and newly arrived refugees protested the Legion's "delivering Lydda and Ramleh to the Jews." Arab Legion commander John Bagot Glubb, drew the main ire of the crowds, which spat and booed at him during a tour of Palestinian villages in the northern highlands. In Nablus, the masses even drove out Transjordanian governor Ibrahim Pasha al-Hashem in September. Only the intervention of Iraqi forces in the region put an end to the heated demonstrations.[52]

This opposition did not check Abdullah's plan. After helping Transjordan's military effort, pro-Hashemite Palestinian leaders assisted Abdullah by granting official political approval to annexing the Highlands. From their base in Cairo, Haj Amin and his loyalists in the AHC tried to block the annexation and on October 1, 1948 announced the establishment of the "All-Palestine Government." The pro-Hashemite Palestinian leadership immediately opposed the move and on the same day convened "The First Palestinian Congress" in Amman and declared the All-Palestinian Government illegal.[53] Two months later, a convention to reach understandings on the

future relations between the Palestinians and Transjordan met in Jericho.[54] Sheikh Ja'bari, who arrived in a show of force with an entourage of 200 armed men, was elected president of the convention.[55] He urged participants to place the Palestinian problem in Abdullah's hands and unite with Transjordan. Several delegates, including Suleiman Taji al-Faruqi of Ramleh and Sa'ad al-Din al-'Alami of Jerusalem, tried to call for some degree of Palestinian independence, but the adopted resolutions represented a victory for Ja'bari's position.[56] Now all that remained was to wait for the Jordanian Parliament to approve the annexation of the Palestinian Highlands.

The developments preceding the war, and more so those that occurred during the war, underscore the impact of longstanding horizontal ties between Transjordan and the Highlands on the different Highland positions toward Abdullah's annexation plans. The regions of Jerusalem and Nablus, where ties with Transjordan had loosened during the nineteenth century and Mandate years, were reserved in their approach towards Abdullah and Transjordanians, if not patronizing and hostile. In these areas, annexation to Jordan was widely regarded as a cultural and political setback, and subjugation to a backward Bedouin rule and people.[57] In contrast, Mt. Hebron largely favored Transjordan – from the general public that gathered en masse to greet Abdullah on his visits, to the local elite that had close ties with the King for at least a decade before the war. As mentioned, the positive attitude of Mt. Hebron residents was reciprocated with a favorable approach on part of Transjordan.

These good relations reflected a continuity of Mt. Hebron's eastward-looking social and economic networks from the Mandate period. However, the relations also had important sociocultural aspects. Unlike Jerusalem and Nablus, Mt. Hebron did not consider Transjordan's Bedouin identity a liability or a shortcoming, but the opposite. As seen in Chapter 1, the Bedouin heritage attributed to Highland villagers enhanced their image in the eyes of the Bedouins with whom they had numerous social and commercial ties. The urban population of Hebron included families of Bedouin origin and also regarded the association favorably. Hebron's version of

customary law, *shariy'at al-Khalil*, gained its prestige from being perceived as a more genuine reflection of Bedouin legal expertise (*haq al-'Arab*) than any other version of *'urf*. Additional circles of identity contributed to the favorable relations between Transjordan and Mt. Hebron, and no one commanded multiple identities more skillfully than Sheikh Ja'bari. Like other contemporaries, Ja'bari had a floating identity that shifted between various centers.[58] Pan-Islamic identity was dominant in his worldview, although a general Arab identity also held an important place. Ja'bari's overall actions suggest that he certainly regarded himself as Palestinian insofar as geographic boundaries were concerned. However, he did not see this as a contradiction to the idea of a supra-national framework. Mt. Hebron's highly developed ties with Transjordan made the latter the natural partner for such unification. To those used to viewing the two regions as a single territory, the boundaries between Palestine and Transjordan were still new and artificial. Indeed, Karak was closer to Mt. Hebron than Haifa or Jaffa in many respects.

Another, more specific, reason for the pro-Hashemite attitude of the Mt. Hebron elite and other Palestinian figures was that many lacked faith in the viability of a separate Palestinian entity.[59] Ja'bari, the most articulate and candid of the pro-Hashemites, listed the reasons for this in his address to the Jericho Convention. He blamed the British, the Zionist Movement and the Husaynis, but also criticized Palestinian society's inability to unite beyond the local levels of the village or the city.[60] In response to criticism over the Jericho Convention and the impending annexation, Ja'bari told Egypt's King Farouk, "Let us, the inhabitants of Palestine, save for ourselves, in a peaceful manner, at least what remains of our country."[61] Ja'bari argued that without the promise of unification, Abdullah would have withdrawn from the territories he occupied, thereby allowing Jewish forces to capture them.[62] This was a widespread concern shared by many Palestinians, who, after April 1948, viewed Abdullah as their sole protector from the advancing Jewish forces.[63] Nonetheless, it is difficult to accept the claim that the actions of Ja'bari and other Palestinians in support of unification stemmed from conclusions they drew in the course of the war, as some of them tried to argue. Many Palestinian advocates of

annexation, such as Suleiman Tuqan, were long-time supporters of Abdullah, since before the war.[64] At a 1950 reception Ja'bari held for the King in Hebron the sheikh announced that, "Hebron was one of the first Palestinian cities to advocate Palestinian-Jordanian unification, even as early as 1936 . . . It was its consistent position up to the Jericho Convention . . ."[65]

PUBLIC-LEADERSHIP GOVERNMENT

On April 24, 1950, the Jordanian Parliament voted to annex the Palestinian Highlands, to be known thereafter as the West Bank. The efforts of Abdullah and the pro-Hashemite Palestinian leadership had concluded successfully, and now came the time to reap the benefits of loyalty. The new Jordanian administration began to allocate privileges to its allies but also to other Palestinian leaders who had not demonstrated the same degree of loyalty before 1948. Both groups now had to justify their continued leadership to their shocked public. The catastrophic consequences (*Nakba*) of the War of 1948 for the Palestinians, and other challenges that emerged in the 1950s, rendered this a difficult undertaking. Since the mid-1950s, Egyptian President Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser presented his own popular vision of pan-Arab unification. Nasser's pan-Arabism offered not only practical and conceptual links to major supra-familial networks but also a model for ousting the family-based elites that still dominated most of the Fertile Crescent.

Two scholarly notions prevail regarding the Jordanian period. One is that the status of the Palestinian elite was largely dependent on relations with the government, which took a direct approach in governing the West Bank and preferred a convenient "traditional" leadership rather than a modern ideological one. The second notion is that the Palestinian elite's continued ability to lead depended on a stable patronage system.[66] However, actors in the Palestinian sociopolitical system would respond to the new reality in ways that would undermine both assumptions.

The story of Sheikh Ja'bari sheds light on both aspects. Upon annexing the West Bank to Jordan, Abdullah appointed Ja'bari as member of the Senate. However, the Sheikh's status was not solely

dependent on his personal ties: neither the assassination of the King in July 1951 nor the crowning of King Husayn in 1953 affected his status and he continued to hold ministerial and senate positions until 1967, all while serving as Hebron's Mayor.[67] His institutional power helped him maintain patronage and other ties with the public, alongside other ties. As mayor, he controlled municipal council appointments and exercised greater control than other West Bank mayors. Although he was required to recommend municipal appointments to the Minister of Interior, the latter would approve the nominations almost automatically.[68] As a minister, Ja'bari's actions led observers to describe him as corrupt,[69] but his conduct appears to have been within the conventional norms of the *wasta* (brokering) institution of Jordanian and other Middle Eastern countries' political culture.[70] Thus, Ja'bari was an impressive example of a leader who drew his strength from mediating between the public and the state's resources. At the same time, his relations with the Jordanians were rather unique, compared to most Palestinian officials.[71] The latter were extremely limited in their ability to amass power by through mediation of government resources, as tight, centralized Jordanian supervision restricted their power to award privileges or impose sanctions. The mayor of Tulkarem, for example, was almost dismissed in 1964 when he used central government powers to fire a local tax collector. Even mayors were obliged to request transit permits from the Jordanian district governor, and only few enjoyed the privileges that Ja'bari did, including exemption from transit permits.[72]

Against the backdrop of the so-called Arab Cold War in the 1950s and 1960s, between the camp of Arab monarchies and the "progressive" states led by Egypt, many Mt. Hebron leaders identified with the conservative monarchic camp, Ja'bari included.[73] This approach strengthened his standing with Jordan's royal family and helped him establish ties with monarchist Iraq, Gulf sheikhdoms – the pre-independance Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.[74] In November 1957, with Jordan challenged by talk of Syrian-Egyptian unification, the Sheikh headed the Hebron Convention. Attended by 10,000 participants, the convention expressed support for Husayn and denounced Egypt's attempts to undermine political stability in Jordan.[75] In his capacity as a religious leader, Ja'bari also attended an

inter-Arab ‘*ulama* convention of May 1958 that emphasized the Hashemites’ legitimacy to rule as descendants of the Prophet, and condemned the Egyptian attacks against them.[76]

Ja‘bari’s pro-Hashemite orientation was driven by two main motives. First, he represented a large conservative group of Mt. Hebron residents who were not Nasser followers and largely sympathized with the Hashemites.[77] Broad support for Ja‘bari’s moves such as the Hebron Convention seemed to confirm his pro-Hashemite stance, as did the difficulty of left-wing parties such as Baath or communists to gain foothold in the region. While these obstacles appeared to be objective, Ja‘bari certainly contributed to them. In the 1960s, he ruled that communists were not Muslims and therefore prohibited from bequeathing property upon their death.[78] Such rulings apparently added to other difficulties the Communist party encountered in efforts to establish itself in the religious, conservative region of Mt. Hebron.[79] In addition, Ja‘bari’s continued pursuit of political power obliged him to exhibit unreserved loyalty to the royal house. The goals of other family organizations did not necessarily lead to a similar strategy. As we shall see, many organizations preferred to shilly-shally in the inter-Arab sphere.

In the northern West Bank, the al-Masris adopted a different approach to the new reality. The British withdrawal and the subsequent War of 1948 ended the family’s profitable dealings with the British army, and destroyed its western trade networks. Although the al-Masris lost fewer lands than others, the war had left its mark.[80] Heavy reliance on the local market proved detrimental to the family’s business, and the local depression forced the al-Masris to shutter their match factory in 1948.[81]

The al-Masris’ family organization, which remained essentially economically-driven, was required to make adjustments. The first steps taken by Ma‘azuz, Nashat and Nai‘f (three of the four family leaders) was to redirect industrial operations towards export, in order to reduce reliance on the local economy. A new oil-processing plant geared toward export was a direct result of this re-orientation of the family’s commercial networks. Opened in the early 1950s, the plant became the family’s flagship enterprise, as well as the source

of livelihood for hundreds of employees from and around Nablus. It was still the West Bank's largest employer in the late 1970s.[82]

Beside economic constraints, the al-Masris were further challenged by the need to deal with two contradictory players – the Jordanian government, which could easily affect the family business, and Mt. Nablus' restive population, which did not care much for the Hashemites. The aftermath of 1948 served fertile ground for leftist movements with a radical agenda, first and foremost the Communist party, the Baath and the Arab Nationalists (Qawmiyun al-Arab).[83] These movements posed a twofold challenge for the elite families. First, they positioned themselves as the hardcore opposition to Jordan. Their support of the "progressive" countries (Egypt, Syria and from 1958 also Iraq) in the 1950s was favorably received, especially in the northern West Bank. In addition, elements within these movements were critical of the elites, even if they expressed this indirectly. In 1949, for example, the Communist party published manifests against the Pro-Jordanians and the "traitorous" economic interests of the merchants and landowners.[84] For its part, the Baath attacked the political culture of patronage relations, which it attributed to the Jordanians.[85] Nonetheless, there was more to this reality than a dichotomous division between the "traditional" leadership and the "radical" camp. As shall be seen later, most leftist activists came from the elite families, which had their own grievances against the Jordanians for discriminating against the West Bank in general, and their own economic interests in particular. These frustrations built up during the first five years of Jordanian rule and marred the kingdom's relations with much of the West Bank's economic and political elite.[86]

Beyond the local considerations of Mt. Nablus, the inter-Arab arena posed yet another challenge. Like many Nablus-based merchants, the al-Masris had decades-old ties with Egypt, primarily due to the export of soap from Nablus.[87] With Nasser's rise to power, these ties deepened further and acquired additional dimensions, thanks to Hikmat al-Masri's friendship with the Egyptian president. This relationship stood in marked contrast to the adversity between Jordan and Egypt and like other challenges the family faced, obliged its leaders to navigate carefully in a sea of hostile forces.

Consequently, the family preferred to maintain as many ties as possible, including weak ones, without sacrificing any to conflicting interests.

Hikmat, the al-Masris' most prominent actor in the political sphere, was elected to the parliament in 1950. In the early 1950s, he supported the government and was rewarded with senior appointments. By 1957, he had served as speaker of parliament twice, and was the Minister of Agriculture as well as a member in various governmental agencies.[88] Concurrently, in 1954 he joined the National Socialist Party (NSP), whose name obscured mild intentions to work toward the social and political agenda that left-wing movements promoted. Under the leadership of Suleiman Nabulsi, the NSP offered an alternative to the left-wing opposition movements that was more moderate in its criticism of the Hashemites.[89] The party was attuned to public opinion and mindful of the special relations several families had with Egypt to the point. At the same time, however, it was careful to contain friction with Jordan and avoid an all-out confrontation. This balance enabled the party to attract various politicians, including rivals. In Nablus, for example, members included figures from the al-Masri and the Shak'a families, which headed the two camps that divided the region since the early Jordanian period.[90] This pattern recurred in Jerusalem, where party members included rivals Anwar al-Khatib and Anwar Nuseibeh.

The NSP illustrates a phenomenon that prevailed in the West Bank sociopolitical arena during the Jordanian period. The party was a weak formal network that did not represent the region's genuine, informal sociopolitical alignments. An American diplomat who studied the NSP argued that "It isn't really a party, but a group of individuals who share certain perspectives on how Jordan should be ruled."[91] Hikmat was a typical example. He cared little for the party's socialist agenda and remained a capitalist who never concealed his reservations about communism.[92] However, choosing the party as a compromise, as did Hikmat and others, proved a risky option. Jordan became wary of Hikmat in1955, when he called for a union with Egypt, against the backdrop of unrest stirred by the Baghdad Pact.[93] As speaker of parliament in 1957, he played a key role in events surrounding the dramatic dismissal of Suleiman Nabulsi's

government, which had called Jordan to divorce western powers and join the Egypt-Syria axis. In addition to the sacking of Nabulsi's government, King Husayn placed the West Bank under military rule and outlawed opposition activities; Hikmat himself was placed under surveillance and was repeatedly arrested.[94] Matters improved only in the early 1960s, when Jordan adopted a more favorable state investment policy toward the West Bank This move placated the Mt. Nablus elite and tempered its criticism, and eased tensions between Jordan and Egypt. Consequently, the Hashemites appointed moderate opposition members such as Hikmat al-Masri, Qadri Tuqan and Anwar Nuseibeh to government positions, thus securing their cooperation.[95]

Focusing exclusively on Hikmat's institutional and official status paints an incomplete picture of the al-Masris, as Hikmat represented only the feisty oppositionist side of the family that appealed to the public in Mt. Nablus and Egypt. To the Jordanians and their allies, however, the al-Masris, showed a more moderate face. Hikmat's cousin Ma'azuz, one of the family's four leaders, was also a member of the pro-Nasserite National Socialist party. Nonetheless, he enjoyed easy access to Amman as chairman of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce and by virtue of his ties with senior Jordanian officials including King Husayn. Ma'azuz wasn't the only al-Masri to hold a position in the Jordanian government. One nephew, Wail, served in the Foreign Ministry; another, Qays, worked at the Ministry of Agriculture. Wasfi, a first cousin of the al-Masri leadership quartet, was president of the Nablus District Court from 1952 to 1965.[96] In addition to personal and institutional ties, the al-Masris forged powerful economic connections with the government. The oil factory, for example, was established with government aid, in exchange for 40 per cent of the shares.[97] The diverse ties between the al-Masris and the Hashemites tempered the adverse effect of Hikmat's political activity and based the relations on long-term mutual interests. These ties guaranteed stability, and ultimately proved more resilient than those of Sheikh Ja'bari.

Although different in nature, the Hashemites' relations with both the openly cooperative Ja'baris and the more reserved al-Masris lead

to the same conclusion that the significance of Jordan's role in preserving the status of Palestine's elites has been overstated. First, as previously noted, any institutional authority the Hashemites granted the elite was limited, and subject to close and rigid regulation. It follows, then, that institutional power could not have been a major asset in patronage relations, even if one accepts the mistaken notion that these relations were be-all and end-all. Second, Jordan needed the public influence of the Palestinian elite. This is precisely the reason it strived to co-opt leaders such as Hikmat al-Masri and others, even though they were politically inconvenient allies. Indeed, a sizeable portion of the West Bank elites did not behave as if their local influence depended on good relations with the government. In the Mt. Nablus area, opposition to the Hashemites even had a positive effect on the elites' image. Undoubtedly, Ja'bari's genuine social influence and reputation in Mt. Hebron made him an important Jordanian asset. There is no reason to believe that his success as an arbitrator who ended fierce blood feuds was merely an instrumental role devoid of prestige or public appreciation. Also, his conservative political opinions appeared to represent those of the general public around Mt. Hebron, at least until the early 1960s.[98] Ja'bari's status was based on numerous bases of support and like other politicians, he maintained complex relations with his public, that included patronage, political and social ties.

A closer view of the relations between the West Bank public and its leaders, on one hand, and those between these leaders and Jordan, on the other, suggests these were more reciprocal in nature, and carried mutual benefits for all sides, than previously believed. The elite's ability to deal with the government and at the same time maintain its public influence did not depend strictly on patronage but rather the ability to effectively manage all its bases of support. The more numerous, diverse and current a family's bases of support, the less important its relations with the government were. Nonetheless, the elite families clearly stood to gain from good relations with the Hashemites. On this matter one should distinguish between a family's relations with the royal house and its relations with specific governments; this was true even of genuine pro-Hashemites such as Ja'bari.[99] An individual's affiliation with the royal house was

determined less by his formal party membership and more by his practical actions and informal ties. One of the most compelling examples of the power of informal networks during the Jordanian period is the "Hebronite alliance."

THE HEBRONITE ALLIANCE

As shown in Chapter 2, social integration in Mt. Hebron in the 1940s was sustained by independent processes that were still ongoing in the region and throughout the Highlands in general. The collapse of the two camps that had long divided rural society allowed the urban elite, led by Ja'bari, to enter the rural arena and assume leadership of the entire Mt. Hebron region within a few short years. At the same time, there were practical manifestations of Mt. Hebron based identities, the most prominent of which was the emergence of a powerful regional coalition I shall call the "Hebronite alliance." It should be emphasized that most members and observers of the Hebronite alliance probably use the simple term *al-Khalayla* (the Hebronites) to address it.

The impact of the Hebronite alliance stemmed from the regional consolidation of the Mandate period and extended far beyond the boundaries of Mt. Hebron during the Jordanian period. The alliance offers extensive evidence of the continuity of the familial order, and in some respects, illustrates its growing power. At the same time, the alliance also reflects the adaptations required for the survival of the familial order as a relevant phenomenon attuned to the needs of its time.

The Hebronite alliance was established as a regional network, which was initially based on families from the city of Hebron and gradually extended to the entire Mt. Hebron region. With Sheikh Ja'bari as its primary architect, the alliance originally functioned as the major support base for promoting the Sheikh's own interests and those of his family. However, the alliance could not have survived on such a narrow platform. The key to the network's power was twofold: it genuinely reflected the region's political, cultural, economic and social profile in the late Mandate period, and catered to the varied interests of its members. Mt. Hebron was a peripheral, religiously

homogeneous region, where patriarchal structures facilitated control through agreements among family leaders. The Mandate period did see some development such as improved education[100] but not the emergence of a significant group that was not based on a familial foundation. The region's clans continued to extend their alliances through familiar patterns, such as assimilating smaller families into larger ones.[101] The clans' decision making centers, the *diwans*, continued to determine the families' policy and action,[102] and often mobilized their members to collective action in the public sphere.[103] In other words, the Hebronite alliance was simply an elaborate expression of social practices that had long existed on a smaller scale.

An important study argued that "there is no empirical evidence of great family alliances among the Palestinians."[104] Nevertheless, such alliances did exist, at least since the later centuries of the Ottoman era. Two types of large inter-familial alliances were historically common in Palestine in general and in the Mt. Hebron region in particular (the principle of parallel structure is at play). The first was known as *saf* ("line") and was based on both true and fictitious kinship relations. Historically, this term was used to describe alliances based on *Qays* or *Yaman* origin, such as the nineteenth-century coalitions that competed and sometimes struggled with each other (Chapter 1). However, as these myths became outmoded, *saf* came to refer mostly to urban alliances grounded in kinship ties. Like other alliances, a *saf* was the result of pragmatic calculations, but kinship claims lent it cohesion.[105] The Hebronite alliance belonged to the second type of alliance, known as *'usba* ("group"). In contrast to a *saf*, an *'usba* united multiple kinship groups that retained their separate genealogical – and in some cases, political – identities.[106] The main goal of forming an *'usba* was to protect and promote the various interests of its members, including seemingly contradictory ones. This was the *raison d'être* of the Hebronite alliance and its importance to its constituent groups from the late Mandate era through the Jordanian period. For the elite families, the alliance promoted political and economic aspirations and allowed them to divvy up resources; for the ordinary families, the alliance regulated social, economic, and legal relations. For both groups, the alliance facilitated acclimation when their members migrated from Mt. Hebron to new locations.

Zilberman described the Hebronite alliance as a "single mutual guarantee group," a term used in the Palestinian context to describe *khams* – five generations of a common ancestor.[107] Typically, the guarantees binding *khams* members were ones of mutual assistance and collective responsibility, most notably in the context of blood feuds. Just as the *khams* would collectively demand what it believed were its rights from another mutual guarantee group, so too were *khams* members obliged to bear responsibility for their own members' actions.[108] Clearly, the Hebronite alliance could not be run on the same principles because of its sheer size.[109] Therefore, the alliance shaped its own brand of mutual guarantee, which was grounded in a consensual mechanism for resolving disputes, and regulating distribution of resources.[110] Largely anchored in the customary law used throughout Palestine, in the Mt. Hebron area this arrangement was particularly developed. Sheikh Ja'bari's position as the region's supreme arbitrator from the 1940s onward reflected the centrality of *'urf* to both the Hebronite alliance and society at large.

The Hebronite alliance was formed as a confederate system that accommodated multiple political tendencies. During the 1940s, for example, the alliance included both mu'aridun and *majlisiyyun* families. This pluralism would extend into the Jordanian period too, even allowing some degree of competition in municipal and parliamentary elections. Still, at least one unspoken rule was honored: the political and public status of senior alliance members – Sheikh Ja'bari and the brothers Rashad and Anwar al-Khatib, who all held top government positions – were not to be challenged. From the onset, the Sheikh's relationship with the Khatib brothers included some of the natural competition between the two dominant families. In fact, Ja'bari and the Khatib brothers did not care much for each other at all. Still, this was irrelevant to their ability to collaborate and divide power between them. The Ja'baris tended to concentrate in municipal positions at the Hebron municipality, while the Khatibs held government positions outside Hebron.[111] An American report from 1962 described Hebron, or possibly the general area of Mt. Hebron, as exclusively controlled by the "triumvirate" of Ja'bari and the two Khatib brothers.[112] This observation was slightly overstated, as it is difficult to imagine the alliance would have survived without

an accommodating division of economic and political resources between the region's leading families. Other families with representatives in the Hebron municipality or the Jordanian parliament also maintained a similar division of political powers and resources, and clans practiced an internal division between their lineages. The Tamimis, for example, were represented on the national level at the Parliament, Senate and senior governmental positions by their al-Khatib lineage, while the Takruris and others families among the clan's 17 lineages were involved at the municipality.[113]

Such division of resources was done mostly by the families themselves on both the inter and intra family level, which helped preserve the familial order and balance between the different members of the alliance. The Jordanian rule contributed to this balance as it did not overly enhance the power of one actor at the expense of another. This was not a self-evident policy, as the next chapter will illustrate. In any event, the division of powers and resources kept new elements, such as the Communist, the Baath and Qawmiyun al-Arab parties from gaining significant traction in the region's political and social sphere. Jordan too blocked new forces from the political arena, especially after the 1957 events. By requiring candidates to submit good conduct certificates issued by the governor, the government effectively stonewalled the candidacy of undesirable individuals.[114] As seen, Ja'bari also upheld the rules governing the sociopolitical arena, and blocked radical forces threatening the order determined by the Hebronite alliance. Hebronite leaders used additional means to control the alliance and the boundaries of the political game: like many notables throughout the Middle East, Ja'bari and his associates had thugs, *zu'aran*, who guaranteed minimal opposition to their patrons.[115]

Jerusalem and the Hebronite Alliance

The rise of Hebron and its elite was not grounded solely in the city's changing relations with the villages but also stemmed from the northward expansion of its influence toward Jerusalem. The agents of this expansion were Mt. Hebron emigrants who used the Hebronite alliance as an instrument to promote their interests and ultimately to control the Jerusalem economy. This change reflected the power of

the Hebronite familial order and its hierarchy, as well as the novel use of several longstanding practices and social institutions; it also reshaped the social fabric of Jerusalem, and impacted the diffusion of sociopolitical networks throughout the West Bank.

Residents of Mt. Hebron had migrated to Jerusalem since the late Ottoman period. This emigration increased during the Mandate years and continued into the Jordanian period when Hebronites became the largest group in Jerusalem and its rural environs. According to estimates, in the late 1960s Hebronites made up 50–80 per cent of the city's Arab population, which numbered 66,000 in 1967).[116] On top of this demographic advantage, Hebronite emigrants also gained economic importance in the city during the Jordanian period. In 1950, 32 per cent of business owners in Jerusalem were of Hebronite origin; a decade later, this rose to 42 per cent.[117]

This rapid growth had caused serious friction in Jerusalem between emigrants and the city's native population already in the late Mandate years. In 1946, the Jerusalemite Muslim and Christian employees of the National Bus Company succeeded in forcing the dismissal of Hebronites from the company,[118] highlighting that tensions were so fierce that local identity even overrode the common Islamic faith shared by the Jerusalemite and Hebronite drivers. In late 1947, a group of young Jerusalemites headed by local notable Haj Hafez Hashan founded a gang that aggressively attacked Hebronite emigrants. The emigrants quickly responded by setting up their own anti-Jerusalemite organization.[119] Their campaign, waged on the eve of the fatal confrontation with the Zionist Movement, provides another perspective on the depth of vertical divisions in Palestinian society during this decisive period.

By the 1950s, the Hebronite alliance worked as a mutual guarantee system and was highly instrumental in promoting the interests of Hebronite emigrants. The original Jerusalemites recognized this and attributed the emigrants' power to their tight cohesion.[120] Ostensibly, what legitimized this cohesion was the common Mt. Hebron identity cultivated by Ja'bari and other Hebronite leaders, who nurtured cultural characteristics of the region that existed long before establishing the alliance. While the Mt. Nablus area, for example, was

traditionally identified with unrest and rebellious tendencies, the identity of Mt. Hebron traditionally reflected religious piety, as well as the Bedouin legacy of the region's residents (Chapters 1 and 2). Nevertheless, this was not the exclusive basis of the Hebronite emigrants' cohesion. Most important was the dense web of economic, legal, political and other networks linking immigrants to each other and fostering a high degree of personal acquaintance and mutual dependence, which stood in stark contrast to the religious and sectarian heterogeneity of native Jerusalemites.[121]

Some of the Hebronite networks were created bottom-up, in response to everyday needs while others were established by the Hebronite elite of Jerusalem. On the popular level, neighborly ties were formed as immigrants tended to live in clusters, a choice facilitated by existing economic and political conditions. After 1948, many Hebronite immigrants lived in abandoned apartments in the occupied Jewish Quarter, and in other conflict areas on the border between Jordanian-controlled East Jerusalem and Israeli-controlled West Jerusalem. Neighbor networks were also maintained in commercial zones, where Hebronite businesses were established alongside each other, forming yet another network. An information network helped emigrants find housing and employment, with help from the business families such as Kharbawi, Marka, Abu Zina and Barakat Abu al-Filat, who played a key role in Jerusalem's economy. Many Hebronites were also engaged in the shoe and textile, transportation and stonecutting industries.[122] If disputes arose with a business or other rival that was not of Hebronite descent, emigrants could rely on their local mutual assistance networks, notoriously known to Jerusalemites for their readiness to extend aggressive assistance to fellow Hebronites.[123]

Other networks were founded and controlled by members of the Hebronite elite of Jerusalem. The most of important of these networks was based on Hebronites who captured key appointments in Jerusalem's religious establishment during the Husaynis' 1930s push to expand their influence network by recruiting other influential families (Chapter 2). Among the new recruits were families from Hebron, such as the Muhtasibs; one of their leaders, Hilmi, was appointed to serve as Haj Amin's secretary in the Supreme

Muslim Council in the early 1930s.[124] As leaders of the alliance, Sheikh Ja'bari and the Khatib brothers maintained close ties to Hebronite notables in Jerusalem. In 1947, Anwar al-Khatib himself was appointed general director of the *waqf* of Jerusalem and secretary of the SMC.[125] Sheikh Suleiman al-Ja'bari, a cousin of Sheikh Ja'bari, was appointed deputy Mufti of Jerusalem by the city's Mufti, Sheikh Husam al-Din Jarallah in December 1948, after the British withdrawal.[126] In 1963, Anwar's brother Rashad al-Khatib was appointed Qadi al-Quda by the Jordanians, a post of ministerial rank in charge of the religious establishment.[127] Involvement in the religious establishment gave these and other Hebronite officials such as As'ad Bayud Tamimi and Hasan Tahabub extensive access to *waqf* resources,[128] which were an important factor in the Jerusalem economy during the Jordanian period. According to various estimates, the *waqf* controlled 80 per cent of all property in the Old City and elsewhere outside the city walls, including hundreds of apartments and other commercial assets. A considerable portion of the land in east Jerusalem also belonged to the *waqf*, which controlled an estimated 1.5 million hectares throughout the West Bank. During the Mandate period, *waqf* revenues were used to finance hundreds of jobs (and as noted, were a key resource of the SMC patronage network), a practice that continued during the Jordanian period as well. The *waqf* also funded schools in Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as construction projects and various welfare programs. The Hebronite network's foothold in the religious establishment granted Hebronite immigrants resources and privileges that played an important role in the community's economic success.[129]

An extremely important Hebronite network was based on the customary law system. This key social institution was preserved by the Hebronite émigrés in Jerusalem, who used it to regulate their relationships and maintain cohesion.[130] Gradually, they also imposed customary law on the original inhabitants of Jerusalem,[131] a process indirectly supported by Jordanian law, which recognized *'urf* as part of the state's legal system. Arbitrators were certified to hear all matters, including homicides.[132] The case of 'Adel Sharabati illustrates many typical aspects of the modern history of

Jerusalem's Hebronite community. Born in Hebron in the early 1940s, Sharabati moved to Jerusalem in 1958 and found lodging and a job with the help of family members who had since settled in the city. After a decade of working as an errand boy, Sharabati opened his own business in the Butchers' Market in the old city. As his socioeconomic status improved, he began serving as an arbitrator, applying the knowledge he acquired from observing *'urf* arbitrators in action. Hebronites and Jerusalemites of various sects and religions came to his diwan, requesting that he resolve their problems. Over time, he became the supreme arbitrator in and around Jerusalem. In 2008, the municipality of Jerusalem awarded Sharabati with the Kollek Prize for his contribution to the community.[133]

Non-Hebronite Palestinians and other observers note that while *'urf* was an indispensable system for mending inter-familial relations, it was sometimes used for other, non-peacekeeping purposes. Zilberman claims that Hebronites enforced customary law in Jerusalem not only for arbitration but also as a "predatory system"[134] that aggressively promoted the emigrants' interests. A Hebronite in dispute with someone else might threaten to summon the other party to *'urf* if he refused the Hebronite's demands. Typically, the non-Hebronites preferred reaching a compromise. First, refusing a summons by a legitimate system such as *'urf* could justify sanctions, even violence. Second, non-Hebronites were acutely aware that Hebronite arbitrators controlled the system,[135] as remains the case today.[136] Arbitrators also had a personal agenda as well. This problematic combination of interests and authority in the application of *'urf* was evident in the case of the Hebron family Barakat Abu al-Filat, which amassed considerable wealth from its textile, trading and smuggling businesses. The family had numerous economic interests in Jerusalem, and held senior positions in the city's Chamber of Commerce after 1948.[137] At the same time, at least three of its leading members – Omar, Taher and Faiq – were senior business arbitrators during the Mandate and Jordanian periods.[138] Still, not all Hebronite arbitrators were tainted by extraneous interests. To this day, arbitrators fill a genuine need and provide an important service of resolving inter-family conflicts that modern

legal systems are not equipped to handle. *'Urf* also offers an alternative to those wishing to avoid encountering or recognizing Israel's legal institutions.

The Hebronite elite also controlled a network that was based on the Muslim Brotherhood, a useful asset due to its control of several welfare organizations and charity funds. The Muslim Brotherhood's main branch in Jerusalem included distinguished Hebronites such as Sheikh Ja'bari, Rashad al-Khatib, Sheikh Sabri 'Abadin and Sheikh 'Abd al-Hay 'Arafeh.[139] In the Jordanian period, the Brotherhood was considered amenable to the regime and was the only movement legally permitted to operate after 1957. Hebronite elites and immigrants played a key role in transforming the Brotherhood into a pro-Jordanian movement.[140] Still, the network was less significant than the *waqf* and *'urf* networks. Amnon Cohen and others describe the Brotherhood in the Jordanian period as a loosely knit organization with no more than 700 members in the West Bank.[141]

After 1948, the Hebronite elite took advantage of its influence among emigrants to acquire political power in Jerusalem and marginalize the city's veteran leading families such as Husayni, Dajani, Nuseibeh, Nashashibi and 'Alami. The War of 1948 dealt a harsh blow to the Jerusalem elite, on both public and personal levels. Having played a major role in national leadership under British rule, the Jerusalem elite became associated – more strongly than any other local elite – with the failure of the Palestinian confrontation with the Zionist Movement, and with the *Nakba*.[142] Much of this elite also lost assets now located in Israeli territory,[143] fled the country during the war and many preferred to stay in other Middle Eastern countries or elsewhere abroad when the war ended. Jordan also weakened the Jerusalem elite by undermining its control of the religious establishment, which was an important source of its income (Chapter 1).[144] On a broader level, the Hashemites undercut the Jerusalem elite by reducing the city's economic and administrative status compared to Amman, effectively equating Jerusalem with the other two district cities of Hebron and Nablus.[145]

One sign of decline was a significant change in the structure of leadership among the Jerusalem elite. Families previously headed by large and exalted leaderships before the war, shrunk to a leadership

of one leadership (*shakhsiyat*, lt. "personalities"), such as Anwar Nuseibeh, Kamal Dajani, Husayn al-Khalidi and Musa al-'Alami.[146] The frequent rivalry between these notables weakened them further in face of Hebronite solidarity, as did Jordanian steps to encourage competition between these personalities.[147] This local policy derived from the broader "divide and rule" strategy that sought to perpetuate the traditional split between Jerusalem, Nablus and Hebron.[148]

The emergence of leaders who relied on the Hebronite community for support created convenient conditions for a change among the Jerusalem elite. The most prominent of these leaders was Anwar al-Khatib. Anwar became pro-Jordanian after 1949, despite his previous affiliation with the Husaynis during the Mandate. Although a member of the moderate opposition of the National Socialist Party (NSP), al-Khatib maintained good relations with the royal family. This allowed him to fill numerous senior positions, including mayor of Jerusalem and minister of economics. Unlike many of the Jerusalem elite, al-Khatib was careful to maintain ties with the public through his wide web of connections with businessmen and the authorities, and even made his private funds available to assist the public.[149] Anwar Nuseibeh was another member of the NSP. Although fellow party members, al-Khatib and Nuseibeh were rivals in the local Jerusalem arena – not an uncommon phenomenon. Nuseibeh, who came from a once-prominent Jerusalemite elite family, did not succeed in exploiting the growing dominance of the Hebronite community. In 1956, for example, he hired a Hebronite contractor who paid two dinars to every immigrant who promised to vote for him in the parliamentary elections. Nuseibeh's failed effort emphasized the obstacles that Jerusalem *shakhsiyat* encountered in competing with the cohesive Hebronite community.[150]

SOUTH VS. NORTH

Competition between Anwar Nuseibeh and Anwar al-Khatib was a local facet of the broader rivalry between two regional networks in the West Bank. One network loosely corresponded to the Hebronite alliance and included pro-Hashemite members of the Hebronite and Hebron-Jerusalem elites. The second network was based on the

northern West Bank and included personalities from Nablus as well as members of Jerusalem's old prominent families.[151] Jerusalem – until recently Palestine's most important political center – was torn between these two camps, in another reflection of its enfeebled state.

The roots of this split were evident already upon Jordan's official annexation of the West Bank. In April 1950, Hikmat al-Masri and his brother-in-law Anwar Nuseibeh demanded from the newly elected parliament, which now included both Jordanian and Palestinian lawmakers, certain constitutional amendments as a condition for the annexation.[152] However, their demands met with objection from Ja'bari and Suleiman Tuqan, who successfully swayed MPs to approve the annexation. Nasser's pan-Arabism became powerful in 1955–1956, exacerbating tensions between the two sides. The southern camp adopted a conservative, pro-Hashemite stance, while the northern section of the West Bank embraced a socialist, pan-Arab identity. Nevertheless, informal ties frequently outweighed formal ideological divisions. Rivals Nuseibeh and al-Khatib were both members of the NSP but their informal contacts with the royal family as well as their own regional networks had greater practical importance. Often, this created contradictions and odd situations. In 1956, for example, al-Khatib lost his seat in parliament and blamed this on alleged Egyptian meddling against him[153] – an unlikely claim, considering al-Khatib was a member of the pro-Nasserite NSP. Moreover, unlike many of his fellow party members, al-Khatib maintained good ties with the Hashemites, and consequently held a series of senior ministerial, diplomatic and administrative positions, including serving as the governor of the district of Jerusalem.[154]

The assassination of the pro-Hashemite Suleiman Tuqan of Nablus during the 'Abd al-Karim Qasim coup in 1958 in Iraq sharpened the existing division between the West Bank's southern and northern networks, identified with Jordan and Nasser, respectively. Still, despite the inherently geopolitical divide, politicians in both camps continued to use modern ideology as their political *raison d'etre*. In conversations with an American diplomat in 1961, Hikmat al-Masri voiced veiled criticism of Ja'bari and his men, and said that the state needs "politicians who first think of it [the state] and only later of their families and tribes."[155] Al-Masri himself certainly had his

own family and its numerous interests in mind, yet his statement – assuming it was honest – illustrates the different approaches of the two networks. The northern network was generally more open than its southern rival to new and popular ideas (although not all of these necessarily worked in favor of preserving the Hashemite state as Hikmat stated). This was not surprising, as the northern West Bank was a more dynamic region and its leaders were attuned to public sentiment.

One of the strongest expressions of this responsiveness was the integration of the younger generation into left-wing parties in the early 1950s. As during the Mandate period, the younger and older generations continued to hold different attitudes and opinions, shaped by their respective formative experiences. For the older generation, this was the rise of Arab nationalism after World War I; the younger generation was forged in the aftermath of 1948. However, unlike their elders, this younger generation could join organizations that were based on genuine political ideology and not merely facades for family interests. Among the young Nablus leaders was Basam Shak'a (b. 1930). His father Ahmad was a prominent merchant and notable during the Mandate period (Chapter 2), and his brothers Walid and 'Adel were two of the city's "traditional" leaders. Basam joined the Baath in the early 1950s and headed the party's Nablus branch until he fled to Syria in 1958.[156] Other members of local elite families became involved in radical left politics too. Rahmi Tuqan, of the clan's leading lineage, was a senior member of the Communist party. Salah 'Anabtawi was among the founders of the first Palestinian office of al-Qawmiyun (1952), where membership was initially contingent on personal and family ties.[157]

This political involvement of the elite's younger generation dispelled the prevalent distinction between the "traditional leadership" and the "radical elite" portrayed in prevalent literature. In practice, the family-based leadership served as the primary hotbed for the radical elite. This became more pronounced after 1967 when the familial order made adjustments to adapt to changing circumstances. Generally, the northern area of the West Bank preceded the south in this process but there too the younger

generation ultimately forced regional leadership to acknowledge its existence, if not its rights.

Political differences between the northern and southern parts of the West Bank persisted in the face of new concerns that emerged in the late 1950s. In March 1959, the Arab League discussed Nasser's initiative to establish "The Palestinian entity" (*al-kiyan al-Falastini*), designed to place the Palestinian issue at the heart of Arab awareness. Five years later, the Cairo Summit of 1964 approved the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization and assigned the task to Ahmad Shuqairy, the Palestinian representative at the Arab League.[158] The PLO held the founding congress of its Palestinian National Council (PNC) in Jerusalem on May 28, 1964, and drafted its National Charter (*al-Mithaq al-Watani*). The British embassy in Amman made light of the PLO's influence on the street,[159] but Jordanian intelligence had an entirely different impression, and reported great enthusiasm toward the PLO and Shuqairy throughout the West Bank.[160]

Two months before the founding congress in Jerusalem, Shuqairy appointed several committees to elect representatives to the PNC. In April, Sheikh Ja'bari convened with other notables from Mt. Hebron and Bethlehem at the home of Bayt Jala mayor Wadi' Da'mas and informed Shuqairy that his committees with mostly northern West Bank notables do not represent Palestinian diversity. The notables also opposed a Palestinian entity that would sever the West Bank from the East Bank and threatened to boycott the congress unless their position was accepted. The pressure succeeded in changing the composition of the PNC.[161] Ja'bari himself was a member of the steering committee that drafted the National Charter,[162] although this did not change his pro-Hashemite orientation. After the congress, he hosted King Husayn and other Jordanian officials in Hebron, where he delivered a speech reiterating his commitment to Palestinian-Jordanian unity.[163] In the northern West Bank, Shuqairy encountered different sentiments. In April 1962, he met in Nablus with Hikmat al-Masri and other figures who told him that the Palestinian problem would be resolved through Arab unification. This was a popular approach among the public, especially with the Nasserite oppositionists who rejected any

departure from the desired unification.[164] Nevertheless, disappointed by the failure to establish a tripartite union of Egypt, Syria and Iraq in 1963, and encouraged by Egypt's support for establishing the PLO after the Cairo Summit, Palestinian unification supporters changed their tune.[165] Hikmat al-Masri was among the pro-unity leaders who began assisting Shuqairy and was elected one of his deputies at the first and second PNC congresses.[166]

Initially, Jordan took a moderate approach toward the PLO. However, there was an inherent contradiction between the kingdom's wish to assimilate the Palestinians in Jordanian society (the Jordanization policy) and the goals of the PLO that emphasized the Palestinian identity. This tension strained relations until an all-out conflict erupted in 1965 when Jordan imposed restrictions on the organization.[167] The same year, the PLO began addressing the concept of the "armed struggle" (*al-kifah al-musallah*), which the Fatah established by Yasser Arafat, Khalil al-Wazir and others proposed as an alternative to the PLO's diplomatic strategy. In November 1966, three Israeli soldiers were killed by a landmine planted by Fatah members. Israeli forces followed the perpetrators' footprints to the village of Samu'a near Hebron and retaliated, killing at least 14 Jordanian soldiers and demolishing houses. For West Bank residents, the Israeli operation confirmed PLO claims that Jordanian forces could not protect Palestinian border villages and that a Palestinian protection force was needed. Violent riots erupted throughout the West Bank, protesting perceived Jordanian incompetence and economic discrimination against Palestinians. Several riots took place on Ja'bari's doorstep, including a demonstration calling on King Husayn to "follow Nuri al-Said" (the Iraqi prime minister who was murdered in 1958).[168] There is no record of the Sheikh's response. However, his actions after the occupation of the West Bank the following year (discussed in Chapter 4) suggest that the Samu'a events led Ja'bari to conclude that the Jordanization had failed, and that the Mt. Hebron youth did not embrace the pro-Hashemite policy of their elders.

Jordanian intelligence fingered two members of the al-Masri family, 'Izat and Nimr, as key instigators of the riots around Nablus.[169] At the same time, al-Masri leaders Ma'azuz and Hikmat were

working with left-wing organizations, moderate opposition members and different local leaderships to draft their demands. Several days later, delegations from Nablus and Jerusalem drafted documents supporting the PLO and Fatah. These documents served as the basis of a manifesto, which was published in a conference in Jerusalem on December 5 and marked the conclusion of the Samu'a incident. Conference delegates introduced themselves as the "national leadership," although most belonged to the northern network that was based on Nablus and Jerusalem. Mt. Hebron leaders, particularly Ja'bari and Rashad al-Khatib, were conspicuously absent. Anwar al-Khatib, a key Hebronite-Jerusalemite figure, attended as governor of Jerusalem and represented the Jordanian government, not his fellow Palestinians.[170]

THE JA'BARI AND AL-MASRI NETWORKS OF INFLUENCE

A comparative study of the evolution of the Ja'bari and al-Masri families' influence networks from the Mandate period to the end of the Jordanian rule provides an empirical analysis of how the West Bank elite in general, and the family institution in particular, responded to the changes affecting Palestinians during these years. This perspective highlights two of this book's key arguments. One is that family organizations varied in ways that directly affected their ability to cope with changes; the second is that the familial order is not a fixed "traditional" system but rather a dynamic structure, whose influence networks reflect how the family institution changed in response to historical shifts.

A One-Man Band

When Sheikh Ja'bari launched his public career in the mid-1920s, his family had no tradition of political involvement (Chapter 2). Most of the Ja'baris worked in transport or as shepherds,[171] and only few had acquired advanced religious education, or another career.[172] The Sheikh's political career was therefore extraordinary, and the network of influence he built from the 1920s onwards reflected the political power-seeking goal of his family organization and its strategy.

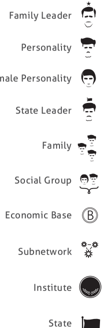

DIAGRAM 2 The Al-Ja'bari Network, 1967.

Diagram 2 illustrates the structure of Ja'bari's network in 1967. Sheikh Ja'bari is featured in the center; the links extending downward represent the ties he established with large and small Hebronite families. These ties formed the foundation of the Hebronite alliance, and bolstered Ja'bari's standing within his clan (center left). The first municipal appointment (center left) in 1940 also enhanced the Sheikh's intra-familial legitimacy and led to the formation of political and economic sub-networks focused on Ja'bari and the common interests he created.[173] Municipal resources also helped extend the Sheikh's alliances with Hebronite families. His ties with Mt. Hebron's rural sector, brought into the alliance, are represented at center-right. During the Jordanian period, Ja'bari continued to resolve disputes in the rural sector, and the governor, police and others often referred particularly intractable cases specifically to him.[174] Illustrated above are Jabari's ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, and with charitable organizations. The right side of both illustrations depicts Jabari's relations with King Husayn, and his personal and institutional ties to Jordan. Ja'bari's ties to members of the Hebronite sub-network in the religious establishment are shown on the upper-left-hand side. On the upper left-hand side are Ja'bari's ties to Anwar and Rashad al-Khatib Tamimi. The brothers mediated between him and a variety of bases of support, including the Jerusalem community of Hebronite immigrants, the Dweyb family (the leading family of the Ta'amra tribes), the al-Majali clan (connected to the Tamimis by kinship), and the Tamimi clan. Finally, Diagram 2 depicts the Sheikh's ties with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates, some forged as early as the 1930s. The Gulf monarchies recognized Ja'bari as a powerful Palestinian leader; this prestige allowed him to mediate between these countries and the public on commercial and religious issues, such as the annual hajj to Mecca.[175]

A diverse composition of support bases distributes risks and offers more options than a homogeneous composition. Ja'bari's influence network was not particularly varied and initially included mostly the social support bases of the Hebronite alliance, which was based on inter-family ties. After 1948, ties with Jordan strengthened the institutional facet of Ja'bari's network by appointing him for senior state positions at the Senate and several ministries. Although

these institutional bases of support tempered the dominance of the social bases, the latter remained a pivotal part of the network, as demonstrated by the Ja'baris' control of the municipality, which in turn depended on preserving the Hebronite alliance. The network lacked the economic bases of support that could have allowed the clan to create broader dependency among workers, or to acquire additional bases of support.

The Sheikh's organization was largely characterized by a star topology reflecting his centralized control over most of its bases. Paradoxically, although his family's power derived directly from the Sheikh's operations, he was largely responsible for its failure to cultivate additional leaders. Ja'bari's authority over the eight lineages of the clan did not follow the "first among equals" principle sometimes attributed to family and tribal leaders in Mt. Hebron and elsewhere. In practice, the Sheikh was the "big man" (*al-kabir*), the family's modern founder.[176] No leaders grew in the shade of this formidable tree, either because his authority was accepted by all, or for fear that any personal ambition would be taken as a challenge of Jabar's leadership. Another explanation relates to the nature of the family bases of support. The family's economic foundation was not highly developed. This restricted, *a priori*, the potential ascent of individuals based on their contributions to economic bases of support (as was the case in the al-Masri network). Nonetheless, this did not preclude the acquisition of economic power based on the individual success of one family member or another. Additional bases of support were also limited in their ability to serve as a foundation for the network's growth due to the Sheikh's monopolistic control. For example, while the Sheikh held various senior positions in the Jordanian government, examples of other family members who did so before 1967 are rare. It is therefore not surprising that his relations with Sidqi Sadeq, the only other politician who emerged in the family, were strained. Sidqi was a member of the Hebron city council and was elected to the Jordanian parliament in the late 1950s.[177] His status was never nearly as high as the Sheikh's and he did not hold a particular role in the family organization. Sidqi established his own group of supporters through the Tahabub clan (headed by his father-in-law), as well as by using his own personal finances and

showing sensitivity to the younger generation that emerged in the 1960s.[178]

A centralized organization can benefit from its leader's ability to closely control organizational organs and execute collective action rapidly. Another advantage of a centralized organization is minimal dependence on functionaries who served as mediators to bases of support. The Sheikh's ties to Anwar al-Khatib, who controlled a cluster of bases that served the interests of the Ja'bari network, offer an example of such dependence. From the organization's perspective, this type of affiliation was valid as long as good relations were maintained with al-Khatib. A centralized structure also reduced the risk of a network splitting into rival factions, although it had potential drawbacks too. The family's status depended exclusively on the Sheikh; any downturn in his performance could sever the family from its bases of support and undermine its overall stability. Furthermore, the absence of additional leaders might impair the quality of decisions such an organization was frequently required to make. Factors such as Ja'bari's age, personality and opinions had a critical impact on every dilemma that arose. From this, one may conclude that his centralized control also contributed to the network's lack of diversity.

The Family as a Multi-Headed Economic Organization

Between 1948 and 1967, the al-Masri family extended its influence beyond Nablus to become the most powerful family in the northern West Bank, and one of the leading families in Palestinian politics in general. This process combined economic expansion, a calculated involvement in regional and inter-Arab politics, extension of social ties, and an increasingly solid hold on key institutions.

During the Mandate years, the expansion of the al-Masri influence network focused mainly on economic and political-institutional operations. During the Jordanian period, the network also deepened its social ties with groups such as the rural sector of Mt. Nablus, as well as with students, intellectuals and others with whom contacts would ripen after 1967 (Chapter 4). The family's influence in the local Nablus arena continued to grow as well. As agriculture declined

during the Mandate period, landed families such as the Tuqans and ʻAbd al-Hadis revenues from selling their lands. However, the War of 1948 cut off this source of income, with detrimental impact on these families.[179] This was a near-final blow to landed families that were on a slow decline since the late Ottoman years when they were supplanted by merchant families headed by the Shakʻas and the al-Masris. The city's center of gravity was shifting, as were its alliances, even before the Mandate ended. Generational change was underway from the 1940s, when several important families transferred leadership to their younger generation, which did not feel bound by the elders' disputes or ties and acted on their own interests. Meanwhile, the al-Masris and Shakʻas went from allies to rivals as both grew in economic and political power. Once again, Nablus split into two camps and alliances realigned with little regard for the "traditional" groupings of the past. Past rivals such as the ʻAbd al-Hadis and al-Masris grew closer in the Jordanian period, probably due to the friendship between Naʻim ʻAbd al-Hadi and Hikmat al-Masri from their days at the American University of Beirut.[180]

The al-Masris also grew more powerful in the institutional arena. One of the most important resources they controlled was the Nablus Chamber of Commerce, which had become a highly influential non-governmental organization during the Jordanian period. During this period, the chambers of commerce regulated commercial activities and promoted industrial development programs.[181] In Nablus and Jerusalem – but not in Hebron, again reflecting the division between north and south – they also campaigned against governmental discrimination of West Bank merchants.[182] Under Jordanian rule, the chambers of commerce extended their authority to the cities' rural sectors and began representing their interests before the government.[183] In lieu of other institutions, the chambers of commerce afforded the urban families controlling them powerful influence over this sector.[184] At the same time, the chambers of commerce offered the urban elite ways of protecting their own interests – for example, by blocking import of competing products. The al-Masris also deepened their control of the municipality, where Maʻazuz served as councilman and as mayor (1952–1957),[185] and consolidated his influence in the pharmacists' association and

al-Najah College (see Chapter 4). Throughout the Jordanian period, women were visibly involved in the family organization and the institutional arena. Ma'azuz's wife Rashda headed the Women's Association, and was focal in funding its philanthropic programs for the needy and general public. She founded a high school, established infant care clinics and headed the Red Crescent chapter in her city.[186]

Charting out the al-Masri influence network shows that the family's core businesses formed its most important support base. Diagram 3 illustrates that all four of the family leaders were linked to these businesses as managers and shareholders (center). They also had contacts in Jordan, Egypt and other Arab countries (top center), while cultivating personal business interests that did not compete with the family's core businesses commercially or otherwise. Thus, the economic and social bases of support were divided evenly among the four leaders, and this division was evident in their respective ties to social power bases. In addition to influencing their clan (top left) the four leaders affected the Nablus public as employers and philanthropists (bottom right). Furthermore, each of the four was linked to specific groups: Haj Ma'azuz was connected to the religious establishment (right); Nai'f was connected to the public by his arbitration services (lower right); Nashat had ties with government administration (bottom left) and Hikmat was connected to students and the 'Abd al-Hadi family (top left).

Control of institutional support bases was divided less equally among the rest of the family organization. As mentioned, figures such as Wail, Wasfi and Qays (top left) held positions in the Jordanian establishment. Leaders like Nashat and Nai'f held sway over merchants through the Chamber of Commerce (bottom right). Ma'azuz stands out with double clout as head of the Chamber of Commerce (1956–1964) and city council member (top left). Rashda linked him to the Women's Association (bottom right) and the general public. Ties to political support bases were also unequal, as Hikmat controlled most of these connections. Diagram 3 illustrates Hikmat's ties to Jordan, Egypt and Nasser (top right), and to Shuqaiyri's PLO (top left). The center depicts his ties to 'Abd al-Rauf al-Fares, a key leader in the rural sector of Mt. Nablus (bottom right) and to the Nuseibeh brothers (top left), who linked him to the

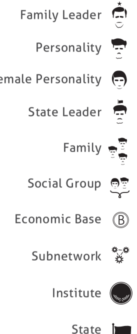

DIAGRAM 3 The Al-Masri Network, 1967.

Jerusalem region. All these ties served the al-Masris in electoral alliances and other activities.

Family leaders are commonly identified according to their prominence in the public sphere. For this reason, numerous observers marked Hikmat as the leader of his family.[187] However, examining the al-Masri network shows this was not the case. Leadership and power in the intra-familial arena were reflected in control over bases of support and consequent participation in decision-making. Control of support bases was divided evenly among the family's four leaders, with a slight advantage to Ma'azuz and Hikmat. As noted previously, the most important decision-making took place in the business rather the political sphere, as the family was first and foremost an economic organization. Nashat and Nai'f were every bit involved in the family's business decision-making as Hikmat, and Ma'azuz was even more so as general director of the family's economic empire during the Jordanian period.[188] Hikmat's high public profile did not necessarily reflect his role in the family's political decision-making, which involved the other leaders who did not always conform to his preferences (Chapter 4).

The above analysis suggests that the al-Masris headed a network with a hybrid topology, one that contained multiple sub-networks of various forms, combining the advantages and drawbacks of different network topologies. This structure reveals a largely decentralized division of power. The important bases of support formed a fully-connected topology, reflecting the joint control of important power bases. Consequently, the al-Masri network was highly cohesive. Tension between leaders was natural, and stemmed from competition, different approach and other factors. Nevertheless, they were linked to each other through multiple ties, which effectively reflected shared interests and reduced the probability of a split. This decentralized structure also bred redundancy. If one leader was incapacitated for any reason, the family's other leaders would tend to his bases of support, thus maintaining the overall stability of the organization.

The al-Masri leadership structure enabled the family to diversify its bases of support and avoid putting all its eggs in one basket. For example, the division of labor between Ma'azuz and Hikmat allowed

the family to maintain ties with Jordan as well as its rival, Egypt. While political ties with Jordan did suffer somewhat, the family enjoyed beneficial economic, political and personal ties with Egypt and with Nasser. The multi-headed structure allowed greater pluralism and more importantly, it led to informed decision-making. Each of the leaders forged different ties in keeping with his individual personality and skills, complementing each other's connections. Hikmat, for example, was a reserved and aloof individual, while Nai'f was known for his affable personality. As the network's diversity grew, so did its chances of survival in face of the changing reality.

CONCLUSION

The distinct structure of the socioeconomic networks in each of the three Palestinian Highland centers on the eve of the War of 1948 directly affected how each would emerge from the war. Hebron, which kept its traditional links to the east and north, was only moderately affected, while Nablus lost many of its Mandate-era ties to the west and sustained more serious damage. Even so, post-war circumstances were such that even Nablus succeeded in regaining centrality as a hub of economy, administration and politics.

Relations between each of the three areas and Jordan also stemmed directly from the quality of the lateral networks each one maintained with Transjordan in the decades preceding the war. Mt. Hebron's strong ties to Transjordan were manifest in the Hebronite leadership's active support of the Hashemites during and after the war, with broad popular support in Hebron. By contrast, animosity toward Transjordan came into play in Jerusalem and Nablus both during and after the war.

Despite reservations and even hostility toward Jordan among considerable parts of the elite in Nablus and the remainder of Jerusalem's original elite, the Jordanians aimed to draw them into their fold. As the next chapter will show, Jordan's moves proved it was well-aware of the local leaders' influence. Still, the government was not generous in bestowing privileges. Therefore, access to resources could not be the main pillar on which the Palestinian elite could base its public support (*sha'biyya*), but rather one of the many

types of relations. Relations between the elite families and the Hashemites and other power centers in the inter-Arab sphere were similarly complex. The behavioral patterns and relations that emerged were not monolithic in nature, and derived from the distinct goals of each family organization that both shaped – and were shaped by – their specific environment. The al-Masris conducted themselves in a way that reflected the dominance of economic considerations among the strong merchant class around Mt. Nablus, but also the climate of national unrest in that region. The centralized nature of Ja'bari's organization mirrored the patriarchal structure of Hebronite society.

Conditions at the end of the War of 1948 provided the opportunity for many groups and informal networks to improve their status. Hebron went from being a peripheral city to the important political hub of the southern West Bank. Jerusalem, which had historically enjoyed a higher standing than Hebron, was flooded with Hebron emigrants whose leaders gradually became the city's dominant elite. In Hebron and Nablus, players wisely filled the void left by the war's destruction of informal networks such as that of the Husaynis (Chapter 2). The Hebronite alliance took advantage of the situation to expand to the north, and the political influence of Nablus took a southbound push (this would ultimately play a role in events such as 1957 crisis, the founding of the PLO in 1964 and in the political aftermath of the Samu'a disturbances in 1966).

These developments highlight a key feature of the Jordanian period: informal networks endured, while formal ones- including left-wing, pro-Nasserite parties and even the Muslim Brotherhood- remained languished. Similar to the transition between the Ottoman and British rules, the informal networks of the Jordanian period were evolved versions of those of the Mandate years, and often reflected yet broader changes. From the neighborhood level to the national one, pragmatism turned partners into rivals and back. Familial order practices were still the main foundation for informal networks, which ranged from the family-based political and military organizations that led Palestinians in the War of 1948, to the Hebronite alliance that reproduced the Hebron order in Jerusalem. The arena of formal institutions such as municipalities, chambers of commerce,

the Women's Association and other organizations also reflected informal family-based networks. Even the internal hierarchy of left-wing movements that advocated a supra-family vision often reflected local social hierarchies. Still, these examples also illustrated the constant transformation of the familial order. It follows, then, that the familial order was not a conservative feature of society but an adaptive institution that responded to changing circumstances.

Palestinian integration proceeded rapidly on all levels during the Jordanian period. The War of 1948 had severed existing ties to the west, forcing the West Bank to re-network. After 1948, the regional hubs of the cities and their surrounding environs expanded to new locations and formed close cultural, social, economic and political ties. This resulted in the formation of the two main geopolitical blocs of the West Bank, headed by the two "kingdoms" (as Basam Shak'a called them in 1976) of Nablus and Hebron. In between was Jerusalem, wedged between the two blocs that dominated the city and revealed its weakness.

CHAPTER 4

From Occupation to Elections: 1967–1980

Israel's occupation of the West Bank in June 1967 was a turning point that expedited existing political processes and triggered new economic and social developments. The separation from Jordan, friction with Israel, and the decline of competing identity centers converged to sharpen a distinct Palestinian identity; within a few years, the PLO became political mainstream in the West Bank. Changes in the employment structure led to mass proletarianization, as Palestinians abandoned farming and flocked to Israel for employment. Economic development and the establishment of universities deepened ongoing trends of toward education, and the growth of a new, politically conscious generation.

Conventional wisdom maintains that these and other developments (elaborated below) modernized social, economic and political systems in a way that weakened the familial order, if not near destroyed it. Numerous scholars, including Cobban, Shemesh, Sahliyeh and Hilterman, argue that the political culture of the West Bank underwent a sweeping change, which replaced personal and family loyalties with political ideologies and actions. Many studies cite the 1976 municipal elections as a historic juncture that marked the maturation of the above processes as Palestinian society moved from a local family-based political culture to nation-wide politics. These elections brought to power so-called "nationalist" mayors, who advocated a nationalist Palestinian ideology with regards to the

conflict with Israel, and seemed to represent a new, radical elite that differed from its predecessors of the so-called "traditional leadership" in almost every respect (Introduction).

Taking a different approach, this chapter demonstrates that the sociopolitical changes in West Bank society after 1967 were more moderate than commonly described. Undoubtedly, change depleted the power of veteran influence networks and shaped a new public discourse; however, it did not have the debilitating effect on the institutions and political culture of the West Bank familial order as is often described. From the basic family unit to major social institutions such as *'urf*, the ability of all familial order actors to remain relevant depended less on the forces of change than on the actors themselves. As in the past, their ability to weather periods of profound change depended on their capacity to integrate into the new social and political reality, and create new influence networks and value by other means.

The twin cases of the Ja'bari and al-Masri families provide the evidence for this argument. The different experiences of both families between 1967 and 1980 authentically reflected the particular local social, political and cultural changes that swept Hebron, Nablus and Jerusalem, as well as those affecting the West Bank as a whole. During this period, the Ja'baris and al-Masris remained the most powerful families in the West Bank. Nonetheless, they too were obliged to adjust to the new circumstances, and their varying degrees of success stemmed directly from their distinct organizational features of goals, structure and strategies (Introduction). My study concludes, therefore, that the common perception and analysis of the alleged decline of the "traditional leadership" that regards leading families as monolithic bodies is ineffective both as a methodological approach and as a reliable representation of actual events. In fact, the accounts of both families indicate that the main threat to the "traditional leadership" emanated not from changes in the post-1967 period – several of which these families even exploited to their own benefit – but from home-grown rivals that emerged in their local environment and from within the familial order itself.

This chapter focuses on the two areas of the southern and northern West Bank that served as the arenas for the two families.

This serves the comparison between the two archetypes of family organization, one pursuing political clout, and the other economic goals. In addition, focusing on Hebron and Nablus also reflects the ongoing marginalization and decline of Jerusalem that worsened after 1967, when it effectively became a Hebronite branch in many respects. The chapter opens with a wide-angle review of the key developments that took place in the West Bank (and, generally, in the Gaza Strip too) after 1967. We proceed to discuss the consolidation of Israeli policy toward the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank, making the distinction between regional and local levels. From there, we move on to the Ja‘bari family and explore its relations with the three powers – Israel, Jordan and the PLO. I will review the circumstances that enabled this family to take advantage of events to expand its influence to an unprecedented scope, but which also placed it on a fateful course. From the southern section of the West Bank, we move northward to examine the profound changes that the Israeli occupation cause in regional networks at large, and particularly the elite influence networks. I explore the al-Masris' response to the same triangle of powers the Ja‘baris faced. I will analyze their sophisticated response to the transformations of the period, and the way in which this affected both intra-familial and extra-familial levels. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the changes in the influence networks of both families. I will demonstrate that these changes accurately reflect developments in the local arena of each family, as well as those that took place throughout the West bank.

1967–1980: KEY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Shortly after the 1967 war, Israel imposed a military government on the West Bank and the other seized territories of the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula, in keeping with the 4th Geneva Convention guidelines for military rule in occupied regions. East Jerusalem and its rural environs were annexed to Israel and came under Israel's civil statutory, and the municipal jurisdiction of Jerusalem. In 1981, Israel replaced the military rule with the Civil

Administration as part of the Camp David Accords that preceded the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.

Palestinian identity was shaped and sharpened against this political background. The foundation of the PLO and other organizations advocating armed struggle in the 1960s accelerated Palestinian politicization and forged a distinct West Bank identity. Still, the status of the PLO and its leader Shuqairy plummeted after the war, and the organizations failed to gain a strong foothold in the West Bank.[1] The 1968 Battle of Karameh and the takeover of the PLO by Fatah and other organizations advocating armed struggle later that year left a deep impression on the Palestinian public, but the organizations failed to leverage this momentum to instigate a broad popular uprising against Israel.[2] In practice, the political arena was divided into three main factions: pro-Hashemites aspiring to return to Jordanian control, pan-Arabists willing to rejoin Jordan if it agreed to support inter-Arab unification, and those supporting Palestinian organizations advocating armed struggle.[3] A small group called for an independent Palestinian entity alongside Israel. Proponents of this position included Attorney Aziz Shahada, Hebron mayor Sheikh Ja'bari, journalist Muhammad Abu Shalbayeh and Dr. Hamadi Taji al-Faruqi.[4]

The events of 1970–1971 known as Black September reverberated sharply throughout the West Bank.[5] Coupled with the decline of pan-Arabism and the growing recognition that Israel had no plans to cede the West Bank, this tilted public support in favor of the PLO and a distinct Palestinian solution.[6] This shift echoed clearly in platforms not previously identified with a distinct Palestinian solution, such as the conservative *al-Quds* newspaper, which in 1972 opined that "all talk of unification is a lie. [. . .] It is about time that the Palestinian nation solves its problem by itself."[7]

In 1972, Israel decided to hold municipal elections in the West Bank. The PLO fiercely objected to the initiative, desiring both to demonstrate its authority as well as opposition to any cooperation with Israel. Despite this objection, the elections took place in 1972, underscoring the organization's weakness at the time. More than half the candidates were new to politics and included refugees, intellectuals and Palestinians who migrated to the cities from rural areas. The election results showed that cities closest to Israel were

quick to respond to the socioeconomic effects of the occupation, forging strong ties with Israel that fostered rapid change. In the more remote areas of Nablus and Hebron, however, elections did not reflect a significant sociopolitical change.[8]

The October War of 1973 proved once again that an Arab military victory would not resolve the Palestinian problem. At the same time, however, it also shook Israel's perceived invincibility. This twofold conclusion heightened all parties' awareness of the need for a diplomatic settlement. Egypt involved the PLO in the diplomatic moves it advanced with the end of the war and in June 1974, the PNC adopted the Ten Point Program (that essentially provided the PLO with validation for future compromises), which the West Bank viewed as pragmatic. In October the same year, the PLO further solidified its status with the Arab League Summit Conference in Rabat, which recognized the organization as the sole legal representative of the Palestinians. The momentum continued when Arafat delivered his first speech at the United Nations the following month. The West Bank responded to these developments with a newfound enthusiasm toward the PLO.[9]

In 1975, Israel amended the Jordanian election law that still applied to the West Bank, allowing the participation of women and young people who were not necessarily taxpayers as the original law stipulated, in order to expand the electorate and hold the second municipal elections in the West Bank since 1967. According to many observers, the 1976 elections signaled that modernization processes had matured, and led to the replacement of the "traditional leadership" with a new political elite that was younger, more educated and more radical.[10] This book, however, disputes this argument. As we shall see, these conclusions were exaggerated, and do not reflect the sociopolitical complexity of the West Bank political culture at that time.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

As shown in Chapter 3, the War of 1948 disrupted the west-bound economic, social and political networks of the West Bank and forced them to shift to the east. However, the 1967 War reversed this shift.

Although Israel's "open bridges" policy allowed the region to maintain its ties with the east, the Israeli economy proved a more powerful magnet.[11] After a 19-year interruption, once again the West Bank forged a dense web of economic, social and cultural ties with the west. In contrast to the Mandate Period, however, this change in orientation affected the entire West Bank, and in many respects recreated the country as the single region it was during the Mandate years. This development sparked numerous changes that extended from the regional to the intra-familial level.

Ties with Israel improved the standard of living in the West Bank but also perpetuated fundamental problems, especially economic dependence and underdeveloped industry. Per capita income increased by 350 per cent between 1968 and 1980. By 1978, the GDP rose by 274 per cent and consumption increased by 243 per cent compared to the previous decade.[12] The main causes of this change were Israeli consumption of Palestinian commodities and Israeli investments in Palestinian farming, and above all, employment of Palestinian laborers in Israel. In 1968, some 4,000 Palestinian laborers worked in Israel's private sector; within a few years, these reached tens of thousands, accounting for 30 per cent of the entire West Bank workforce.[13] Palestinian laborers could earn two or three times more in Israel than in the West Bank. This had far-reaching socioeconomic implications.[14]

Many Palestinians left West Bank jobs to work in Israel, upsetting labor patterns and releasing themselves, at least partly, from familial and other patronage networks. West Bank industry bore the brunt of these changes; in 1968, this sector accounted for 9 per cent of the GDP, but only 8 per cent in 1982.[15] Women filled the West Bank jobs vacated by men who now worked in Israel, and some women even worked in Israel too. In 1961, women constituted only 8 per cent of the workforce in the West Bank, but this figure rose to 15 per cent and 20 per cent in 1968 and 1970, respectively.[16]

The disruption of work patterns increased demand for laborers but offered no employment opportunities for educated Palestinians, who grew increasingly frustrated.[17] The redistribution of resources between unskilled laborers and the educated sector in the West Bank largely reflected a new division between the cities, and the rural

and refugee sectors.[18] A 1980 survey found that 88 per cent of West Bank laborers working in Israel hailed from refugee camps and villages.[19]

Although suitable employment for educated Palestinians was scarce, the number of educated West Bank residents rose sharply after 1968. According to a comprehensive survey carried out by Jordan in 1961, 18.8 per cent of all men and 4.4 per cent of all women in the West Bank completed high school studies, but only 0.88 per cent of men and 0.14 per cent of women attended university. Those seeking higher studies had to venture outside the West Bank, and few could afford it; this made it extremely difficult for members of weak socioeconomic groups to pursue academic education and ultimately restricted their social mobility.[20] Higher education, therefore, remained an upper-class privilege during the Jordanian period, a fact, which directly affected the social composition of the educated elite that clearly evolved from the old elites of the familial order. Israel's occupation of the West Bank led to profound changes in the local education system that were both qualitative and quantitative. Teachers' training improved.[21] From 1967 to 1976, the number of schools increased by 25 per cent, the number of classrooms increased by 49 per cent, and the number of students increased from 141,998 to 211,215. While percentage of high-school graduates dropped from 69.9 per cent in 1968 to 61.3 per cent in 1981, the number of students earning matriculation certificates nearly quadrupled over the same period (from 2,149 in 1968 to 8,024 in 1981). Higher education too became more accessible with the rising standard of living and the establishment of several universities in the West Bank.[22] In 1970, only 1 per cent of the population had 13 years of education or more. Ten years later, this reached 11 per cent.[23]

Already during the Jordanian period, the educated sector formed a distinct group in the local political scene, but they faced several obstacles. The educated ranks gravitated toward left-wing movements outlawed by Jordan, which even restricted their organization in movements that seemed innocuous.[24] In addition, many educated people left the West Bank for lack of employment opportunities, and did not serve as local change agents. Both problems persisted after 1967. Educated Palestinians continued leaving to find employment

elsewhere, even as general migration declined.[25] In 1978, for example, most of the 19,000 people who left the West Bank were educated individuals.[26] Those who remained were frequently frustrated, especially the teachers, whose influence on protest against Israel was noted as early as 1968. Israel did not consider the educated Palestinians as potential partners in a political dialogue, and disbanded their organizations and banished many of their leaders.[27] The weakness of the educated sector also stemmed from ideological immaturity and longstanding internal social tensions. Ultimately, the educated sector played a key role in bolstering the standing of the PLO, a move that gained strength for both groups in the mid-1970s.

These changes accelerated institution building after 1967. New institutions such as labor unions, newspapers and universities appeared alongside municipalities, chambers of commerce, charitable associations and women's organizations.[28] Lavie calls the institution building efforts of 1967–1974 an expression of "passive Palestinianization," in which the Palestinian identity of institutions grew more pronounced as the result of the growing social, economic and political distinctiveness of the West Bank. "Active Palestinianization" of these institutions began in 1974, when the PLO appropriated them as instruments of the national struggle.[29] The pioneers of this shift were the left-wing movements, which believed social revolution must precede a national revolution.[30] Perhaps surprisingly, their Islamist rivals shared a similar view, and considered social reforms focused on developing Islamic social organizations as a necessary preliminary stage of establishing an Islamic state. However, Fatah focused on the political aspects of the struggle and was concerned about the potential growth of local elements, so developing an institutional infrastructure remained a low priority, at least until the early 1980s (see Chapter 5).

ISRAELI POLICY REGARDING THE WEST BANK LEADERSHIP

The 1967 War and subsequent occupation of the West Bank found Israel with no clear policy on the region's future.[31] Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan advocated allowing the locals to manage their

own civic affairs, but strongly opposed a leadership that would represent the entire West Bank.[32] The first attempt to establish such a leadership came in July 1967 shortly after the war, when a group of West Bank leaders headed by Anwar al-Khatib of Jerusalem requested Israel's permission to hold a convention to decide the future behavior/response of the people of the West Bank. Israel initially approved the convention but revoked its consent at the last minute.[33] Shortly afterwards, several other top Jerusalemites including Ruhi al-Khatib, ʻAbd al-Hamid Sayih and Kamal Dajani declared the reinstatement of a defunct Mandate-era institution, the Supreme Muslim Council. Their immediate goal was to use the new SMC to express their opposition to the annexation of Arab Jerusalem. In the long term, however, they planned to use the council as a national leadership forum. Israel responded by exiling several SMC leaders and barring the council from political activity.[34]

In the spring of 1974, Shimon Peres replaced Moshe Dayan as Minister of Defense and began weighing alternatives to his predecessor's policy against a supra-local leadership. Later that year, Peres held meetings with four prominent figures from the three West Bank centers – Sheikh Jaʻbari from Hebron, Anwar al-Khatib from Jerusalem, and Hikmat and Haj Maʻazuz al-Masri from Nablus. Peres considered establishing a West Bank leadership that would promote a peace agreement with Israel. The meetings took place against the backdrop of the Arab Summit in Rabat, which marked the height of the PLO's popularity. Peres was told that Israel was too late.[35] In 1975, several years before the Camp David Accords that anchored the idea, Peres proposed a "civil administration" that would expand the powers of West Bank mayors and keep Israel's involvement in civil affairs to a minimum. The West Bank would still be controlled by Israel but Palestinians would have been granted unprecedented self-governance. However, with the exception of a few supporters, this proposal met with a cold response in the West Bank, especially in light of the PLO's firm disapproval.[36]

In a shift from its previous objection, after 1974 Israel took extensive steps to bolster local leaders, and was even willing to accept some degree of their involvement in political affairs.[37] According to

several studies, curtailing local leaders' direct access to the Jordanian governmental resources they enjoyed before the occupation had weakened the region's leaders.[38] This was true in the case of leaders who lost governmental positions and employment after 1967, but did not apply to leaders such as Sheikh Ja'bari or the heads of the al-Masri family. Both Israel and Jordan regarded Ja'bari and the al-Masris as major West Bank leaders, especially after Jerusalem's Arab leadership was sidelined. Consequently, both families enjoyed unprecedented authority and access to resources. At the same time, these developments further intensified the political rise of Hebron and Nablus, as Jerusalem continued the decline that began in the Jordanian period. This Israeli policy had direct, if inconsistent and occasionally contradictory, bearing on the structure of informal networks in the West Bank.

In October 1967, Israel made a formative decision on its policy toward the West Bank. A committee headed by Dayan determined that Israel would strive to "require the local population to cooperate and achieve maximum dependency on the government mechanism and the local [Palestinian] administration as a means of thwarting intentions and attempts at civil rebellion."[39] As an immediate result, local administration institutions were strengthened, especially municipalities and chambers of commerce, and the powers held by the heads of these organizations expanded significantly. As we shall see, they were authorized to handle issues that touched the barest of public nerves, including family reunification, deportation, home demolitions and prisoners.[40] The leaders controlling these institutions all belonged to elite families.

Israel did not object to the familial patterns of the local political culture, and even encouraged them. Controlling the public through the leading families had already been a key practice during the years of the military rule over Israel's Arab population, and[41] Israel's military government of the West Bank applied the same practice. In the 1972 elections, for example, the military government preapproved lists of families' candidates without actually holding elections (*tazkiyya*). The military government regarded a balanced representation of families to be an important condition for maintaining stability;[42] Still, the military government occasionally

banished family leaders, even though this destabilized intra-Palestinian relations.

Israel's policy of focusing on family-based leadership should be considered in light of the existing alternatives. By the late 1960s, young educated Palestinians had emerged in the public sphere as a politically distinct generational group. Typically, they were born in the 1930s and 1940s, leaned toward ideological factions and officially advocated a modern administration to replace patterns of family politics. In the late 1960s, they were a small, divided group and many of them found it difficult to cut loose of their family tethers. Israel's decision to cultivate this group was not an imperative, but rather stemmed from rethinking the wisdom of its exclusive focus on the "traditional leadership." Participants in a November 1968 meeting of intelligence services noted the waning influence of the "traditional leadership" over younger Palestinians, as well as independent organization attempts of radical circles. Subsequently, Israel decided to cultivate additional groups of leadership,[43] although there was no evidence that this decision was actually implemented. In practice, Israel policies showed a clear preference for the "traditional leadership" and the familial order.

Increasingly, the Palestinian media affiliated with the nationalists became a platform for criticizing Israel's disregard of the new forces and its use of "Quislings" from the old leadership.[44] The fierce attacks did not necessarily reflect broad public opinion and were probably published on PLO orders. However, there was also grassroots criticism. In January 1975, a school principal in Jenin told government officials that his circle of young intellectuals scorned the old leadership and was frustrated that the military government was not encouraging young leaders to replace the old guard.[45] Even *al-Anba*, a newspaper published by the Israel Association of Laborers, occasionally published criticism of the old West Bank leadership and the military government for perpetuating these leaders and their faulty practices.[46]

SOUTHERN WEST BANK: THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES HANGS OVER JA'BARI'S HEAD

As the most prominent leader in the southern West Bank since the 1940s, Hebron Sheikh Ja'bari was a frequent target of Palestinian

criticism after 1967. The way both he and his family responded to the new era that began in 1967 illustrates both the opportunities this period offered, as well as the challenges and risks it posed to the familial order and its institutions. The case of the Ja'bari family highlights the decisive impact these institutions' specific characters had on their proactive handling of change- for better, or for worse.

With his longstanding goal of political influence in mind, after 1967 Ja'bari decided that a positive relationship with Israel could become one of his most important bases of support. He pursued affinity to Israel with the same determination that marked his efforts on behalf of the Hashemites in 1948, once again showing strength of character and bold, unflinching leadership. Ja'bari himself attributed his dramatic shift in policy to the 1967 crisis, which led him to conclude that the Arab countries were incapable of solving the Palestinian problem. Therefore, he felt justified in embarking on a search of his own for a diplomatic settlement.[47]

Barely two weeks after the war, Ja'bari already proposed convening Palestinian and Israeli leaders to outline a peace plan for establishing a Palestinian state within the territory of the 1947 partition plan.[48] His proposal was rejected outright but he continued discussing his ideas on self-administration with Israeli representatives for several years.[49] At the same time, Ja'bari's failure to garner support for his ideas among Palestinian leaders reiterated once again the socio-political rift between the northern and southern areas of the West Bank. Most leaders of the northern West Bank, especially the Nablus leadership of Hikmat al-Masri, Qadri Tuqan and Walid Shak'a, rejected his plans. In June 1968, Israeli Foreign Ministry official Moshe Sasson, who had met with Ja'bari several times, reported that the Sheikh suggested that Israel pressure al-Masri to persuade him.[50] The only place Ja'bari found support for his plans was Mt. Hebron, his traditional sphere of influence.[51] Ja'bari also supported Peres' civil administration ideas in 1974, and was promptly vilified by all sides. He lashed back at his detractors to say that denying Israel's existence "is likened to one who denies the existence of the sun".[52] Despite the harsh criticism, Ja'bari's words and actions proved his confidence in his legitimacy to lead a significant diplomatic move on behalf of the

Palestinians. Indeed, both Ja'bari's supporters and rivals regarded him as the boldest of West Bank leaders well into the 1970s.[53] Still, his ideas gained little traction with his Palestinian rivals or with Israel, which remained opposed to a supra-local Palestinian leadership and kept these discussions theoretical.

Regardless, Ja'bari continued cultivating relations with Israel, which helped him consolidate his status as a regional leader. Two months after the war, the Israeli Prime Minister's Advisor for Arab Affairs reported that "Ja'bari is cooperating with the authorities and taking steps to ensure that the entire Mt. Hebron region will follow his lead. Encouragement of people like him is extremely important."[54] Many Israeli officials, including military intelligence officers and others acquainted with Ja'bari before 1948, disagreed with this assessment.[55] Nevertheless, Ja'bari enjoyed authorities far beyond those of other mayors.[56] He held close ties with Israeli prime ministers, defense ministers and other senior officials, and was well-aware that they perceived him as the omnipotent leader of the southern West Bank. Ja'bari could rely on consent from the military government to almost any request he posed, ranging from preventing expropriation of land to resolving problems of the local municipalities in the southern West Bank.[57] This gained him enormous political capital and established him in a position of influence on the government, often wielding greater influence than Israelis. In a letter to Prime Minister Golda Meir in 1973, one Israeli attorney complained that Ja'bari was easily able to arrange for "family reunification" (allowing relatives of West Bank residents stranded in Jordan by the war to return) while he himself was unable to obtain similar permits for his own clients.[58]

Ja'bari's new power allowed him to deepen his influence in areas such as Jerusalem, where he previously had no direct leverage. By the 1970s, the Jerusalem region had been dominated by Mt. Hebron emigrants for nearly two decades. Over time, this expatriate community assumed its own distinctive features, as ties to Hebron loosened and grew more ambivalent.[59] The community remained proud of its Hebronite heritage and exploited it whenever necessary, but often played down these ties. For example, the Barakat Abu al-Filat family, a prominent Jerusalem family of Hebronite origin,

eventually discarded the second part of its name that disclosed its Hebron origin. The family shortened its name to Barakat, which was also the name of a respected Jerusalem Greek-Orthodox family.[60]

Before the war, Ja'bari's contacts with the Hebronite community of Jerusalem were mostly indirect, maintained through local leaders of Hebron origin such as his son-in-law Anwar al-Khatib. After 1967, Ja'bari's growing power allowed him to circumvent the power brokers of the period to forge his own ties in Jerusalem. He began cultivating influence networks in the city that he used to deal with the entire Arab community of Jerusalem, Hebronites and others. In 1968, for example, he succeeded in overturning an Israeli order to confiscate shops in East Jerusalem, and gained considerable public support.[61] Jerusalem leaders too acknowledged Ja'bari's new direct influence on the region. In July 1969, a group of the city's public figures met to establish a body that would represent Arab Jerusalem before the Israeli authorities but failed to reach an agreement. As a compromise, participants agreed that Ja'bari would represent them. Publicist Muhammad Abu Shalbayeh bitterly criticized the weak Jerusalem leadership, which failed to unite and needed the Hebronite to resolve its affairs.[62] Among those contributing to Ja'bari's increasing influence in Jerusalem was mayor Teddy Kollek, who befriended the Sheikh with hopes of reaching out to the city's Hebronite community through him. For his part, Ja'bari bolstered the legitimacy of the Jerusalem municipality when he urged the city's Palestinians to vote in the municipal elections of July 1973.[63]

Ja'bari extended his influence into new territories, including the northern West Bank and the Arab communities of the Israeli Negev and the Galilee regions. In 1969, the Prime Minister's Advisor for Arab Affairs reported that the Sheikh had renewed his pre-1948 contacts with the Bedouin tribes of the northern Negev. The official also reported that the local sheikhs regarded Ja'bari as a highly influential pan-Arab figure, and looked to him to promote their own interests.[64] Before long, the Sheikh established himself as an *'urf* arbitrator in the northern Negev[65] and in the mid-1970s, he successfully resolved a fierce dispute between Christian and Druze communities in the Galilee.[66] The fact that Ja'bari – a Palestinian – was called to assist Israeli citizens in resolving internal disputes as well as differences with

the Israeli establishment attests to the tremendous power he commanded after 1967.

Vacillating Relations with Jordan

The extent of Ja'bari's influence largely relied on the fact that informal networks in the West Bank became more powerful after 1967. This was not exclusively Israel's doing; Jordanian relations with Ja'bari and others after the war also highlight the complex relationship between the Palestinian elite and the kingdom over decades.

The shift in Ja'bari's political positions after the war led to a decline in his relations with Jordan. First hints of a rift emerged as early as August 5, 1967, when Ja'bari refused to sign a declaration of allegiance to King Husayn that was sent through Hebron envoys.[67] Ja'bari told the British Consul that Jordan was pursuing a catastrophic policy that left the people in the region defenseless, and therefore he had decided to promote a settlement by himself.[68] This shocked Jordan, where Ja'bari was soon branded a traitor (*kha'in*). The Sheikh retorted that "traitors are those who abandoned the West Bank and preferred that its children attend demonstrations rather than school."[69] This rapid collapse exposed several key features of the relations between the Hashemites and the Ja'baris. Unlike many Palestinian families, the Ja'baris had no significant economic interests in Jordan at the time.[70] Most high-ranking positions were held by the Sheikh himself; other family members held no senior positions. Thus, when relations grew strained, it was quite simple to sever ties with Jordan and redefine the family's attitude to the Hashemite kingdom.

With the exception of public invectives, the kingdom had no leverage against Ja'bari and tried to pressure him through the public instead. In January 1969, Jordan imposed heavy taxes on the Hebron bus company that transported pilgrims to Mecca through the kingdom.[71] The Jordanians also prohibited the export of grapes, one of Mt. Hebron's main crops.[72] Still, Jordan's ability to impose sanctions was limited. The economy of Mt. Hebron was no longer dependent on Jordan to the same degree it was before the war. It is also plausible that Jordan did not want to risk entirely alienating

the public, which was traditionally a friendly population with significant branches in the kingdom. When pressure failed, Jordan tried incentives and in July 1969, the king offered Ja'bari a ministerial post. The Sheikh declined.[73] In 1970, Ja'bari went so far as to declare that Jordan had no role in any Israeli-Palestinian settlement, since Palestinian borders ended at the River Jordan.[74] Like other Palestinian leaders following Black September, he adopted an increasingly harsh tone toward Jordan, not because he favored the PLO, but because he wished to exploit the anti-Jordanian public sentiment.[75] The discord with Jordan, however, did not prevent Ja'bari from continuing to operate there through his contacts. One such contact was Mustafa Dudin from the village of Dura, who held various senior positions in Jordan. The Dudins did not particularly sympathize with the Sheikh's views but were forced to assist him in Jordan in order to obtain privileges in Mt. Hebron.[76] Such ambivalent relationships were commonplace in his bases of support network and prevailed because both parties needed each other, albeit with reservations. Nevertheless, permanent mutual mistrust rendered utilitarian ties fragile, and ultimately effected the stability of Ja'bari's network in case one or more of the conditions holding it together changed.

In 1972, relations between Ja'bari and the Jordan showed signs of recovery although they never regained their pre-war level. The détente of sorts came with Husayn's plan for a United Arab Kingdom that would grant the West Bank autonomy under its patronage,[77] as well as Jordan's desire to placate key West Bank leaders after Black September. With no physical presence in the West Bank, Jordan tried to maintain its influence in the region through individuals. This system of patronage (*wasta*) would become a key instrument of Jordanian policy during this period, in contrast to its centralized approach before 1967. The new approach considerably reinforced informal networks in the West Bank, as well as the reciprocal nature of Ja'bari's relations with Jordan. The Hashemites had no substitute for Ja'bari's influence in the West Bank or in Israel,[78] and had little choice but to put up with his troublesome rhetoric. This bargaining position enabled Ja'bari to enjoy considerable resources and powers from Jordan[79] without substantially changing his ideas, which did

not seem to move from theory to practice anyway. On the whole, Ja'bari's actions during this period suggest that he viewed the issue of a Palestinian entity not only as a rational solution but also as a bargaining chip in his relations with Jordan.[80]

In 1974, the rising power of the PLO eroded Ja'bari's confidence and drove him to embrace Jordan more tightly. In private conversations with Israeli government officials, he conceded that an independent Palestinian state was unviable and that he would rather Jordan took control of the West Bank than the PLO.[81] Still, the trust and intimacy that characterized relations between Ja'bari and Jordan before 1967 were never fully restored; the Sheikh would pay the price for this before long.

Relations with the National Camp

For years, Ja'bari's relations with the nationalists, first and foremost the PLO, were characterized by mutual rejection and hostility. This animosity did not stem from substantial ideological differences. While Ja'bari rejected the PLO's *modus operandi* – especially the armed struggle concept – the main source of tension between the sides was their competition over political influence in the West Bank.

Ja'bari played a key role in relations between the PLO and the southern West Bank, especially the Mt. Hebron area. Since the early days of Israeli rule, he publicly opposed the PLO and blocked its efforts to destabilize the region through trade strikes. Ja'bari took to the streets with strongmen and threatened merchants that their stores would be raided and the goods distributed to the city's poor if owners complied with the strikes.[82] According to military government reports, Ja'bari advised it to employ a heavy hand against public displays of disorderly conduct.[83] According to Ronen, he also instructed southern West Bank leaders to prevent the PLO from establishing roots in the area, and demanded that locals turn in PLO activists in exchange for his assistance on various matters.[84] "We have a moral duty to prevent any collaboration between the population and the terrorists,"[85] he boldly declared. After PLO operations, he would typically invite himself to senior Israeli officials to denounce the Palestinian organization.[86] Ja'bari's actions were designed to maintain Israel's support but were equally the acts of an

formidable leader – "a man of commanding, almost patriarchal appearance," as described by the British Consul[87] – who fiercely defended his territory and blocked any intervention in his spheres of influence. His actions against PLO activists did not prevent him from later intervening on their behalf to ease their sentences. However, these moves aimed to appease their families, not the PLO itself.[88]

The difference between Hebronites and Nablusians is a well-known Palestinian narrative. Popular folklore facetiously portrays the proverbial Hebronite as a conservative type, capable of enduring much suffering before his anger erupts as a burning flame, and the Nablusian as a short-tempered ideologue. Although grossly stereotypical, the narrative largely overlapped with both region's relations with Israel; Mt. Nablus churned with unrest within a short time of the occupation while Mt. Hebron erupted only two years later.[89] In the northern West Bank, unrest bore a marked national character, whether pan-Arab or Palestinian. In its southern counterpart, unrest appeared related to local dissent and was more religious in nature, although national elements were present too.[90] Land appropriation and confrontations with Jewish settlers caused friction; however, most tension revolved around the Tomb of the Patriarchs, sacred to Jews as the Cave of the Machpela and to Muslims as al-Haram al-Ibrahimi.[91]

Mt. Hebron remained very conservative in essence, despite post-1967 developments. The social structure underwent little substantial change and families remained the fundamental unit, as did other derivatives of the familial order such as *'urf*.[92] In the early 1970s, there were no cinemas or theaters in the area.[93] Potential change agents such as refugees lived in two camps at a distance from Hebron and had negligible impact on the city's atmosphere.[94] The same was true of the Hebronite educated sector, which had the highest emigration rate in the entire West Bank due to the stagnant local economy. Consequently, educated circles carried little weight in the local arena.[95] Many of the changes ushered in by the occupation, such as employment in Israel and the increase in revenues that followed, had no adverse impact on the influence networks of the Mt. Hebron elite, unlike elsewhere in the West Bank. Ja'bari, and through him other southern West Bank leaders, was involved in most

moves – ranging from organizing employment to the acquisition of development funds, exploited to amass political gain.[96]

These regional distinctions may explain why Ja'bari interpreted unrest as a local matter rather than part of a broader process of political mobilization and radicalization. Naturally aware of his constituents' sensitivity to the Tomb of the Patriarch, he repeatedly used sharp rhetoric against Israel on this matter.[97] He did not, however, understand that the mounting frustration, whether religious or national in nature, would ultimately lead to the same outcome as in the northern West Bank, and intensify the confrontation with Israel. The PLO did understand this. In May 1969, a large Fatah cell was uncovered in Hebron;[98] two months later, Fatah members assassinated Ja'bari's friend, the *mukhtar* of the town of Halhul.[99] Still, Ja'bari interpreted the increasing frequency of PLO operations as a mostly random phenomenon.[100]

The PLO refrained from targeting Ja'bari, who was a far more powerful leader than the slain *mukhtar*. The organization conducted most of its efforts against the Sheikh in the pro-PLO press, which carefully avoided explicit mention of his name.[101] In early 1974, *al-Fajer* editor Yousef ("Joe") Nasser made an exception and published a caricature depicting Ja'bari with a slipper crammed in his mouth. Nasser disappeared several days later and was never seen again. Suspicions immediately led to the Ja'baris but the investigation found nothing.[102] Years later, Hanna, who succeeded Nasser at *al-Fajer*, recounted a meeting with a criminal from Hebron who claimed to be one of Nasser's kidnappers. The outlaw claimed that most of the kidnappers were members of the Ja'bari family and that they broke into Nasser's apartment with help from Jamil Hamad, none other than Nasser's deputy editor.[103] Either way, the incident sheds light on the balance of powers in the West Bank of the mid-1970s, when Ja'bari was a powerful regional leader and PLO loyalists still lacked powers of deterrence or retaliation. There were other dimensions to these power relations too. Ja'bari dismissed PLO opposition to his self-government plan, and was excluded from growing rapprochement between the PLO and other West Bank leaders after Black September. He remained adamant in his belief that the PLO would never attain political or military significance as long as it

remained divided into numerous splinter groups.[104] Ja'bari's rhetoric assumed a more nationalist tone only after the Rabat Summit and its resolution, which he acknowledged.[105] However, both tone and recognition were short-lived and were reversed in 1975 when support for the PLO declined due to its involvement in the civil war in Lebanon, and Jordan's favor increased. The military government reported that behind closed doors, even staunch Palestinian nationalists admitted that separating the two banks of the River Jordan was infeasible.[106] For his part, Ja'bari renewed his calls for self-government and resumed denunciation of the PLO.[107]

Ja'bari's relationship with the PLO might have improved if he were willing to temper his ambition for political dominance. If Ja'bari had been content with his regional status and relinquished aspirations to lead the entire West Bank, his altercations with the PLO would have probably been less frequent. Interestingly, other members of his family did not automatically share his attitude toward the organization. At least three of Ja'bari's sons, Burhan, Nur al-Din and Nabil, sympathized with the PLO. Like other families, the Ja'baris reflected prevalent inter-generational differences. Nabil, however, claimed that the mutual public tirades between his father and the PLO masked relations that were, in fact, far better. Nabil also contended he personally delivered conciliatory messages from PLO leaders to his father, despite disagreement on a host of issues.[108] Even so, the high-profile friction took its toll on public opinion and gradually eroded support for the Sheikh. Still, the rising PLO was not Ja'bari's biggest problem. More immediate and significant danger loomed ahead in the local reality of Mt. Hebron, deriving from the typical sociopolitical patterns of the familial order.

Disintegration of the Hebronite alliance in Hebron, 1967–1976

Parallel to Ja'bari's personal rise to power, the Hebronite alliance in Mt. Hebron underwent an opposite process of internal erosion that ultimately lead to its disintegration. The more powerful Ja'bari grew, the more this disrupted the balance between him and the families that were his main allies in the Hebronite alliance. One of the foundations of this alliance was the division of economic and political resources between the leading families. During the Jordanian

period, the government helped maintain this balance with its centralized control of resources that kept any single element from gaining excessive dominance. The occupation of the West Bank set in motion three processes that collapsed the balance. West Bank personas who held senior positions in the Jordanian government became irrelevant. Israel and Jordan alike nurtured Ja'bari, who became more powerful; Israel even targeted Ja'bari's old partners too. Last, but not least, was the Sheikh's own conduct.

The deteriorating relations between Ja'bari and the Tamimi family, his senior partner in the Hebronite alliance, offer an example of the internal erosion of Ja'bari's bases of support. After 1967, Tamimi leader Rashad al-Khatib lost his institutional clout as a member of the Jordanian senate,[109] while Ja'bari's strength continued to grow. Both sides recognized that the rules of the game had changed irreversibly. Two tense years in these relations ended in 1969, when Rashad and his associate Sheikh Muhammad al-Dweyb, leader of the Ta'amra tribal confederation, were exiled to Jordan. Officially, Rashad was deported for subversive activities against Israel, but his rivalry with Ja'bari was most likely a major factor in the government order.[110] A month later, Rashad's son 'Isam was deported too, followed by 'Abd al-Hay 'Arafeh, a longstanding rival of Ja'bari's who ran against him for the mayoralty in 1946.[111] After 'Arafeh's deportation, Ja'bari tried to draw the 'Arafeh family into his circle by petitioning the government to ease detention conditions for his sons. According to Zvi Barel, who served in several military government positions in Hebron, every deportation awarded Ja'bari with double leverage, both removing his rivals and making him instrumental in their chances of being allowed to return.[112] Rashad's brother Anwar al-Khatib was also forced to grit his teeth in view of his father-in-law's growing power. Until 1967, Anwar al-Khatib had been a key Jerusalem leader but was deported after the war. Ja'bari secured his return two months later, after appealing to Dayan.[113] Stripped of his official powers as governor of the Jerusalem district, all that remained for al-Khatib was to watch as Ja'bari eclipsed him in his own city. In another case, Ja'bari had a dispute with Sheikh Bayud Tamimi, the Qadi of Hebron. The top cleric considered himself the supreme authority on the Tomb of the Patriarchs and objected to the settlement Ja'bari was trying to

advance at Israel's request. Ja'bari prevailed, with the help of the Supreme Muslim Council in Jerusalem that like many others, was in need of Ja'bari's services.[114] Ja'bari, however, could not always rely on his patronage, which was suitable for inter-family relations but less so in dealings with formal large-scale organizations. It was fortuitous for Ja'bari that institution building in Mt. Hebron was not highly developed. In the mid-1970s, only 18 social institutions operated in the region, including the Charitable Association of Hebronite Women and the Red Crescent. In addition, there were several active farming and labor unions, typically of limited power.[115] Some associations, such as the Engineers Association, were more effective because they affiliated with a strong parent organization in this case, the Muslim Brotherhood. Ja'bari had taken part in establishing the Brotherhood's Palestine branch in 1946 (Chapter 2) but by the early 1970s, he came to view it as a threat that had grown beyond the scope of his influence.[116] The Sheikh developed his reliance on patronage and his rivals' fears at the expense of other, perhaps more positive, types of ties. He remained highly popular in various circles but other groups perceived him as a problem. Intellectuals were among his critics, although their main grievance was not related to the national cause as one may think, but rather to the patterns of his administration. Specifically, they viewed the *tazkiyya* of 1972 – government-approved lists of family candidates who were appointed all over the West Bank without elections based on an inter-familial agreement – as an undemocratic arrangement of the familial order.[117] Ali Sharif, a former Jordanian lawmaker and an erstwhile friend of the Sheikh, published the intellectuals' position in a comprehensive three-part manifesto titled "Three Letters of Reproach to a Leader-Friend" in which he criticized Ja'bari:

> I thought that all the harm caused to us by you and your associates would cause you shame and drive you to depart from the stage [...] leave the road clear for our educated fellow city residents to take up a position at the helm of the ship. You did not do so, and instead your pride soared and you elevated your own status. You became older in years and are lagging in your technological understanding and your ability to lead others. You believe that leadership is your property and your inheritance. Neither you, your family members, and your close

> associates should not be misled [...] why don't you look at your neighbors? [...] You are incapable of distinguishing between Israeli leaders and ordinary Israeli citizens, [since] they have no servants or entourage [...] You should be happy with people who tell you "no." You should be happy to see people who bear the truth and engage in science and knowledge. Do not kill them or push them away or put them in jail, because a fear of rivals is a fear of the truth [...] And you [and your associates] are leading your flock regardless of their objections.[118]

Public censure of the type voiced by Sharif, who was emboldened by his family's backing, was rare. Few of Hebron's intellectuals dared to publish similar diatribes and when they did, many Hebronites interpreted these as the product of their family interests.[119] In such a climate, the intellectuals stood little chance of succeeding in the political sphere as a distinct group. In late 1975, however, a political avalanche presented intellectuals with the opportunity to leverage their resources by connecting to broad, familial powers.

In 1975, the military government still had faith in Ja'bari's ability to continue leading the southern West Bank, and felt similarly about other convenient candidates in the northern West Bank. The military government therefore felt sufficiently confident to schedule elections for 1976 and further relax Jordanian election laws by reducing voter taxes and allowing women to vote. Like many West Bank leaders,[120] Ja'bari objected and argued that there were "more important problems to resolve than women voting."[121] To the military government officials trying to persuade him to stand for election, he explained that he would not run against candidates "who only yesterday kissed my hand and served me coffee." He considered any arrangement outside the *tazkiyya* as a personal insult to his four decades of leadership. Unlike the 1972 election, this time the military government was generally not interested in this sort of arrangement (although it agreed in a few locations).[122]

An indignant Ja'bari announced he would not run, toppling the last pillars supporting the Hebronite alliance's sociopolitical arrangements in Hebron – but not necessarily in other places, such as Jerusalem – and sending the city's families scrambling after new allies. On January 30 1976, representatives of several local families,

including Qawasmeh and Zughayer, convened and decided to back their own candidates: Fahd Qawasmeh, an unknown and politically unaffiliated engineer, and Dr. ʻAwny Sabri Zughayer.[123] Later, Qawasmeh would recount his deep misgivings about the decision to challenge Jaʻbari by running for elections, and said he was unable to sleep properly for days.[124] Among other things, this statement suggests Qawasmeh understood that the Sheikh's decision was not necessarily final. In fact, Jaʻbari did change his mind several times.[125] His fickle behavior accelerated the dissolution of the Hebronite alliance's sociopolitical arrangements,[126] and forced his cousin Sheikh Suleiman Jaʻbari out of his peaceful anonymity to publish an open letter to the residents of Hebron in the *al-Quds* newspaper. Sheikh Suleiman praised the benefits of Hebron's longstanding unity and the city's development under his cousin's leadership. He cautioned the public against dissent and urged it "to maintain unity and protect the well of sweet water from which you drank until today."[127]

The military government hoped Jaʻbari would have a change of heart, and decided to do something to dispel Jaʻbari's fear of a possible embarrassing defeat. One of the candidates was Dr. Ahmad Hamza Natsheh, an active member of the Communist party.[128] Publically, Jaʻbari was gracious toward Dr. Natsheh and asked the city council not to disqualify him despite the man's Bethlehem residence.[129] Jaʻbari's loyalists, however, paraded loudly by the Natsheh family *diwan* (the clan's decision-making center) and threatened anyone challenging his leadership. Behind closed doors, the Sheikh himself had warned the military government about the "growing strength of the communists" already in December 1975. His comments were interpreted as a suggestion to remove Natsheh, who was indeed exiled to Lebanon the following March.[130] The deportation reverberated throughout the West Bank and many, including the PLO, accused Jaʻbari of instigating the move, although he denied it. Prior to his forced exile, Natsheh was not a particularly important figure in his large clan, but the deportation evoked unifying anger. Fahd Qawasmeh, who had co-founded "The National Bloc" with Natsheh, now enjoyed the support of an increasing number of families that joined his list. Of the nine candidates on the

list, at least six hailed from leading families. This chain of events effectively silenced Ja'bari's candidacy[131] and the National Bloc won the April 12 elections.

The Fall: 1976–1978

The collapse of the Hebronite alliance in Hebron crushed Ja'bari's assumption that strong patronage and reliance on Israel were sufficient to maintain his power. Likewise, the military government learned that it too had erred in assuming a strong patronage network was sufficient to guarantee a leader's power. Indeed, the military government misunderstood both the system of agreements in Hebron as well as the implications of blatantly empowering the Sheikh in a period of significant change that neither the military government nor Ja'bari adequately understood. Events proved it had been a mistake to view the familial order as based exclusively on patronage or incapable of change, even in a conservative city such as Hebron. Israel's conspicuous empowerment of Ja'bari generated public dependency and sympathy but also deep revulsion and anger. In any case, patronage was no substitute for favorable public opinion in this period.

The prevalent approach views the developments in Hebron as part of a broader process of social and political modernization that elevated intellectual and nationalist forces throughout the West Bank. However, this should be regarded with some skepticism. Events in Hebron effectively reflected the endurance of the familial order in political culture that was also well apparent in elections in other localities in the southern West Bank.[132] Qawasmeh enjoyed the support of emergent forces,[133] but it is doubtful that he would have been elected without a strong inter-familial coalition. Still, as a candidate who assumed no religious trappings, unlike his predecessors, Qawasmeh's victory was a novelty, which reflected two phenomena. Hebron had become somewhat less conservative, despite its enduring family-based political culture. In addition, Qawasmeh was part of a trend sweeping the entire West Bank, in which young politicians came to the forefront with both a nationalist agenda as well as strong family support.

Qawasmeh declared that one of his top priorities would be to establish a municipality that adhered to standards of good

governance and due process, thus expressing his commitment to the agenda of Hebron intellectuals. However, it would not be long before Qawasmeh would be obliged to acknowledge the pressures of familial order and compromise on his platform;[134] his post-election pledge that he would not purge the municipality of Ja'bari loyalists lasted less than a year. In early 1977, two dozen of Ja'bari's men were dismissed and replaced with employees from the Qawasmeh and Natsheh families.[135] Shortly afterwards, the mayor and a confidante, the city engineer, were accused of diverting municipal funds to develop the Qawasmeh family quarter. Some 18 months after his election, many of Qawasmeh's supporters, especially the intellectuals, were disappointed to see him continue the family-based *modus operandi* of his predecessors.[136]

Qawasmeh was forced to share power not only with his own family and its allies but also with rival families. For more than two years, he clashed with the Ja'baris over control of the Islamic College, which the Sheikh founded in 1971. Ultimately, Qawasmeh chose to protect his contacts with the military government and defer to its demand that he relinquish control to the Ja'baris, so as to temper their opposition.[137] In addition to assisting the Ja'baris with the college, the military government also appointed the Sheikh's son Muhammad Rashid to head the government's education bureau, and his brother Samir as a district judge.[138] The government also extended several humanitarian gestures to the Ja'baris, such as financing the hospitalization costs of the ailing Sheikh, but refrained from significantly intervening for the Ja'baris' with Qawasmeh. As we shall see, the military government had no qualms about reinforcing politically amenable families in order to weaken troublesome mayors during this period. In Hebron, at least initially, the government took a different approach, mainly due to Qawasmeh's pragmatism, which led him to prioritize municipal rather than national goals, unlike several other nationalist mayors elected at the same time. Consequently, Qawasmeh gave the authorities little reason to harass him, and even won the sympathy of several military government officials.[139]

Jordan, which had not forgotten Ja'bari's conduct after 1967, did not go out of its way to help the Sheikh. Qawasmeh for his part

made considerable efforts to connect with Amman. In early 1977, he told former Dutch Prime Minister Joop den Uyl that Jordan is important to the Palestinians in general and to Hebronites in particular because of the latter's special connection to Jordan, thus confirming the relevance of Mt. Hebron's enduring lateral ties with the Hashemite kingdom. Qawasmeh did not rule out the possibility of a Palestinian state in a confederacy with Jordan[140] and shortly after his election, he became the first nationalist mayor to pay an official visit to Jordan. Enraged by the magnificent reception for Qawasmeh, Ja'bari lashed out at Jordan fiercely.[141] Both Jordan and Israel had another, more practical reason to withhold support from the Ja'baris,[142] who failed to present an adequate alternative leader when the Sheikh's health began to fail. This void highlighted the acute shortcomings of the centralized organizational structure the Sheikh had created, and his failure to groom a worthy heir.

Qawasmeh succeeded Ja'bari as mayor of Hebron but did not inherit his regional stature. Delegations from all over the southern West Bank continued to seek audience with the Sheikh, who used his ties with Israel and Jordan to resolve problems, alongside serving as a senior *'urf* arbitrator. In November 1977, he welcomed Egyptian President Anwar Sadat on his historic visit to Jerusalem, and used the opportunity to obtain a pardon for a Hebronite sentenced to death in Egypt.[143] Once again, Ja'bari's informal networks proved invaluable. Soon afterwards, however, his health deteriorated and he died in 1980, leaving his clan with the legendary narrative of the family's golden age. The memory of Sheikh Muhammad 'Ali al-Ja'bari as the clan's unrivaled leader loomed larger than life for decades.[144]

NORTHERN WEST BANK: UNDERMINING THE OLD INFLUENCE NETWORKS

The Israeli occupation changed the outward orientation of the northern West Bank networks, as well as their internal topology. From Nablus itself to specific dignitaries, the status of important social, political, administrative and economic hubs of the Jordanian

era declined as these networks became more decentralized. These and other changes undermined the region's influence networks, but at the same time offered opportunities to establish new influence networks in their stead.

After only several months of rule, the military government described Nablus as a radical political hub whose influence permeated the entire northern West Bank.[145] Evidence of this was found in the Israeli prisons in the West Bank. Of the 606 Palestinian prisoners two months after the war, 431 were jailed in Nablus, compared to 40 in Hebron.[146] In September 1967, Nablus mayor Hamadi Kana'an orchestrated a strike that began in the Nablus education system and spread to the entire northern West Bank.[147] Wishing to weaken Nablus, the military government exploited insights regarding the economic and administrative importance of the city, which remained a key junction for many resources flowing in and out of the northern West Bank.[148] Israel made clear there would be consequences for Nablus if the strike continued, and that it would cultivate Jenin, Tulkarem and other cities instead. The threat stirred local concerns and ultimately ended the strike, but the city remained a lively political center.[149] In November 1968, the mayor of Tulkarem told Defense Minister Moshe Dayan that his city was the quietest in the West Bank and "if there is anything going on, it is due to the influence of Nablus."[150]

Despite its declarations, the military government took no active measures to undermine the central part Nablus played in the West Bank economy, but the city's role somewhat diminished anyway due to the geopolitical changes after 1967. Opening the borders with Israel allowed northern West Bank villages to establish direct ties to the west. Israel was closer than Jordan; it offered more employment opportunities, and consumed more goods.[151] The ability to establish independent ties with Israel without the mediation of Nablus had an adverse impact on the city, although these were not necessarily economic. Nablus was somewhat compensated with new sources of revenue, especially the thousands of Israelis who shopped in Nablus markets every week.[152] Still, these changes were not enough to make up for the weakening influence networks of Nablus, which declined as the regional mediator.

Nablus suffered more as the result of a premeditated move by the military government to divide the northern West Bank into four districts, now administratively independent from the former regional capital.[153] This move had informal implications as well, such as the ability of other officials in the new administrative system who did not hail from Nablus to develop their own influence networks. In practice, both the economic and administrative damage to Nablus' status as a regional hub ultimately led to the same result: the city's regional influence networks were replaced with new and often smaller networks, featuring a cast of new actors.

Alongside the post-1967 challenges to Nablus' regional influence networks, longstanding local influence networks faced threats as well, some that had evolved over a long period. Hand in hand with widespread migration from Nablus in the Jordanian period, an opposite process flooded the city with thousands of rural immigrants and refugees, who were outside the elite families' primary support circles. According to the 1967 Israeli census, Nablus' 18,481 refugees accounted for 33.5 per cent of the population of the city and its environs.[154] Despite the scope of the new groups, their social and public assimilation was limited. For example, of the hundreds of people employed by the municipality, only 10 were refugees.[155] Since such jobs were one of the elite's most obvious resources of patronage, we can infer that there was little contact between the elite and the new groups. Relations between the veteran population and the newcomers were tenses, and impeded potential cooperation such as joint organizations and arrangements.[156] In 1975, for example, one executive member of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce complained that he was being alienated because of his village origins. The same year, the *mukhtar* of the Balata refugee camp claimed that the refugees wanted the camp annexed to Nablus but were fully aware that the city's leading families objected. He suggested that the military government allow refugees to vote in the Nablus municipal elections in order to promote integration.[157]

The inflow of capital to Nablus from its emigrants posed another threat to the city's local influence networks. In 1969 alone, Nablus expatriates, especially in the Persian Gulf, transferred a total of 60

million Israeli lira into the city,[158] a sum nearly equal to the city's total revenues from its exports to Jordan.[159] The new money weakened dependencies on elite networks and fueled other developments, including the growth of the city's built-up areas, which increased by 22 per cent between 1961 and 1967. After 1967, the city continued to spread in all directions,[160] as development eclipsed – but did not completely destroy – the city's family-based coalescence patterns. As in the case of the departure from the walls of Jerusalem's Old City (Chapter 1), affluent Nablus families tended to concentrate in new upscale neighborhoods such as Rafidiya (a village eventually incorporated into Nablus) and Mahfiya. Still, the process undoubtedly disrupted the numerous personal and neighboring networks that contributed to family cohesion. The new neighborhoods had a more heterogeneous character and were established for specific, usually supra-familial groups, such as the members of labor unions.[161]

Alongside opportunities, economic ties to Israel also posed an enormous challenge to the local influence networks. In 1967, there were 387 factories in Nablus. The al-Masris owned the largest four, which employed 430 people, or 5 per cent of the city's breadwinners.[162] In May 1971, a labor dispute broke out in the al-Masri oil factory, the West Bank's largest employer. In a conversation with a military government official, a local intellectual attributed the dispute to growing unrest among laborers over the salary gaps between the West Bank and Israel. According to the intellectual, many employees walked out on their jobs without compensation after calculating that four months' work in Israel would cover the severance that they forfeited. He explained to the official that this led to a severe shortage of skilled workers in the local industries, and estimated that if the al-Masri family gave in to the workers' demand for higher wages, this could trigger a landslide in labor relations throughout the entire West Bank.[163]

Such challenges left their mark on the local influence networks and most probably on intra-familial networks such as the al-Masri network that employed numerous relatives. The 6,000 workers who left Nablus for Israel every day in 1975 found employment easily, without having to rely on the elites. They found work

independently, through the military government's employment bureau and local employment agents, whose proliferation was yet another indication of the opportunities these times offered diverse actors.[164]

THE AL-MASRIS RESPOND: INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND TIES WITH RISING POWERS

For the al-Masris, the profound changes in the West Bank since the 1960s were an unwelcome challenge. The family did, however, acknowledge these changes, and adapt to them by extending their institutional, economic and political ties to the public in general, and to emerging powers in particular. The major post-1967 institutions in the northern West Bank included local chambers of commerce and municipalities, which were empowered by which enjoyed authorities granted by both Israel and Jordan.[165] Their strength also seemed to stem from their increasing significance as alternative political institutions, in the absence of other institutions permitted to operate in the political arena. Typically, such status harbored the potential for political mobilization, as seen in the role the Nablus municipality played in organizing the strike of autumn 1967. At the same time, the municipalities and chambers of commerce succeeded in controlling and even curtailing civil unrest through the "strike committees" established for this purpose, and other means.[166]

The power of municipalities and chambers of commerce motivated families to establish additional institutions to compensate for the reduced efficiency of other vehicles of influence, such as inter-familial alliances or Jordanian government positions. One such example was the Supreme Agricultural Committee headed by ʻAwny Rauf ʻAbd al-Hadi, an affluent landowner from ʻArabeh. In the 1970s, his organization managed to encroach on several spheres of operation of the chambers of commerce, with which he constantly competed over funds and authority. ʻAbd al-Hadi's success enhanced his status in the rural environs of Mt. Nablus, and positioned him as the key rival of the al-Masris and the al-Fares family, their major ally in the area.[167]

Against this backdrop, senior public positions became too important for the the al-Masris to discount. In the late 1960s, Hamadi Kana'an was the mayor of Nablus; however, Arik Cohen notes that the residents knew that the al-Masris held the real power.[168] Once again, this illustrated that as a purely economic family organization, the al-Masris did not seek public or political positions as an end in itself. Therefore, they could allow Kana'an to fill his obligations even though he belonged to the rival camp led by the Shak'as, so long as he did not harm their interests. When the al-Masris wished to remind the public who held the real power in Nablus, they did so effectively. In 1967, for example, the municipality was in desperate need of a loan. The city council refused the aid Israel offered, and deputy mayor Haj Ma'azuz al-Masri intervened and personally loaned the funds.[169] This was an example of a long-standing pattern in which the elite families filled various roles instead of the state.

In early 1969, relations between Kana'an and the al-Masri-Tuqan-al-Fares axis soured after Kana'an accused the Jordanian government of corruption. The charged enraged the Tuqans, one of whose family leaders, Ahmad, was Jordan's Minister of Defense.[170] From this point on, Kana'an's good reputation no longer protected him and the criticism of Jordan served an excuse to oust him. In effect, the conflict with Kana'an began even before that incident after he took over part of the *Sumud* ('steadfastness') funds Arab countries allocated the West Bank through Jordan following the 1967 war.[171] In the first year of the occupation, Kana'an received these funds from the Jordanian government, which was headed at the time by his confidant Wasfi al-Tal.[172] These allocations evoked concern over Kana'an's increasing power and soaring popularity and influence in the West Bank.[173] However, when al-Tal's government was succeeded in late 1968 by one headed by Kana'an's rival Bahajat Talahouni, the al-Masri-Tuqan-al-Fares axis seized the opportunity to gain control of the funds, which were then transferred to the responsibility of Minister of Defense, Ahmad Tuqan. This too illustrated the impact of the changing of the guard on the region's informal networks. Gaining control of the *Sumud* funds was probably the key motive for the move against Kana'an,[174] who was eventually forced to resign.

In March 1969, Kana'an was succeeded by Haj Ma'azuz al-Masri, who immediately set out to build a positive relationship with the Israeli government. Within a short time, he would take credit for several achievements in the civil and municipal area, including Israel's approval of family reunification.[175] The chambers of commerce, which the al-Masris controlled almost continuously since the early 1950s, also offered many benefits, including allowing the family to handle the merchant class that formed one of its most important bases of support.[176] After 1967, the ability to protect the merchants' interests became especially important in light of the tendency of both Israel and Jordan to direct punitive action to the merchants, who were thought to be the most influential group in Mt. Nablus.[177]

The al-Masris' tightening grip on various institutions offset the decline of several of their longstanding influence networks, and helped the family establish connections with emergent forces. This was not necessarily the result of a change in policy, but rather of the family's traditional strategy to gain the flexibility required to protect its interests by acquiring diverse bases of support. The family's multi-headed structure supported this strategy by tolerating a pluralism of ideas expressed by members of different generations. As mayor, Haj Ma'azuz became prominently involved in efforts to release activists, prevent demolition of houses, and recover bodies of the armed fighters who died in operations against Israel.[178] He devoted a considerable bulk of his time to the welfare of hundreds of prisoners from Mt. Nablus, members of various pan-Arab and national organizations,[179] whose textbooks and food packages he personally funded.[180] This focus was not surprising, as the prisoners' fate gradually became a key public issue. Another organization that was instrumental in the family's relations with the public in general and the activists in particular was the Women's Association, which was headed by Ma'azuz's wife Rashda, Zafer's wife Gharda and Hikmat's daughter Jihan between the 1960s and 1980s. The organization set up employment centers to aid the families of slain operatives, dispatched protest delegations to Israeli officials, and organized demonstrations.[181] The family further bolstered ties with the various organizations by providing legal aid to their activists.

Mahdi ʻAbd al-Hadi, a friend of Zafer al-Masri, who was the most prominent member of the family's younger generation, recalled that Zafer funded the legal representation of thousands of activists, while the PLO "did not spend a penny."[182]

The al-Masris also cultivated good relations with the intellectuals and educated class. The Nablus elite and the intellectuals were linked through a diverse networks of ties and traditionally maintained an ambivalent relationship that combined criticism, dependence and loyalty.[183] In the early 1970s, most Nablus intellectuals were members of the elite families.[184] In the 1972 elections, Hamadi Kanaʻan announced the establishment of an intellectuals' list that "would fight against the traditional leadership."[185] Such slogans deflected attention from Kanaʻan himself belonging to the "traditional leadership"[186] and were popular among young educated voters. However, there was a deep disparity between these declarations and reality, which remained dictated by familial interests. Ahead of the 1972 elections, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Operations in the Territories General Shlomo Gazit toured Nablus. On one street identified as an al-Masri stronghold, Gazit met a student in his father's shop, who told him that as a member of the new generation, he would vote for Kanaʻan. An hour later, Gazit received word that the student had changed his mind. "One of the people escorting the visit quickly informed the student's father who rushed to the shop, and resolved the matter by giving his son two resounding slaps, ʻexplaining' his civic duty to him."[187] Indeed, despite Kanaʻan's popularity with the educated class, he failed to breach the family-based circles of loyalty or mobilize them. He himself acknowledged this, and was eventually forced to step down from the race.[188] Shamir et al found that in the same year, intellectual circles themselves were fraught with tension and social differences that hindered their ability to act in concert. Moreover, the vast majority of intellectuals still identified with the core values of the familial order and its derivative political culture, especially the supremacy of the collective over individual interests.[189]

During the early 1970s, the intellectuals were indecisive and in a general disarray that hampered any effective influence. This would change, however, in the middle of the decade, as their ideology began

to mature, and their support of Palestinian nationalism helped them bridge internal social tensions. In his study of Third World anti-colonialist movements, Paige pointed to similar examples of movements that brought together diverse social and ethnic groups, and could not rely on social ideology alone to create cohesion. Therefore, he said, such movements coalesced around the more pragmatic common denominator of political goals,[190] similarly to the West Bank intellectuals.

The intellectuals' contacts with the al Masris dated back to the 1950s. As a Nasserite, Hikmat's popularity with the students at the time enabled dialogue even in turbulent times.[191] Hikmat was also the main address for thousands of Palestinians on both banks of the river Jordan who sought education. Thanks to his ties with Nasser and his successor Sadat, Hikmat was allocated hundreds of scholarships every year that guaranteed admission to Egyptian universities for Palestinian students, free of academic requirements. This precious resource fueled the al-Masris' influence networks, and offers a glimpse into the structure of some of the family's patronage networks, as well as its priorities in distributing privileges. One-third of the scholarships went to students in the West and East Banks, and another third was earmarked for students from Nablus. The final portion of scholarships was given to Hikmat's longstanding ally, 'Abd al Rauf al-Fares, who awarded them to residents of the rural Mt. Nablus region, his area of influence.[192]

In the first half of the 1970s, demand for higher education exceeded the al-Masris' potential allocations, and the gap was filled by institutions such as municipalities and organizations, including the PLO, which awarded hundreds of scholarships.[193] However, the family still had the means to maintain ties with the educated class. In the 1970s and 1980s, Zafer and his wife Gharda became the largest philanthropists of West Bank educational projects designed specifically for the impoverished classes.[194] Nonetheless, Hikmat took the most proactive response to the growing demand for higher education, and began working with Israel, Jordan and Arab countries immediately after the occupation to obtain academic certification for al-Najah College in Nablus.[195] The al-Masris' involvement in al-Najah began in the 1920s with a donation by Haj Taher al-Masri and Ahmad

Shak'a for acquiring the land for the college,[196] and continued with the family's unwavering financial sponsorship of the institute and advocacy on its behalf.[197] Hikmat's efforts bore fruit and in 1977, al-Najah received academic accreditation.[198] Low tuition fees allowed members of the lower classes to acquire an education, and al-Najah was popularly dubbed "the university of the poor."[199] Undoubtedly, Hikmat considered al-Najah to be his life's work, and he served as chairman of the board until his death in 1994. The university honored his passing by canceling all activities for a three-day mourning period.[200] Hikmat was succeeded as chairman of the board by his son Salah.[201]

Social action was an important motive for the al-Masris' activities in the field of education. Like affluent families elsewhere, the al-Masris were not free of society's expectations. Supporting education also allowed the family to extend its influence networks and ties beyond the traditional circles of support, and offered an opportunity to develop long-term ties with the intellectuals within the new power centers that emerged in the political scene. One such intellectual was Fatah member and future statesman Saib 'Ariqat, who was Hikmat's protégé. According to Mahdi 'Abd al-Hadi, Hikmat al-Masri funded 'Ariqat's doctoral studies at Bradford, as he did for others including Hisham 'Awartani, who became a senior academic scholar. When 'Ariqat returned to the West Bank after completing his studies in 1983, he received a lecturing position at al-Najah and headed its foreign relations department. At the same time, he worked at the *al-Quds* newspaper that was also affiliated to the al-Masris.[202]

Indeed, the al-Masris' growing control of institutional bases of support, and the ties they forged with intellectuals and supporters of the national movement and other organizations helped the family adapt to the changes in its local and regional influence networks. However, this extensive web of ties was plagued by external pressures, which warranted a separate response.

Relations with Israel and Jordan

The al-Masris established good relations with Israel but unlike Sheikh Ja'bari, were careful to conceal them. The family simultaneously cultivated its public image both as antagonistic to Israel, and as an

effective mediator with connections that benefited the public, a duality Hourani describes as a typical pattern of the "politics of notables." The military government demonstrated good will to the family, but did not hesitate to apply pressure when the al-Masris acted against its wishes. When the family initially opposed the 1972 elections, the military government revoked the al-Masris' import license and even detained Hikmat overnight.[203] Still, the parties' relations were positive and such events were rare. As with Ja'bari, Israel strengthened the al-Masris' position in the local arena but contributed to its decline in the national political sphere.

After the 1967 war, Hikmat seemed to have abandoned the idea of a Palestinian state. In a meeting with an Israeli official several days after the war ended, Hikmat said Shuqairy's ideas had crumbled and that the West Bank should be returned to Jordan.[204] In November 1967, a British diplomat who surveyed positions in Nablus on the idea of an independent Palestinian state, reported that nearly everyone questioned on the subject replied that "it was all a lot of nonsense."[205] The American and French Consuls received similar impressions.[206] Nonetheless, the same month, Hikmat al-Masri and several other Nablus leaders proposed to establish a Palestinian autonomy for an interim period, at the end of which the Palestinians would decide on their future. Raz noted that it was Hikmat who tried to obtain support for the plan from Egypt and Jordan. Egypt agreed, Jordan refused and Israel avoided responding altogether,[207] as it was focused on the 'Jordanian option' at the time (return of the West Bank to Jordan). Hikmat abandoned his initiative and mediated between Jordan and Israel until finally the negotiations cooled in early 1969.[208] This role contributed to the preservation of his important status in the meantime but made him less relevant when he left the stage to make way for more proactive elements such as Sheikh Ja'bari and PLO activists.

The same ambivalence that characterized the al-Masris' relations with Jordan since the 1940s persisted after 1967, as the family continue to try to balance between its ties with Jordan and obligations to other, often contradictory centers of influence. As in the Jordanian period, the family resolved its dilemma through a division of labor among the family's leaders. Israel documents cited

Haj Ma'azuz as one of King Husayn's best friends, while Hikmat continued to express opinions that were occasionally problematic for Jordan, such as the initiative for Palestinian autonomy mentioned earlier. Jordan's weakened bargaining power after 1967 served the family, since Jordan was forced to employ the same combination of threats and incentives it previously used with Ja'bari to keep the al-Masris' favor, such as offering senate positions and even the premiership, which Hikmat rejected in March 1969.[209]

The decline of pan-Arabism eased Jordan's relations with the family but new pressure systems evolved in the form of Israel and the PLO. Israel's "open bridges" policy helped Nablus maintain its connections with the east, which were vital to its role as a major hub that channeled the bulk of commerce from the northern West Bank to Jordan. For its part, Jordan frequently exploited this dependence to pressure the Palestinians, with hopes of stirring unrest that would destabilize Israeli control.[210] The economic leaders of Nablus, in particular the al-Masris, were keen to prevent such crises, and often activated their ties in Jordan to revoke various rulings Jordan imposed on West Bank residents.[211]

The 1960s saw the establishment of two new economic family organizations within the al-Masri clan, alongside the existing one headed by Haj Taher's heirs (Hikmat, Ma'azuz, Nashat, Nai'f and later, Zafer). Munib al-Masri founded EDGO, a company that provided services to the petroleum industry and evolved into a global corporation.[212] Sabih, the younger brother of Hikmat, Nashat and Zafer, did not join their organization, and chose instead to develop his own independent economic family organization. In the 1960s, he became a food supplier to the Saudi army and relocated to Saudi Arabia, where he established additional businesses, including a partnership with Emir Abdullah, son of King Faisal (d. 1975). One of his businesses, ASTRA, cultivated crops in the north-Saudi region of Tabuk and employed hundreds of Nablus expatriates, including members of his own family.[213]

This emergence of two new family organizations within the al-Masri clan also contributed to the division of labor vis-a-vis Jordan. Haj Taher's heirs had contacts with prime ministers 'Abd al-Mun'am al-Rifa'i and Bahajat al-Talahouni,[214] while the organizations headed

by Sabih and Munib had relations with less agreeable prime ministers such as Wasfi al-Tal. As financial advisor to King Husayn, Sabih also enjoyed a warm relationship with the Jordanian monarch.[215] These various links substantially increased the al-Masris' ability to protect the public interests as well as its own by formal and informal means.

The Black September events soured relations between Jordan and the organization headed by Haj Taher's heirs. Hikmat, who censured Jordan, was even detained for several hours while visiting Amman in April 1971.[216] Still, al-Masri envoys continued to fill a wide range of positions in Jordan in a manner that preserved the family's ties with the Hashemites. For example, Jordanian Prime Minister Wasfi al-Tal appointed Munib al-Masri to serve as Minister of Public Works immediately upon the outbreak of the Black September events.[217] Relations continued to improve and Taher al-Masri, Nashat's son, was appointed a member of the parliament and government minister. Shortly before, Taher had married the daughter of Habis al-Majali, general commander of the Jordanian forces during the Black September events.[218]

As the PLO gained power, al-Masri leaders increasingly adopted a tone they hoped would achieve the near-impossible task of simultaneously expressing loyalty to both Jordan and the PLO. Initially, the Jordanians were enraged, especially Husayn, who viewed Hikmat as a self-serving man who put his business interests above all.[219] Given the family's relentless pursuit of economic goals, Husayn's wariness may not have been entirely misplaced. The al-Masris' warming toward the PLO undoubtedly led to Jordan's decision in 1975 to open an oil factory that would compete with the family's flagship West Bank industry. This time, however, the al-Masris could rely on Haj Ma'azuz's ties with King Husayn, who agreed to suspend the plan.[220] The division of labor within the family continued to prove its value.

Relations with the PLO

Relations between the PLO and the al-Masris can be divided into two periods, shaped by the character of the generational players involved. The first phase saw friction between the PLO and the family's veteran leaders until 1973–1974. At the same time, good relations between

the organization and the younger al-Masris evolved spontaneously, and an improvement in relations with the family's older guard followed as well. In 1974, the family would reach a strategic decision on this matter.

In November 1968, Hikmat and other Nablus leaders planned a delegation that would present the West Bank's concerns at the scheduled Arab League Summit in Rabat. This move infuriated the PLO, which threatened to strike anyone trying to undermine the organization's exclusive right to represent the Palestinians. The warning reflected a basic insecurity within the organization, which had faced numerous obstacles in establishing itself in the West Bank and still regarded most West Bank leaders as Israeli collaborators.[221] While the PLO's threats left little impression on West Bank leaders, the summit never took place.[222] Indeed, in the late 1960s, the PLO was only one of several political players in the West Bank, and not necessarily the strongest at that. Establishing the organization's status required time and overcoming tests, most of which occurred outside the boundaries of the West Bank.

Following the Black September events, the al-Masris' attitude toward the PLO warmed, as did their stand on the idea of an independent Palestinian state. This was not a fully developed position at this stage, and the family's statements oscillated between Jordan and the PLO, resulting in inconsistent relations with both. In 1972, for example, the PLO launched a fierce campaign against Hikmat and Haj Ma'azuz in the Lebanese press for their decision to participate in the municipal elections. In response, the al-Masris presented a petition signed by the people of Nablus that made clear that the family continued to enjoy broad public support.[223] This added to previous tension arising from the family's initial support for the United Arab Kingdom plan and its disregard for the organization's fierce objection. Change, however, was already in the making. Al-Masri leaders could not ignore public opinion, which increasingly favored the PLO, first and foremost among the young generation,[224] and many others after Black September. As the al-Masris acknowledged the PLO's changing status, the organization adopted a new approach and exchanged its threat with a new regard for the West Bank leaders' aspirations to influence their region. The PLO too grew more moderate and from the end of 1973,

appeared to temper its previous maximalist demands. West Bank leaders considered this a step closer to their own position.[225]

Throughout 1974, the PLO achieved unprecedented legitimacy in the Arab and international arenas, and this was immediately apparent in the rhetoric of al-Masri leaders. Several days after Arafat's UN speech, Hikmat declared: "Palestinian support of the PLO is a *fait accompli*. The only just and logical solution to the Palestinian problem is the establishment of a state in the West Bank."[226] Hikmat spoke amid reports that the PLO planned to establish a provisional government to represent the Palestinians at the Geneva Peace Conference; Hikmat's name came up repeatedly as a candidate to head this government.[227]

The provisional government plan never matured but the al-Masris began their own strategic discussions, as one British diplomat learned from a conversation with Hikmat's son Hani in August 1974. Reportedly, the al-Masris decided that the only way to address the "PLO problem" was through control from above, since the organization enjoyed strong popular support. The diplomat interpreted Hani's comments as a declaration of the al-Masris' desire to play an active role by "riding the tiger."[228] Four months later, Israeli Defense Minister Shimon Peres met with Hikmat and Haj Ma'azuz, in an attempt to learn whether any West Bank leaders would be willing to talk peace. The two informed Peres that after the Rabat Summit, the PLO was the sole address for such inquiries.[229]

From this point on, professing loyalty to the PLO became a key feature in the rhetoric of al-Masri leaders, who began coordinating their positions with the PLO, specifically with Arafat.[230] However, the family could not pursue this course for long without hurting its relations with Jordan. Indeed, after the initial enthusiasm of late 1974 somewhat waned, the family leaders resumed their old pattern of compromising on the strength of their ties to incongruent bases of support in a manner that allowed them to retain ties to all. As with Jordan before, this behavior made the PLO suspicious and the organization pressured the family from time to time.[231] Still, as was their practice, the al-Masris' relations with the PLO did not depend on one exclusive channel. Several of the family's younger members had already established contacts within Fatah during its early stages,

most notably Munib, who joined the movement in 1963 and was a financial advisor to the founding group. Later, he became a close friend of Arafat. This friendship did not waver even during the Black September events when Munib served as a Jordanian minister, and the two remained friends until the iconic leader's death in 2005. Munib used his position to mediate between Jordan and the PLO, and for many years assisted Arafat in negotiations with the Saudis, Americans and others. Munib was also one of the PLO's largest financial supporters,[232] and his strong position afforded him the confidence to declare he was proud to be both Jordanian and Palestinian.[233] This wide range of ties shaped the al-Masris' relations with the PLO, important in itself and more so for the political legitimacy it awarded the family during the 1970s and 1980s. With the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, the al-Masris reaped further economic benefits that would deepen the relations even further. As Chapter 5 will show, this relationship served the PLO interests by promoting Arafat's control over the various forces in the West Bank.

The Crisis of 1976

The eve of the 1976 municipal elections found the al-Masris and the Ja'baris in markedly different situations. Whereas the Ja'baris' social and political foundations were constantly eroding, the al-Masris maintained diverse and contemporary bases of support. Nonetheless, miscalculations and residual intra-family emotions led the al-Masris to one of the deepest crises in their history when Basam Shak'a was elected mayor of Nablus. Contrary to the prevalent narrative, Shak'a's rise was not a victory for emerging intellectual and nationalist forces, nor did it reflect a groundbreaking change in political culture. Rather, it largely expressed the endurance of the familial order.

In May 1975, deputy mayor 'Adel Shak'a announced he would retire and would be replaced by his younger brother Basam. At the same time, mayor Haj Ma'azuz announced he too would retire, and named his young cousin Zafer as his preferred successor.[234] Both veteran leaders' decisions came in response to public desire to see the new generation take the helm.[235] Hikmat opposed Zafer's candidacy, apparently due to lingering resentment after Zafer and Nashat chose

Taher, Nashat's son, to represent the family in the Jordanian parliament over Hikmat's son Samir three years earlier. Hikmat's stance had caused a grave family rift, and a compromise was reached only as elections neared. Hikmat proposed a list to be headed by his brother-in-law Basam Shak'a, with Zafer as his deputy. Hikmat regarded Basam as an inexperienced candidate who would be easy to control. Otherwise, he would never have risked the family's interests by leaving the municipality to one of its traditional rival families.[236]

To Hikmat's credit, Basam had not emerged as a prominent voice for the intellectual or nationalist forces before the elections. Basam completed 11 years of schooling and his main political asset was belonging to one of the two most dominant families in Nablus. Before fleeing to Syria in 1958, Basam presided over the Baath branch in Nablus, but kept a low profile after returning to the city in 1965. He did not join the Palestinian National Front, which the PLO established in the early 1970s to organize its West Bank supporters.[237] Hikmat chose Basam as a candidate of compromise to top the list that combined elite families alongside the nationalist and leftist camps, led by Dr. Khatem Abu Ghazaleh and Khaldun 'Abd al-Haq, respectively.[238] The list reflected the enduring power of the familial order, but also marked a change: rather than running against each other as they did in the past, the rival Shak'a and al-Masri families were now compelled to run together. The list itself was the result of both families' recognition that they had lost their exclusivity in the political arena. Undoubtedly, they estimated that the ideological forces would gain strength in the elections, both because they were genuinely popular, as well as due to changes in the election law that allowed new groups to participate.[239] Shtendel observes a similar process in Arab politics in Israel, where rival families are forced to unite in order to counter rising 'modern' ideological parties.[240]

Hikmat's list won the elections but four months later, he realized his miscalculation. Basam had no intention of being controlled by his brother-in-law and patron, and military government reports would later describe the mayor as an autocrat.[241] He shunned the al-Masris and drew the intellectuals and the PLO supporters closer, while continuing to rely on his own family and its longstanding allies. Fierce nationalist rhetoric, unprecedented for an official of his

stature in Nablus, replaced Basam's innocuous pre-election image. This was not calculated populism. Basam proved to be a genuinely passionate ideologue and an authentic representative of his generation. Unlike his predecessors, he did not conceal his antagonism toward the military government, and used the municipality to advance national goals through various means, including civil disorder.[242] His stubborn independence prevented the al-Masris and others of the Nablus elite to continue using the municipality as a tool for regulating public pressure. The elite's tremendous anger against Basam was further aggravated by his affiliation with George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which many rejected as a dogmatic and intolerant leftist party.[243] Angriest of all was Hikmat, who had created this "monster" which turned the tables on him and made his decisions and actions appear shortsighted. At this point, a fierce struggle erupted between Basam Shak'a and the al-Masris, whose power bases rallied and came to the family's defense.

After his election, Shak'a established National Committee, which he tried to use to mobilize the city's various groups for actions of protest against Israel. The merchants, which were one of the al-Masris' traditional power bases, emptied the committee of all substance, and even took physical action against demonstrators trying to paralyze the city's economy. When Basam asked to take part in discussions at the Nablus Chamber of Commerce in December 1976, he met a resounding "no" from the merchants' representatives.[244] Basam enjoyed the support of *al-Fajer* and *al-Sha'ab* newspapers but was frequently criticized in *al-Quds*, the West Bank's most popular paper that openly supported the al-Masris.[245] The al-Najah University served as yet another arena for the struggle between Basam and the al-Masris. Starting in 1977, it would become a veritable battlefield between Hikmat and the executive board that wanted the university to become a stronghold of revolutionary politics. Hikmat won this particular round but other clashes persisted, especially between the adminis-tration and the lecturers' union, affiliated with the leftist-nationalist camp.[246] In the early 1980s, the al-Masris once again proved highly adaptable when they entered an alliance with the emerging Islamists, who won the al-Najah student council elections in 1979. Supporters of

the Islamist stream mobilized frequently in violent battles against Basam and leftist circles.[247] Nonetheless, the division between the nationalist camp and the Islamist bloc was not strictly dichotomous. For reasons that shall be discussed in following chapter, the PLO was not in a hurry to support Shak'a, and the al-Masris were also supported by nationalists such as Dr. Khatem Abu Ghazaleh, who felt Basam was encroaching on his supporters, and by Dr. Saib 'Ariqat, Hikmat's protégé.[248]

Both Israel and Jordan extended significant assistance to the al-Masris. For example, Israel supported accrediting al-Najah in 1977 in order to give the al-Masris an advantage over their rival Basam.[249] The military government also intervened on behalf of Hikmat's camp at the university by preventing leftist and nationalist teachers from leaving the country to raise support for their cause.[250] In a firmer step, Israel revoked several authorities it had granted the municipality in 1967 and which made it tremendously powerful, such as issuing certain permits and handling cases regarding family reunification, deportees or prisoners. Instead, Israel handed these powers to the Chamber of Commerce headed by Zafer al-Masri. His success in obtaining governmental approval for his requests was praised by the pro al-Masri press.[251] Some of these moves took place with Jordanian collaboration, as Jordan too was keen to weaken Basam, who was staunchly anti-Jordanian.[252] In June 1976, for example, King Husayn awarded a bonus to 900 employees of the Nablus municipality at the request of his friend Haj Ma'azuz, who no longer served as mayor.[253] The fact that Ma'azuz managed to help employees rather than Basam stressed the effectiveness of the al-Masris' informal networks compared to the new mayor's formal powers. These informal networks also played a role in the competition between the two parties to raise funds for the cash-strapped municipality. Here too, Shak'a fell behind. He was no match for the al-Masris' fund-raising capabilities with their widespread ties in the Arab world.[254]

Until 1978, military government reports increasingly noted a decline in support for Basam in Nablus, especially due to his focus on political affairs at the expense of his mayoral duties.[255] Basam was aware of his diminishing popularity but persisted in this course of

action, as he seemed to regard the municipality as a springboard for leadership of the entire West Bank, which interested him far more than mundane municipal affairs. In Hebron, Basam's counterpart Fahd Qawasmeh conducted himself in the exact opposite manner. Qawasmeh focused entirely on the Hebron municipality, with all its implications for his relations with the public, and with Jordan and Israel. Ultimately, Basam's nationalist positions and personal charisma outweighed his shortcomings as mayor, and he succeeded in becoming one of the most prominent West Bank leaders during the early 1980s.

Assessing the impact of the 1976 elections on the al-Masris must take several aspects of the elections into account. First, the family was not ousted from the municipality as some maintain,[256] but was rather the driving force behind Basam's election. Secondly, although the family did lose the formal mayoralty in the elections, the Chamber of Commerce under Zafer's leadership became the de-facto municipality and undoubtedly the most powerful institution in Nablus. This allowed the al-Masris to regain most of the institutional power they held before the elections. Finally, the family continued to demonstrate its strength in other arenas as well. Nonetheless, these events also weakened the family. The elections of 1976 dealt a blow to its prestige, eliminated one of its important public platforms and denied them use of the municipality as an agent of stabilization, which was key for the family and its loyalists.

The annals of the al-Masri family tell a story of change in the familial order and its derivative political culture that is far more important than the specific damage the family suffered. After the elections of 1976, the leading Nablus families lost their previous status as virtually exclusive players in the political arena. From now on, they would have to contend with increasingly powerful ideological forces and social groups that gained a voice with the revision of election laws. Still, the leading families remained the most powerful force in the local political sphere. Change did not unseat them. On the contrary, they adapted to it, and even drove it at times. Basam did not depose the "traditional leadership." On the contrary, he was indebted to it for his very election, which he owed to family-based voting, among other things. While Basam did not fulfill

the expectations of those who promoted his appointment, he was an authentic representative of the young leaders emerging within the powerful families that were genuinely committed to the ideologies prevalent among their generation. Indeed, Basam perfectly embodied the intertwining of new and old.

THE INFLUENCE NETWORKS OF THE JA'BARI AND THE AL-MASRI FAMILIES IN 1976

A look at the Ja'bari influence network in 1976 reveals the loss of its main traditional bases of support from 1967, although it did acquire some new ones. Comparing Diagram 4 and Diagram 2 illustrates the loss of sociopolitical ties to other leading families and the subsequent elimination of the municipality as a base of support. The illustrations on the right of both diagrams chart the sheikh's ties to Mt. Hebron villages that remained in place after the elections. Beside it are his sons' ties to the rural sector: Muhammad as the head of the education bureau, and Burhan as a livestock trader. The sons' ties were much looser than those of the Sheikh and his era. Diagram 4 also depicts his sons' personal economic bases of support, and the ties of their brother Wahid, who frequently mediated between King Husayn and the Sheikh.

The Ja'baris

The perforated line represents the ambivalence that characterized Ja'bari's links to Jordan and King Husayn (upper right), and their decline after 1967. The top right image illustrates the same ambivalence in Ja'bari's relations with the religious establishment, which depended on him despite his confrontations with senior clergy such as Bayud Tamimi. The upper left depicts Ja'bari's ties to the Palestinian community of Jerusalem. Diagram 4 illustrates his growing influence in Jerusalem and the direct ties that replaced the indirect ones before 1967, and the left represents his ties with Arab Israelis and the Israeli establishment. After the Ja'baris lost control of the municipality, these connections continued mainly on an informal, personal level. The bottom of Diagram 4 shows the Sheikh's ties to the Islamic College in Hebron. In 1976, Ja'bari's sons had no direct ties to

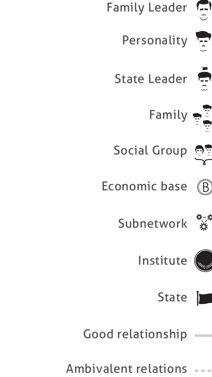

DIAGRAM 4 The Al-Ja‘bari Network, 1976.

the institution; it was not until 1978 that Muhammad succeeded his father as chairman of the board. Below that are the Sheikh's connections to the Ja'bari clan at large. In retrospect, we can state with certainty that the Sheikh's decline directly impacted the intra-familial status of the Darwish lineage to which the Sheikh belonged. After his death in 1980, the clan leadership reverted to the Shaib lineage.

After 1967, the Ja'bari network diversified its power bases by acquiring new institutional and economic bases of support. However, these ties were chiefly personal, not organizational, and did not evolve into substantial webs that could link family members into a cohesive structure. By contrast, the family's sociopolitical support bases still played a critical role in the network, underscoring the perseverance of the familial order. The Sheikh derived his sociopolitical legitimacy from the Hebronite alliance. The collapse of its sociopolitical arrangements in Hebron led to Ja'bari's loss of control over the municipality and the formal status that came with it, which in turn undermined the commitment of both Israel and particularly Jordan to the Ja'baris.

The structure of the Ja'bari network never changed significantly, and its star topology continued to reflect the Sheikh's centralized control. The Sheikh's sons did emerge as functionaries in the organization after 1967 but did not become leaders; at most, they were brokers in control of limited support bases. With no leaders other than the Sheikh, the organization lacked redundancy and was therefore extremely vulnerable. The grave effect of this centralization was evident in Ja'bari's relationship with his associates in the Hebronite alliance, as additional leaders may have been able to reconcile the Sheikh's disputes with his partners. The Ja'baris' relations with Jordan also suffered, as family members were too weak in comparison to the Sheikh for a division of labor such as the al-Masris employed. Decentralizing the organization could have encouraged a pluralism of ideas, which in turn could have facilitated strategic changes in the network. For example, Ja'bari's critical reliance on the Hebronite alliance should have raised concerns. The power of the familial order in Hebron prevented the Ja'bari network from relinquishing inter-familial support, while developing new

support bases could have reduced its dependence on the alliance. Ja'bari's overt ties with Israel should have been identified as a potential problem as well. The full extent of the damage caused by this tight centralization became clear when the Sheikh departed from the stage and left the family with no leader or hub to coordinate its important ties. While some of the family's ties survived the Sheikh's long tenure, they lacked the qualities they had before.

The al-Masris

The dense al-Masri network shown in Diagram 5 and Diagram 3 is the most marked expression of the family's growing power in almost all spheres between 1967 and 1976. Power bases multiplied, and a young generation of leaders began replacing the veteran leadership. New family organizations extended the family network's power and increased the family's stability. The organization led by Haj Taher's heirs – Hikmat, Haj Ma'azuz and Zafer – remained united through ties linking the organization's core businesses in the West Bank, Jordan and the Persian Gulf. In addition, the organization retained its traditional bases of support such as the extended family, Nablus merchants and the rural sector, among others. Ties with Egypt and Jordan were preserved too although some would be transformed, such as relations with students and intellectuals (center). After 1967, Ma'azuz and Zafer developed relations with the educated class, adding to previous ties established by Hikmat and reflecting the rising political significance of this class, and education in general.

Sabih and Munib formed their organizations (right) around their private enterprises and their power bases reflected their interests, most of which were outside the West Bank in 1976. Increasingly, the two connected with Jordan and the Persian Gulf but had virtually no bases of support in the West Bank, which was irrelevant to their organizational interests. Still, both were careful to form ties with the extended family and Nablus expatriates, owing to norms of commitment to family members and one's place of origin. Diagram 5 also shows the acquisition of contemporary bases. In addition to the ties that now encompassed students and intellectuals, new bases of support were acquired according to their relevance to each of the three organizations. Israel (center) and national movement activists in

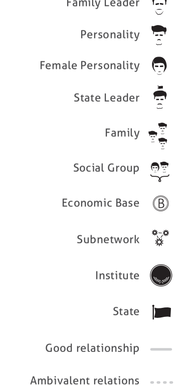

DIAGRAM 5 The Al-Masri Network, 1976.

the West Bank were important to the triumvirate of Haj Taher's heirs but not for Sabih and Munib, whose main gravity resided outside the West Bank. All three organizations formed ties with Fatah's leadership (bottom). However, while Sabih and Munib had strong ties to the movement, Haj Taher's heirs maintained an ambivalent relationship with Fatah. This reflected the generation gap between Hikmat and Ma'azuz and the younger Sabih and Munib, as well as the fact that Haj Taher's heirs belonged to the West Bank leadership, an association which caused tension with the PLO.

The al-Masri network of 1976 reflected the diversity of its support bases as it formed new ties with institutional bases such as al-Najah, *al-Quds* and Fatah. This process also mirrored the growing importance of West Bank institutions as part of the state-building process. From a topological perspective, the network maintained its division of power among the leaders of the three organizations. These redundancies were increased by the fact that all five leaders sought control over contemporary bases of support. Still, some leaders retained exclusive control over some bases. Therefore, when Hikmat's relations with Sadat cooled in 1978 following the Israeli-Egyptian peace process, the al-Masris lost the Egyptian scholarships the family had distributed for years. The shortcomings of the decentralized leadership took center-stage in the 1970s, when tension between Hikmat and the other leaders eventually led to the crisis of 1976.

CONCLUSION

Whereas the Ja'bari family lost its standing through a protracted process that eroded its foundations, the al-Masris' crisis of 1976 was not inevitable. In most areas, the al-Masris could be satisfied with their effective response to changing circumstances. Despite the economic upheaval after 1967, the family continued to amass economic power. The turmoil that shook local and regional influence networks throughout the northern West Bank only strengthened the al-Masris' grip on local and regional institutions. Bolstered by economic resources and a dense web of external ties, these institutions helped the family extend its reach to new groups, specifically the educated class and national activists. Undoubtedly, political

circumstances were complicated but these did not prevent the family from maintaining good relations with Jordan, and forging discreet yet effective ties with Israel. At the same time, the al-Masris affinity to the PLO evolved hand in hand with the organization's rising stature in the West Bank and international arena.

In the southern West Bank, Sheikh Ja'bari conducted himself differently, although one must bear in mind that his environment responded more moderately to 1967. The economic impact was strongly felt in both West Bank regions; however, many of the changes in the southern West Bank were under Ja'bari's direct control. Politicization and the introduction of new change agents such as intellectuals, refugees and institutions were slower in the southern West Bank, and sometimes had negligible impact compared to the north. Familial order actors and organizations continued to play a prominent role during this period – for example *'urf*, which remained a key social institution, the mutual guarantee systems of Hebronite expatriates in Jerusalem, and the dominant role of the family institution in the social and political spheres. Changes in the southern West Bank may have been slower and different in nature compared to the northern West Bank, but were unmistakable nonetheless. Unlike his rivals the Qawasmehs, Ja'bari refused to accept this and missed the opportunity to form ties with emerging bases of support such as the PLO or the educated class. He also misunderstood another important development: the regional Mt. Hebron identity he had cultivated since the 1940s was being gradually subsumed into a broader, distinctly Palestinian identity. Although Palestinian identity had emerged before 1967, it gained dominance as a conceivable and practical solution only in the late 1960s. This may have been easier to miss within the cultural and political discourse of the conservative Mt. Hebron region, compared to the nationalist, agitated northern West Bank. In his prime, Ja'bari was a gifted politician, who particularly excelled in identifying and exploiting such trends. As he aged, this would be precisely the task he failed.

Contrary to dominant opinion, there were no insurmountable challenges forcing the families to abdicate their sociopolitical prominence, despite ongoing change. The biggest threat to the

Ja'baris and the al-Masris' status emerged not from the broad changes underway in the West Bank but from the local forces of rival families that were an integral part of the so-called "traditional leadership." The Ja'baris' decline was first and foremost the result of the destruction of the balanced division of power within the Hebronite alliance, and the growing animosity toward the Sheikh for his oppressive treatment of his rivals. As for the al-Masris, their tactical misstep came at the eve of the 1976 elections, and empowered the Shak'a family, which had been their rivals for decades. Either way, the 1976 elections revealed several changes in the local political culture of both arenas. In Hebron, election for public office no longer required religious trappings. In Nablus, new forces upset the centuries-old division of the sociopolitical sphere into two familial camps, and forced realignment. In both cities alike, families that handed over leadership to their younger generation gained advantages. This transfer of power was driven less by significant changes in general society or the elite, and more by the need to adopt a discourse of nationalism and reflect an air of modernity.

1980 showed marked differences between the two families. With the departure of its legendary leader, the Ja'bari family declined. While they did retain some residual power, the Ja'baris' golden age had ended. Paradoxically, in the more "radical" Nablus, the al-Masris managed to erode Basam Shak'a's victory and recover some of their lost political status. These differences were first and foremost the result of each family's distinct strategy and *modus operandi*, and a product of their respective organizational features and environment. These elements and others will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Clans and Clout: A Concluding Comparative Look

In the late 1970s, a new generation of leaders took over the public discourse and arena in the West Bank. The most prominent of these were mayors, most of whom had been elected in the pivotal municipal elections of 1976 as leaders of political blocs combining several political elements. These public figures were less inhibited than their predecessors about wrangling with Israel. Within two years of municipal elections, they had already marked their next objective as establishing an all-West Bank leadership framework, which their contentious predecessors had failed to accomplish. Alongside this leadership, representatives of new groups appeared on the scene – trade union leaders, journalists and activists of various nationalist factions. Another significant development of the late 1970s was the rise of the Islamist stream, headed by the Muslim Brotherhood, which promoted a different vision that sometimes contradicted that of the national camp. The main bone of contention was the national movement's secular thought, especially the Marxist concepts of the leftist organizations. The Islamists rejected these as heresy corrupting the youth, and as negating their call to re-embrace religion – a call that resounded throughout the Arab world after 1967.[1] In the 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood refrained from direct involvement in the political arena, which in any case was controlled by the national movement's superior power of attraction. Starting in the early 1980s, however, their presence grew among the general public, universities and elsewhere.

Although the political arena was becoming more diverse, it remained controlled by representatives of the old elite of strong families for much of the 1980s. Despite differences of age, style and perhaps *weltanschauung*, most nationalist mayors (i.e. identified with the national agenda) and council members descended from the local dynasties that led the Palestinian highlands since the early twentieth century, sometimes even earlier. Envoys of this new generation of the old elite were found in the nationalist press (such as Mahdi ʻAbd al-Hadi), among senior PLO members (Faisal al-Husayni and many others) and various positions of influence.

A genuine change in the makeup of Palestinian local leadership would finally come with the eruption of the first *intifada* in December 1987, when young field operatives began to take control of the turbulent situation. These activists identified with the nationalist and Islamist movements, including Hamas, which was established on the foundations of the Muslim Brotherhood. A popular saying from the *intifada* period – *al-walad bisakar al-balad*, or "the child shut down the city" – described the generational inversion of the social hierarchy. The street was now dominated by the youth and their leaders from the Popular Committees, many of whom came from the margins of society. Not only Israel was surprised by the grassroots *intifada* but also the PLO, which rushed to impose its authority on the activists. The first *intifada* ended in 1993, shortly before the signing of the Oslo accords and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of Yasser Arafat. Seven years later, the second *intifada* erupted (October 2000) and brought the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to one of its most bitter peaks. Like the first *intifada*, this one appeared to have grassroots origins. Here, too, the youth bore the brunt of the uprising until it faded out in 2004. In January 2005, two months after Yasser Arafat's death, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) replaced him as chairman of the PA. Under Abbas, the PA began an intensive reconstruction of its institutions. However, Hamas' violent takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 delivered a devastating blow to these efforts and Palestinian unity at large.

Against this backdrop, this concluding chapter examines the place of the familial order networks, their patterns and organizations in the new Palestinian arena from the late 1970s to the present.

For this purpose, we leave the comparative structure that juxtaposed the three different regions and focused on local micro-processes and case studies for a broader thematic conclusive analysis. That is not to say that regional differences were no longer socially or politically relevant. They did, however, become less pronounced, as broad processes swept through the West Bank at large, blurring local particulars to a certain extent. Section 1 addresses the place of the familial order within the new political sphere. I will examine the seemingly unlikely cooperation between representatives of the familial order and the PLO against the local nationalist leadership of the West Bank in the 1980s, and continue from there to address the role of the familial order in society and the political culture from the 1990s onwards. Section 2 offers a comparative analysis of the differences between the familial order's relations with the PA and with Hamas, and examines the impact of these relations on informal networks and nation-building processes. Section 3 explains the familial order's enduring relevance by examining the functional and cultural components of its basic unit – the family. Section 4 shifts to a comparative examination of other cases in Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt where family-based organizations faced compelling social and political upheaval. The fifth and final section will analyze the different processes of integration the Palestinians experienced since the nineteenth century, and how these were mirrored in their informal networks in general and those of the familial order in particular.

THE FAMILIAL ORDER AND THE NEW POLITICAL ARENA

The political changes from the mid-1970s and on occurred throughout the West Bank and impacted all levels of society, including the elite, where change may have appeared to be profound. In reality, however, these transitions were not so much a replacement of "traditional" forces representing the old social order with "modern" ones but more a generational change within the elite groups. The so-called "revolution generation," (*jil al-thawra*) born in the 1930s and 1940s, had founded and supported the organizations advocating armed struggle against Israel, and were generally

proactive in their approach to the Palestinian problem. This generation now came into power, replacing the old guard of the "*Nakba* Generation," (*jil al-nakba*) which was associated with passivity and bore the shame of defeat. This generational turnover was evident in public discourse, which increasingly criticized veteran leaders as old-fashioned and incapable of managing modern systems of administration.[2] For this reason, prominent families like the Qawasmehs, Shak'as and al-Masris chose young candidates to represent them from the 1976 municipal election onward, catering to public taste, as well as appeasing the PLO. While the prominent families did try to stay in good relations with the popular PLO, they did not hesitate to confront the organization if they felt their interests were in jeopardy.[3] For its part, the PLO was not so much a direct player in the arena of the second half of the 1970s, but a frame of reference acceptable to most players, and was not a bone of contention on which candidates could base their *raison d'etre*. In fact, the national factions were not particularly confident they could win the 1976 municipal elections, perhaps due to the declining importance of the national ticket.[4] After their victory, however, cautious statements were replaced with confident rhetoric and slogans that retroactively downplayed the role of familial order patterns in the elections.[5]

Change may have been nuanced, but important nonetheless. Families on all social levels continued to play key roles in the political arena, whether through electoral power or as established players. They were also joined by new actors such as representatives of trade unions, refugees and other social groups, shaping an increasingly heterogeneous arena. In this context, two points must be emphasized. First, the fact that new groups joined the political game did not necessarily negate the preservation of familial order patterns within them as well. The family remained a valuable sociopolitical resource to be leveraged parallel to the ideological sphere, especially in mass movements like Fatah that were less dogmatic than the left-wing "fronts" (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – PFLP; the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine The General Command, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine – DFLP). Secondly, the advent of certain

groups into the arena of representational politics – especially women, refugees and candidates from lower socioeconomic classes – did not necessarily reflect a maturation of social processes but rather the technical amendment of the 1976 election law that allowed their participation to begin with (Chapter 4). Without this amendment, these groups would have remained excluded from the political game, which would have continued being controlled exclusively by the veteran powers. Therefore, while new players did emerge, it is vital to understand the circumstances and avoid overstating the essence of the change.

In part, the misperception of national "modern" leadership vs. "traditional leadership" as a fixed dichotomy stemmed from regarding the elite families as a single interest group.[6] As we see throughout the book, division was in fact one of the constant trademarks of inter-familial relations. Israeli opposition was not the only obstacle preventing the formation of supra-local leadership but also rural-urban tensions and other divisions, particularly between the northern and southern West Bank.[7] In 1975, West Bank leaders were so divided they were incapable of sending a joint condolence delegation to Saudi Arabia after the death of King Faisal al-Husayni.[8] This fragmentation and infighting left a void in leadership in the West Bank, which began to be filled in the late 1970s with the emergence of a new leadership. Rather than ousting veteran powers, however, this new force expanded the political arena and prepared Palestinians for a more significant transition from familial to national politics.

The first evidence of an all-West Bank leadership (after the failed attempt to create the Palestinian National Front in 1973) was on October 1, 1978, with the foundation of the National Guidance Committee (NGC) in Bayt Hanina, on the northern outskirts of Jerusalem. The NGC was set up in response to the Israeli-Egyptian peace process, which was perceived as a threat to Palestinian interests. The composition of the NGC, which included mayors, trade union representatives, delegates from the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem and students, reflected both social and political change.[9] At the same time, the elite families were quite dominant. At least three (Basam Shak'a, Karim Khalaf, and Fahd Qawasmeh) of the six members of the

NGC secretariat were mayors of big cities, and members of strong families.

Although neither the PLO nor Israel formally recognized it, the NGC gained considerable respect and public influence already in its first year. Almost inevitably, this caused tension with other powerful local and regional actors, as in the case of the rivalry between Basam Shak'a and the al-Masris. Israel and Jordan exploited this tension to weaken several of the emerging leaders. Unlike Israel and Jordan, the PLO was not interested in curbing the growing Palestinian nationalist sentiment. The organization was, however, concerned with the growing clout of local nationalist leaders, and therefore took measures to bolster the political importance of prominent families as a counterweight to the NGC.

The cases of the Ja'baris on one hand and the al-Masris on the other underscore the difficulty of identifying a uniform pattern of relations between the family-based leadership and the various national movements in the 1970s. As an organization, the al-Masris were inherently more open than the Ja'baris were to adapting their strategies and derivative sources of power to changing realities; they did this in many ways, including forging stable ties with the PLO and other rising forces. Still, even the versatile families did not show a single consistent pattern of relations with the new players. For example, Shak'a's support for the PFLP shows that there was no clear-cut rule regarding the families' preferences for connections. Many families did in fact prefer Fatah to other political movements, most likely because it was more socially and politically acceptable than the left-wing alternatives. The leftist "fronts" combined nationalism with Marxist-Leninist social doctrine. As per the Marxist component, these organizations – in particular the PFLP – viewed the working class as their natural audience, and berated the bourgeoisie as a colonial utilitarian creation unwilling to contribute to the national struggle.[10] Naturally, these attitudes repelled strong families, who felt threatened by the ideology and dogmatism of the leftist movements. Already in 1974, several West Bank leaders tried to tap into these anxieties and stoke fer that these organizations would stage a socialist takeover, which "would confiscate people's property and cause terrorism and chaos."[11] Fatah, on the other hand, opposed the class

distinctions made by the leftists. From its perspective, the public constituted one single front for the liberation of Palestine. This reflected the PLO's decision to put off formulating a social agenda in order to avoid undermining the national struggle,[12] as opposed to the leftist movements that sought to combine and even advance the social revolution before the national revolution. Thus, when Fatah organizations like the *al-Shabiba* youth began to appear in the West Bank in the 1980s, they refrained from proposing changes in the existing social order and even sanctified the clan and other traditional values.[13]

Fatah also proved more politically comfortable due to its ability to contain a range of opinions, in contrast with the left's uncompromising dogmatism.[14] This flexibility enabled Fatah to become a mass movement in which young people from leading families could find their place as opinionated individuals, while still allowing them to consider broad familial interests. Indeed, there was no reason this youth should have different political ideas and a different national identity than others of their generation. These social and political characteristics enabled leading families' members to join the 'revolution' without fearing this would cost them their heads.

As a new movement, Fatah justifiably saw little point in confronting the familial order and especially not the elite families, providing they accepted the PLO's leadership. Such a confrontation could have turned them into rivals in an arena where Fatah already had enough enemies. Among the families there were also hardnosed rivals, such as Sheikh Ja'bari. However, as we have seen, Fatah preferred dealing with such rivals individually through clandestine contacts, without implementing a general policy of hostility toward the leading families. Undoubtedly, Fatah leaders realized that these families were not all cut from the same cloth but rather a divided collection of players with different interests and considerations. It was therefore preferable to mobilize them and take advantage of their social, economic and political clout.

The story of Faisal al-Husayni, the last prominent scion of the leading Jerusalemite clan, illustrates that careers of elite families' members were not necessarily separate from the political mainstream of their period. Faisal al-Husayni was the grandson of Musa Kazim

al-Husayni and the son of ʻAbd al-Qader, the commander in-chief of the Holy Jihad militia in 1948. Faisal al-Husayni spent much of his youth in Cairo, where during the 1950s he became acquainted with Yasser Arafat, Salah Khalaf and other future founders of Fatah. Like other educated young people, Faisal al-Husayni joined the *Qawmiyun al-ʻArab* pan-Arab movement in 1958. After the Qasim coup d'état in Iraq, he moved to Baghdad, where he witnessed the division between those seeking to focus on national goals, like himself, and the left, which advocated a radical social agenda. Faisal al-Husayni noted, "We found a clash between social slogans there. The left talked about socialism, and we talked about nationalism. The Communists lost the battle, but did sow Marxist seeds in us (in the *Qawmiyun*) and in the Baath. That was the major watershed that changed the map."[15]

In 1959, al-Husayni returned to Cairo and from there to Jerusalem, where he was among the founders of the General Union of Palestinian Students. In 1964 he joined the PLO and headed one of its offices in Jerusalem. At the same time, he began to distance himself from the *Qawmiyun*, whose pan-Arab and social messages he regarded as increasingly less valid. The 1967 war found him in a training camp in Syria, where he trained volunteers for the PLO's Palestine Liberation Army. Upon returning to Jerusalem, he ran into his old acquaintance, Yasser Arafat, who persuaded him to take command of the Fatah cell in the city. Their previous personal ties were certainly a contributing factor, but there is no doubt that Arafat also wanted to take advantage of the Husaynis' influence in Jerusalem (Arafat himself was related to the Husaynis on his mother's side, and to the al-Qidwehs – a distinguished family from Khan Younis – on his father's side). Shortly afterwards, Faisal al-Husayni was arrested by Israel and imprisoned for a year. Following his release, he continued his involvement with Fatah and the PLO in research and political activity. In 1987, on the eve of the first *intifada*, both Palestinians and Israelis regarded him as the PLO's strong man in the West Bank. When asked at the time about his bases of support, he answered, "First, remember my name [surname] and the great honor attributed to my father [. . .] and then take my own personal biography into account."[16]

This combination – in the same order al-Husayni himself put it, first his family and only then his sincere commitment to the national

movement – became common and natural as the older generation of leaders gave way to younger ones. Among the al-Masris, for example, the young generation of leaders consisted of Munib and Sabih since the 1960s and was later joined by Zafer in the 1970s. Zafer had many ties with the PLO and Fatah leadership, including Arafat and Khalil al-Wazir, with whom he coordinated his actions as head of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce and mayor (1985–1986).[17] On the popular level, Zafer spread his patronage over nationalist activists in the West Bank, who were grateful for his efforts on their behalf (see previous chapter). In 1985, the PLFP condemned Zafer for agreeing to head the Nablus municipality. Zafer ignored a warning from Fatah that the PFLP was planning to attack him.[18] The following year, a member of the PFLP murdered Zafer on the stairs of the Nablus municipality. His funeral, attended by some 50,000 people carrying his pictures, was a massive demonstration of support for him and for Fatah.[19] In the 1990s, Maher – the brother of Taher and the nephew of Hikmat, Sabih and Zafer, was also prominent as the PLO's economic representative at the Oslo talks, and later as a minister in the PA. At least three of Sheikh Ja'bari's sons were also affiliated with the PLO: Burhan, Nabil (President of Hebron University since 1983)[20] and Muhammad Rashed (PA Governor of the Hebron District in the 1990s). The sons of Mustafa Dudin, Said and Hassan, were also active in the PLO's public relations office at the same time their father headed the anti-PLO Village Leagues formed at Israel's initiative.[21] Muhammad Milhem, elected mayor of Halhul in 1976, was a product of complex relations between Fatah and the Milhem clan. In 1968, a Fatah unit killed seven members of the Milhem family, including the *mukhtar* of Halhul. In order to appease the clan, Fatah paid a large amount of blood money, appointed Muhammad's brother Mustafa as a PLO representative in Amman, and later supported Muhammad in the elections. Veteran politicians such as Rashad al-Shawa also adapted to the changing realities. Al-Shawa was a longstanding pro-Jordanian leader and representative of a strong Gazan clan. In the late 1970s, he became the most prominent mayor under Fatah's auspices.[22]

Paradoxically, the rise of the national forces in the West Bank the Gaza Strip helped strengthen the PLO's connections with the most salient elements of the familial order. The concerns of the PLO

and Fatah about the national forces surfaced at almost the same time as the establishment of the Palestinian National Front (PNF) in August 1973. Fatah's main worry was that the PNF would form an alternative leadership to the PLO. These fears were heightened by the dominant role of leftist movements in the PNF, especially the communist movement. Indeed, the PNF advocated a division of labor whereby the PLO would control foreign relations and conduct the armed struggle, while the PNF would manage the interior affairs of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and serve as a liaison between the PLO and the population. For its part, the PLO was at most willing to let the PNF be an additional channel between it and the territories, in return for its complete subordination. Following the 1974 Rabat Conference, the PLO demanded the PNF restrict its activity still further. Some elements within Fatah even began calling to replace the PNF with a new organization in which Fatah would enjoy leading status.[23]

The PLO's concerns about excessive independence of national forces and institutions in the territories deepened during the municipal election campaign of 1976. The PNF played a role in organizing national groups running in various cities. Yet the PLO leadership did not support the so-called national blocs, and declared its absolute neutrality in the elections.[24] Although the election results were perceived as a victory for the PLO, its spokespersons expressed clear concerns over the emergence of a competing leadership.[25] The PLO also watched with dismay as many of the most prominent municipalities were won by the left. The most poignant example of this was Basam Shak'a in Nablus, where the PFLP, with which he identified, had not in fact been part of the PLO since its secession in 1974. This posed a problem for the PLO: on one hand, it continued to suspect leftist factions intended to strip it of influence, while on the other hand it was trapped in their bear hug as a national symbol. Despite soothing messages from the rising national leadership in the territories, the PLO's concerns were not unfounded.[26] In 1977, the PLO had already condemned Shak'a for assuming the authority to negotiate an end to the students' strike in Nablus with the Israeli military government. The establishment of the NGC further aggravated the conflict. The PLO insisted the role of the "inside"

(*al-dakhil*) leadership in the territories was strictly instrumental, but had very limited success in enforcing its authority and the NGC continued to amass power. The tension peaked in 1980 following the NGC's attempt to take control of the *Sumud* fund budgets allocated by the Baghdad Conference for supporting the residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Mishal claims that this measure reflected the NGC's wish to win recognition as an independent decision-making body.[27]

From the mid-70s on, the PLO sought ways to restrict the emerging leadership in the territories. Its main priority was the leftist factions, but the PLO was also concerned about the "inside" Fatah supporters. Consequently, the PLO adopted a long-term twofold strategy to weaken the young institutions in the territories. First, it encouraged activists to focus on violent activity against Israel rather than institution building, as the leftist movements wanted. Secondly, it maintained a divided institutional infrastructure in the territories, without organizing it effectively.[28] Another method the PLO employed was cultivating conservative nationalistic leaders such as Rashad al-Shawa and Elias Freij as a counterweight to leftist leaders like Shak'a.[29] To keep its hold on the territories, the PLO even agreed in 1979 to cooperate with its bitter enemy, Jordan, by establishing the Joint Committee. This cooperation enabled the PLO to allocate money and appoint loyalists who also enjoyed good relations with Amman in key positions in the territories. Despite protests from NGC leaders, such figures – all from prominent Palestinian families – managed to secure important positions at key institutions like the Council for Higher Education (al-Shawa and Freij) and the East Jerusalem Electric Company (Anwar Nuseibeh). At the same time, the PLO also encouraged rivalries within the left, thus weakening institutions controlled by the NGC.[30]

The close relations many dominant families had with Jordan and their hostility toward the left made them vital and natural partners[31] for the PLO in its attempts to temper the influence of the NGC and its leaders, as exemplified by the prolonged struggle of the al-Masri family against Basam Shak'a. However, this same example is also a reminder that the leading families' help to the PLO must not be viewed in dichotomous terms, as familial forces were active on the

left too, albeit less noticeably. Another reason the families were important to the PLO was undoubtedly the recognition of their influence and ability to provide the public with vital services. Assets such as ties with Jordan and the ability to provide services reflected, in fact, the continuing power of the families' informal networks. The PLO acknowledged this power and tried to wield it to undermine the efforts of the leftist movements and starting in the 1980s, also those of the Islamist streams to establish an institutional alternative. Thus, the families served the PLO's interest in a weak institutional infrastructure. Paradoxically, even after the Palestinian Authority was established in 1994, the *modus operandi* of the PLO and its leaders reflected a transfer of power to such informal networks. This was a result of the governmental structure formed by Arafat, but also of other patterns of actions formulated by new forces, first and foremost among them Hamas.

THE CLAN: BETWEEN THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY AND HAMAS

Sharabi's theoretical framework of neo-patriarchy (Chapter 2) helps in understanding Arafat's policy as chairman of the PA on the institutionalizing of informal networks in general, and the familial order in particular. In fact, while this is not the only explanation, Sharabi's model contributes to an understanding of why informal networks in the Middle East are often stronger than formal networks.

As we have seen, neo-patriarchal motifs appeared in Palestinian politics as early as the British Mandate period, under the leadership of Haj Amin al-Husayni. Robinson, Frisch and Rabe also identified such characteristics in the *modus operandi* of the PA under Arafat, who concentrated great power in its own hands while systematically dividing and undermining players around him. These included major rivals from the left and Islamist groups, but also NGOs and official institutions of the PLO and Fatah, particularly those that sprouted from the "inside."[32] Informal familial order networks and organizations, especially the extended family and customary law (*'urf*), played an important role in diminishing this formal infrastructure.[33] Legrain described this relationship during the Arafat period as "the politics of neo-notables."[34] If his definition

appears somewhat exaggerated, it is not without grounds; patronage and strong informal networks thrive on weak institutional systems. However, the neo-patriarchal model implemented by Arafat is not necessarily valid for his successor, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen). Like Arafat, Abu Mazen is a product of Fatah's underground period. Typically, the clandestine nature of underground organizations renders informal ties more important than formal aspects. Like Arafat, Abu Mazen's formative years in the Fatah and the PLO influenced his initial perception of institution building in the PA, and this may be regarded as an integral part of the problems in transitioning from a revolutionary movement to a governing administration. That being said, Abu Mazen assumed his position after four traumatic years of the second *intifada*, and found himself with a collapsing system of institutions that required a thorough overhaul. Since 2005, the PA has engaged in an intensive process of rebuilding its institutions, in an effort to strengthen its formal systems.[35]

Even if building constitutional institutions somewhat weakens the power of informal networks and the familial orders, it does not necessarily nullify them entirely. In October 2008, for example, a number of serious clashes occurred between PA forces and several clans in the Hebron area. These were so severe that they attracted drew of the international Arabic press, which exposed the PA's difficulties in confronting the power of cohesive and often well-armed clans.[36] In part, the problem stemmed from the lack of a clear PA policy on its relations with the familial order players, while still applying some of the patterns that were in place since Arafat's rule. A key part of the problem were the vertical channels of communication maintained with the clans, specifically the way in which the PA used familial personages as mediators for the clan they commanded. This means that the PA perceives clans as a rigid patriarchal structure, hierarchal and controlled from above. While the PA does not refrain from direct contact with its citizens through its institutions, it certainly leaves key issues to be handled by clan leaders,[37] who often receive senior official positions, as demonstrated in the cases of Muhammad Rashed al-Ja'bari and his cousin and brother in-law, 'Arif al-Ja'bari (Introduction).

The effectiveness of this pattern is inconsistent. In October 2013, for example, PA security agencies arrested student supporters of Hamas from the Hebron area for suspected involvement in an attempt to launch an explosives-packed drone at Israel.[38] In response, the Islamic Bloc at Hebron University and the Palestine Polytechnic University staged a strike to demand the release of several students, who were allegedly not involved in the affair. The confrontation between the PA security agencies and students was resolved with the mediation of leaders of Hebron's large clans, who also signed the agreement as guarantors, thus proving the effectiveness of clan leaders.[39] On the other hand, the incident that opens this book, in which Hebron Governor ʻArif al-Jaʻbari failed to placate his own clan, shows that the mediating ability based on strong familial background does have its limits. Undoubtedly, this reflects a social change in comparison with the period of the authoritative Sheikh Jaʻbari.

Hamas apparently recognizes this change, and implements a more complex policy regarding the familial order. One of the important assumptions in Hamas's policy regarding the familial order relates to its own organizational structure. This currently combines hierarchal features, mainly in the movement's formal systems (e.g. political leadership and civil institutions), with elements based on a matrix-like non-hierarchal structure. This non-hierarchal network, mostly characteristic of Hamas's military wing in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, is the result of its underground heritage combined with current considerations. The main reason for adopting the non-hierarchal network structure was and remains Hamas's need for secrecy. Such structure hampers the ability of outside observers to glean intelligence regarding the movement's decision-making process, its commanders, military configuration and recruitment methods. This enables Hamas to compartmentalize its operations and to back up its system with adequate redundancies to cope with Israeli attacks and PA pressure in the West Bank, particularly since Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip in 2007.[40]

Hamas' attitude to the familial order is a result of its non-hierarchal network structure, but it also reflects recognition of the family's social importance. Therefore, like the PA, Hamas also seeks to

integrate the clan in its systems but there is a fundamental difference in how it achieves this integration. The PA's traditionally hierarchal perception of the clans leads it to relate to them through vertical channels and mediators. By contrast, Hamas operates in decentralized and non-hierarchal manner throughout all levels of the clans. This integration is implemented through direct connections between Hamas and as many actors in the entire clan as possible, without much regard for its internal hierarchies. As a result, some parts of Hamas's military systems and even its leadership are based on kinship networks. The movement's apparatuses also take into account strong personal ties based on the neighborhood, affiliation with the same mosque and even pre-1948 region of origin. Integrating networks based on these identity circles makes clear that beyond Hamas's recognition of the family's social importance, it regards the family and the other narrow identities around it as a means of reinforcing the cohesion of its systems. Indeed, every dimension (family, local etc.) of such ties enhances the cohesion of the Hamas network by amplifying common interests and moral commitments. Various Hamas units therefore reflect not only relationships forged based on the movement's purpose but also informal overlapping networks based on kinship, refugee camps, pre-1948 region of origin and so on.[41]

Kinship and other ties typical of the familial order are also important to Hamas as a channel for social mobility. The story of Ahmad Ja'bari, former commander of Hamas' military wing and a scion of the famous Hebronite clan, offers a good example. Ahmad Ja'bari began his career as a Fatah activist. Between 1983 and 1995, he was jailed in Israel, where he grew acquainted with senior Hamas members such as Salah Shehadeh, Ibrahim Maqadma and 'Abd 'Aziz al-Rantisi. Following his release, he officially joined Hamas and began working in its administrative institutions. He quickly realized that family ties with senior movement members could expedite his rise through the ranks; he took al-Rantisi's daughter for his second wife, and married his daughter to the son of Salah Shehadeh, who headed Hamas's military wing. In 2000, Ja'bari joined the military wing under the command of his in-law, Shehadeh, who was killed by Israel two years later and replaced by Muhammad Deif. In 2006, Ja'bari

became acting commander of the military wing after Deif was wounded in an Israeli assassination attempt. Under Ja'bari's command, the military wing underwent a process of institutionalization and considerable parts of it became conventional units of the Popular Army (*Al-Jaysh al-Sha'abi*) that played a key role in the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip. Israel killed Ja'bari in 2012.[42]

Family ties of the type forged by Ahmad Ja'bari can also be found among other senior Hamas officials. Hamas's former Minister of Interior Said Siam and senior Gaza official Osama Mazini both married daughters of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmad Yassin. Like its military cells, Hamas leadership also occasionally reflects overlapping networks based on ties of origin and other connections. Yassin, for example, surrounded himself with a group from his home village of al-Jura, from which he was displaced in 1948. This group included Yassin's son-in-law Said Siam, parliament spokesperson Salah al-Bardawil, senior Hamas official Ahmad Bahar and Isma'il Haniyeh, Yassin's former secretary and Hamas Prime Minister from 2004 until the establishment of the reconciliation government in April 2014.[43]

WHY THE FAMILIAL ORDER ENDURED

The many changes that took place in the West Bank weakened and altered several practices of the familial order, but its patterns have endured much more than usually portrayed. Its institutions remain valid – first and foremost the family – but also other typical networks and patterns of the familial order. Evidence of this may be found in Hamami's data that shows an increase in the percentage of intra-family marriages from the 1930s to the 1990s. According to her figures, at the end of this period 73 per cent of villagers and 60 per cent of urban and refugee camp residents in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were married to relatives. In other words, marriage networks within the family continued to exist and even expand, thereby enhancing the family's cohesion. The data on residence in family clusters in the West Bank suggests a similar conclusion. Hamami noted that in the 1990s, 91 per cent of families in the Hebron area and 54 per cent in Jerusalem and the central West Bank (no figures were provided for the northern West Bank) lived in

compounds consisting of several families from the same clan.[44] This means that one of the most important networks for family cohesion was widely preserved – the network of personal acquaintances (Chapter 1).

Other networks of the familial order remain relevant and continue to shape society, economy and politics. I will now examine how the families' different cultural, practical and strategic circumstances allowed this endurance.

The Cultural Angle

In order to understand the family itself as the fundamental unit within the familial order, one must address the cultural norms constantly fortifying the family's status. These include three key norms: the obligation to help members of one's social group (family, faith etc), a preference for consensus (*ijma*') over differences of opinion and pluralism, and the need to maintain appearances of collective cohesion.[45] These values essentially reflect the same principle of subordinating individuals' interests to those of the collective, and are in fact among the few elements of the constantly evolving familial order that can be called traditional.

Several scholars attribute this emphasis on the collective to Islam, while others trace its sources back to pre-Islamic society.[46] Either way, it has shown tremendous survivability and sociologists like Sharabi, Barakat and Hammoudi regard it as a key factor in several fundamental problems afflicting Middle Eastern society, such as lack of equal opportunity and suppression of women.[47] Although the West Bank has undergone considerable change, collective supremacy remains a strong principle there too, even among groups perceived as embodying change. Migdal and Warnock suggested that education caused tension within the family and eroded elders' authority.[48] Conversely, Shamir's study of educated people in the northern West Bank (1975) showed that 71 per cent accepted the supremacy of the collective. A similar study in the more conservative southern West Bank may have found even higher figures. It is interesting to note especially strong support for this value among educated people not from prominent families. Many of them were teachers who were critical of the familial order but also came from a

rural background, which generally adhered more to longstanding conventions. In other words, norms supporting the familial order were prevalent even among groups with a critical approach.[49] At study carried by Shadid and Seltzer at the height of the first *intifada* found that students in fact were closer to traditional values than those without education.[50] A decade later, just before the second *intifada*, researchers studying Palestinian youth found that the longstanding attitudes toward the family institution remained strong despite modernization, the rise of the Islamist stream, the first *intifada* and the Oslo process.[51]

These findings support criticism of the classic modernization theories, as there is no correlation between technical modernization and the erosion of traditional values. In fact, familiar cultural patterns often served as anchors providing a sense of stability in times of rapid change, countering insecurity and potential identity crises. This is true of the adherence to values of family loyalty and other cultural anchors. Forman notes that religious piety and even fundamentalism are attracting young people in the Arab world, particularly the educated. Many of them migrated from the village to the city, where they found "tradition" – or what they perceived as such – to be something they can lean on to relieve the alienation of their new environment. One misconception of classical modernist theories is the assumption that acquiring a Western education comes with the automatic adoption of liberal values supposedly attached to them. Experience in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and elsewhere proves that this is not necessarily the case. Educational aspirations, particularly for medical or technological education, are often driven by a narrow utilitarian desire for expertise in modern tools in order to improve one's quality of living.[52] Contrary to the modernist assumption, education was not necessarily coupled with the adoption of liberal conventions; in fact, it appears these were often deliberately avoided. This notion of modernist theory was further confounded when tradition was proven not to be a barrier to technological progress.

This is not to say that changes in cultural perceptions in the West Bank did not weaken the family. Paternal authority, a fundamental feature of the family tradition, has been eroded by a long-term

process, which was particularly striking during the first *intifada*.[53] Still, cultural change is typically outpaced by political and economic transition, which tend to move faster. This is due partly to the difficulty of altering deep-seated norms but also to the overall preoccupation with the national agenda, which pushed aside meaningful public discourse on social and cultural questions.

In part, the preservation of traditional values stems from the fact that the new forces that emerged since the 1970s, ranging from the leftist movements to the Muslim Brotherhood, sanctified the collective and denounced individualism. Islamist thinkers such as Rashid al-Ghanushi of Tunisia perceive individualism, or the "individualistic mentality" (*'aqaliyah fardiyya*), as a negative and regressive trait rooted in the pre-Islamic period, and which contradicts the required collective solidarity. However, the collective to which they refer is the community of Muslim believers (*umma*), not the familial framework. Indeed, many Islamic theorists claim that clan solidarity (*'asabiyya*) divides the *umma*.[54] However, the extent to which the tangible familial identity can be overtaken by an inherently vaguer Islamic identity is unclear; in addition, the individualism they would reject in fact benefits familial identity. Jad, for example, argues that the Palestinian Islamist movements strengthened the family institution because they emphasized traditional family values, such as the obligation to obey the father.[55]

Family values remain a powerful fixture in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and indeed throughout large parts of the Middle East. While cultural conventions of family ties are often binding, they also serve a practical end in providing individuals with effective informal networks. Many societies in the Middle East continue to regard the family as a valid and legitimate card to be played when necessary.[56]

The Practical Angle

Despite the changes in West Bank society, the family continues to fulfill important roles for the individual. It regulates the individual's relationships in society, solves problems with the authorities and ensures his physical and economic security. The ongoing absence of

sovereignty in the West Bank strengthened the familial order in three principle aspects. One, Israel's military government had limited interest in administrative roles, and the institutions of the familial order increasingly filled this void.[57] Two, even if Israel's military government had wanted to assume increased responsibilities in this sphere, it would have lacked the legitimacy to do so. This enhanced the resilience of familial order institutions, which employed national arguments to acquire legitimacy. This enhanced the resilience of familial order institutions, which used nationalist arguments to acquire legitimacy. For example, after 1967, *'urf* customary law began to gain the status of an independent national institution.[58] And finally, the absence of sovereignty in fact prevented the swift and often violent displacement of the longstanding family-based leadership that took place elsewhere in the region in the second half of the twentieth century.

Various studies argue that the changes in the employment structure after 1967 significantly undermined the importance of the families in general, and the leading families in particular. One common argument is that the decline of agriculture in the late 1960s reduced dependence on the elite families, whose prestige and power supposedly derived from land ownership.[59] However, as we have seen, this was not the case with either of the two families, as both the Ja'baris and al-Masris had additional bases of support. The Ja'baris built most of their sociopolitical power on an inter-family coalition, as well as on political connections with the British, Jordanian and Israeli governments. The al-Masris utilized varied bases of support that included economic (mostly industry and commerce), social, political and institutional bases. These two families were no exception. Even traditionally large landowners such as the Tuqans and 'Abd al-Hadis had additional bases of support in the 1970s. 'Abd al-Hadi, for example, owned a large insurance company and engaged in banking, trade and many other businesses during this period.[60]

Furthermore, large estates were not common in the West Bank and did not play a key role in the economy or public dependence on the elite. Gerber asserts that the land regime in the Palestinian highlands was historically based on small farms (even if under the framework of

the collective ownership of *musha'* lands). The 1858 land code did lead to the formation of several large estates but according to Gerber, these were mainly sparsely populated lands in the Judean foothills and the coastal plain. Gerber explained that the coastal estates were owned by few and therefore fairly easy for the Zionist movement to buy, while gaining a foothold in the Highlands was more difficult.[61] The findings of Karmon and Shmueli on land ownership in Mt. Hebron in the late 1960s support this claim. Most of the region's 5,000 farms ranged between 0.1 and 3 hectares in size; only 400 farms (8 per cent) sprawled more than 3 hectares. Either way, there were no large estates in Mt. Hebron.[62] While some Hebronite families such as the Tamimis were large landowners, they also had to divide their land among many lineages. In 1953, figures for the West Bank show only 24 estates controlled between 500 and 1,000 hectares and only 15 estates spanned 1,000 or more. These 39 estates occupied only 6.2 per cent of the total land on the West Bank.[63] These figures reinforce the assertion that the West Bank's agricultural economy was largely based on small farms and was not monopolized by the elite families.

It must be kept in mind, however, that elite families do not form the whole picture of the familial order. They are one component, the tip of a pyramid consisting of various organizations, players and interconnected networks that support each other as emphasized in Chapter One. While this structure meant that any disturbance or upset to one of the familial order's economic, social, cultural or political networks could cause a chain reaction throughout the pyramid, the familial order was capable of containing it and adjust accordingly. One common argument in this regard is that changes in the employment structure, especially during the 1970s and 1980s, made individuals more financially independent and weakened the family as a collective economic system.[64] However, several studies emphasizing the continuing importance of family economic networks disprove this argument. Building homes for young couples remained a project for the extended family, for example. Arik Cohen notes that clans mobilized financial and human resources from their branches throughout the West Bank and beyond. This pattern strengthened both intra-family ties and individuals' dependence on the clan.[65] The family pension system allowing the older generation

to retire while relying on the support of the young working family members also endures.[66] Families specializing in the same profession and working as a single production unit are also still very common.

Peteet explains that although many women in the West Bank started working outside the family household, no independent alternative emerged for them outside the family framework and discipline.[67] This argument is consistent with the findings of Samed, who maintains that employment of Israeli Arab women outside the family did not break the familial economic patterns: their income went into the family budget and they did not achieve economic independence, nor were they freed from the family constraints.[68] Tamari adds that paternalistic control of the family economy continued even after members were working in Israel, or even immigrated. Family ties also played a crucial role in the hiring of workers and their mobility in the Israeli labor market. Tamari noted that many Palestinians relied on relatives to arrange and access jobs in Israel,[69] thus employing a clearly familial economic network that adapted to the changes in the employment structure.

Informal networks based on the family or region of origin have proven their resilience even in the face of significant changes such as urbanization and displacement. In fact, such circumstances made them particularly important to the integration of migrants in their new environment, as illustrated by the Hebronite networks in Jerusalem. The ability of longstanding networks to reconstruct themselves has also been proven in more challenging circumstances when entire communities were dispersed following uprooting and displacement. A study conducted in the late 1990s in the al-Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip found that two-thirds of marriages were between couples whose families lived in the same village until 1948. Studies in refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan reported similar findings.[70]

Small networks like these did not operate in a void, and were frequently linked to larger informal networks in which the elite families played a key role. Sheikh Ja'bari's regular involvement in arranging work in Israel for thousands from the southern West Bank is one example. Similarly, the al-Masri family businesses in the West

Bank and abroad employed thousands from the Mt. Nablus region. Another example may be seen in the local patronage networks of Mt. Nablus. Headed by rural leader ʻAbd al-Rauf al-Fares, these connected to the larger patronage network of the al-Masris that helped students on both sides of the River Jordan. Clearly, particular conditions, such as the absence of universities in the West Bank before the 1970s, played a role in creating these informal networks and other functions performed by the familial order. Yet even when the conditions changed, the familial order's institutions perpetuated themselves by adapting their networks to the new reality. It was no coincidence that the leading clans of Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron promoted the establishment of the universities.

Rising forces, especially the various factions of the national movement, unquestionably changed the political agenda in the West Bank. However, the well-established informal networks of the familial order did not dissolve with the appearance of the movements' nascent institutions. Repeatedly, informal networks proved essential in times of transition, including in locations with an existing institutional tradition. Discussing events in Eastern Europe following the collapse of communism, Glenny wrote:

> Refashioning the institutions of Kafkaesque autocracy into ones that support democracy by promoting accountability and transparency is a troublesome, long-term process. The task is made doubly difficult if economic uncertainty accompanies that transition. Suddenly people who have been guaranteed security from the cradle to the grave are forced to negotiate a jungle of inflation, unemployment, loss of pension rights, and the like. At such junctures, those crucial personal networks from the communist period become very important. The Red Army evacuated its bases in Eastern Europe, but the equally effective yet more seductive force of returning favors owed and promises once made stood its ground to exert a strong influence on the transition.[71]

The competition between institutions established by the national and Islamist factions increased in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the familial order organizations' ready access to connections and resources both in and outside the West Bank gave them an advantage. In any case, the encounter with the rising forces did not spell inevitable clash for the familial order institutions but rather a

synthesis allowing mutual benefit. This blend also included players who appeared to be diametrically opposed to each other. More than once, the Islamist groups expressed opposition to the *'urf*, which competed with Sharia law as a conflict resolution system. In practice, however, members of these groups took part in *'urf* as arbitrators, thereby continuing a longstanding tradition of religious figures, including Sheikh Ja'bari. A similar practice is evident among Arabs in Israel, where Sheikh Raid Salah both heads the northern branch of the Islamic Movement and serves as a senior arbitrator. In Lebanon too, senior Hezbollah clerics have served in this capacity for the past decades, and this is common elsewhere throughout the Fertile Crescent as well. This pattern demonstrates how rising forces coopted and appropriated familial order organizations, much the same way as they assimilated other independent institutions.[72]

The Particular Strategy

The basic finding of the book is that familial order organizations can adapt to virtually any conditions and circumstances. This premise contradicts a widespread approach that describes the changes in Palestinian society as a sweeping wave that eroded the familial order. According to this approach, elite families were the main victims of the social, economic and political transitions of the 1970s. However, this book maintains that these families were never rigid monolithic bodies but rather dynamic complex organizations, whose ability to cling to power depended largely on the particular strategy they chose to deal with change.

The Ja'bari and al-Masri families illustrate four main differences: the effect of local conditions on each family's rise to power; the goals of each family organization; the strategy of acquiring bases of support; and finally, the structure of each family organization and how this influenced its adaptability. Both families' rise to power was affected by large-scale processes, but the local interpretation of these changes had a decisive impact on their significance and form. Developments of the "long nineteenth century" strengthened urban families in Nablus and Jerusalem but not in Hebron, which was to experience similar changes a full century later, and under markedly different circumstances. The elite families of Mt. Nablus emerged

from the merchant class, which grew at the expense of landed families in a process that peaked in the first half of the twentieth century. In Hebron, the elite relied on a division of power among families with different bases of support. In this region, politics were dominated not by merchants but by religious leaders and bureaucrats, whose position reflected the importance of religion in the city's social, economic and political spheres. The weakening of Sufi orders following World War I had a significant effect on the claims on which the Hebron elite based its legitimacy (Chapter 2), but not in Nablus.

Differences between the two cities were also apparent in the influence network each family created. The Ja'baris relied heavily on an inter-family alliance, reflecting the centrality of the family institution to the Hebronite social structure. The Hebronite alliance also illustrated the importance of *'urf* customary law, and the very limited extent of institution building in the Hebron region. The Hebronite environment and its historical association with Transjordan were manifest in the Ja'bari network's ties with the Hashemites. The al-Masris, on the other hand, operated in the quasi-capitalist environment of Mt. Nablus. They owed their empowerment to the expansion of business and their presence in institutions, which were more developed in Nablus than in Hebron. While the al-Masris also maintained an inter-family alliance, the roles it filled were less substantial than those of its Hebronite counterpart.

The differences between the support bases of the two families reflected the fact that they were led by organizations with different traits. The Ja'baris were a centralized organization designed above all to bolster its leader's political clout. This affected the organization's ties with regional players. Ties with Jordan and later Israel helped Sheikh Ja'bari attain positions of strong influence, but at the same time also undermined his ability to develop substantial ties with Egypt and the PLO. Sheikh Ja'bari's ability to focus his family on his own personal objectives was not arbitrary but the result of his centralized control of the family organization around him. By contrast, the al-Masri family emerged as an organization driven by economic goals. While its leaders were not devoid of opinions or personal political ambitions, the family organization was focused on

economic interests. To serve this end, the al-Masris adopted a policy of compromise regarding the level of its connection with regional players in order to maintain ties with them all, unlike the Ja'baris. Like its Hebron counterpart, the al-Masri organization was first headed by a single leader. But already in the 1940s, the growth of its business transformed it into a multi-headed organization dividing powers between its leaders and actors.

This begs the question whether the Ja'baris' centralized structure and the al-Masris' decentralized structure derived from specific local conditions – and the answer is not clear cut. On one hand, it appears that the patriarchal character of the Hebron region did encourage the Ja'baris' centralization. It was probably no coincidence that two leaders of the Tamimi clan, the brothers Rashad and Anwar al-Khatib, did not live in the same city. More likely, it was a division of labor that placed Anwar at the head of the clan's Jerusalem branch and Rashad at the head of the Hebron one, thus avoiding dual leadership in Hebron. On the other hand, one must bear in mind that the Tamimi clan included other powerful parties, such as the 'Awiwi lineage whose interests had to be taken into account, even if they were not considered leaders. In other words, the Tamimi clan appeared to be less centralized and patriarchal than the Ja'bari clan. The al-Masris, on the other hand, had multiple leaders, as did other Nablus clans such as Tuqan, 'Abd al-Hadi, Nabulsi and Shak'a. This appears to be the result of their being wealthy families that were large and established enough to have several economically powerful heirs. As we have seen in the case of the al-Masris, however, inheritance and a division of wealth were not the only factors affecting the number of leaders. Also at play were patterns that stemmed from running an economic organization, particularly the ability of individuals to stand out as talented business managers. The assessment that most elite families in Nablus functioned as economic organizations supports the hypothesis that this also reflects the region's distinct local conditions.

One interesting point concerns the role of women. In both clans, women were involved in forging alliances. In the Ja'bari organization, women did not play a significant role beyond this. On the other hand, women were important players in the al-Masris' influence

network, based on their involvement in the institutional and public arena. This difference suggests women in the Nablus region enjoyed a better standing than in Hebron. The different status of women is also evident from other data, such as the prevalence of higher education. The 1961 Jordanian government survey showed 0.51 per cent of women in Nablus had a higher education; while undoubtedly a low absolute number, it was still 5.6 times higher than the 0.09 per cent figure for Hebron. There is also a significant gap in the percentage of women who graduated high school: 6.6 per cent in Nablus, compared to Hebron's 2 per cent.[73] In both Nablus and Hebron, women were completely absent from the representative political arena until at least the 1990s. Yehia-Younis explained the minimal presence of Arab women in local politics in Israel as part of the political culture of the familial order. She argues that in 2005, clans still continued to constitute the main organizational framework in municipal elections, and excluding women was yet another way of preserving the clan as a patriarchal political framework.[74]

The organizational characteristics of each family influenced the way they dealt with the growing challenges. Here too, it was the local framework that posed the most significant threats to both families. Based in a city considered the highland's most radical, the challenges facing the al-Masris appeared particularly fierce, while those the Ja'baris faced in conservative Hebron seemed more moderate. And yet, the al-Masris succeeded where the Ja'baris failed, due to the degree to which each family was able to adjust to the situation by revising its objectives and bases of support. Under the Sheikh's leadership, the Ja'baris neither altered nor tempered their long-standing goal of increasing the Sheikh's political power. The Sheikh's refusal to recognize the PLO's authority and his attempt to lead independent political initiatives reflected this clearly. Instead, he chose to bolster his influence through ties with Israel, but this came at a steep price. The al-Masris' economic objectives, on the other hand, helped improve their relations with both Jordan and the PLO. Making allowances for various constraints, such as the Jordanian influence on their economic interests, restricted their ability to undertake far-reaching independent political initiatives. The al-Masris also developed ties with Israel but unlike Ja'bari, they kept

them discreet. Furthermore, being a primarily economic organization rather than a political one, the al-Masris had less of a problem accepting the PLO's dominance.

The family organizations' ability to confront change also stemmed from their different structures. Decentralized bodies tend to split, and this posed a challenge to the al-Masris. At the same time, their ability to develop diverse and multiple bases of support provided the family organization with increased security and stability against external attacks. The al-Masris' multi-generational leadership was another stabilizing element, as the younger leaders identified with the political changes and incorporated them into the family's bases of support. All these factors worked in the al-Masris' favor during the 1976 crisis and again in 1986 with the assassination of Zafer, when the family organization's redundancy enabled it to continue functioning despite the loss. In contrast, Sheikh Ja'bari's centralized control denied his organization the benefits of pluralism such as the al-Masris enjoyed. Ja'bari resisted the broad changes underway rather than leveraging them to his advantage, as did other families like the Qawasmehs. This centralization hampered his ability to preserve ties with older bases of support such as Jordan and allied families, because the family had no other leader to moderate the Sheikh's conflicts. In 1976, these problems proved extremely near fatal. Ja'baris' influence network was overly dependent on the Hebronite alliance and lacked sufficient additional support bases that could compensate for the collapse of the alliance. An even harsher consequence of the family's centralized structure was revealed when the Sheikh stepped down from public life, leaving his clan without a successor.

As the comparisons here and throughout the book illustrate, changes in the status of both families derived from markedly different processes and circumstances; first and foremost the families' particular responses, the differences in their goals and priorities, and also their internal structure. In fact, the main resemblance lies is that the most acute danger to their position came from competing families. In other words, the principal threat to their sociopolitical status was not "modern" but rather the continuity of "traditional" familial patterns in the local political culture.

FAMILIAL ORDERS IN CHANGING FERTILE CRESCENT THEATERS

The familial order is not uniquely Palestinian, and it transcends boundaries of region, religion or sect throughout the Fertile Crescent. It can be found in various formations and variations among the Christians, Muslim and Druze of Lebanon, among the Shiites, Sunnis and Kurdish tribes and clans of Iraq, as well as other locations.[75] As we have seen, local circumstances have a tremendous impact on shaping the local variant of the familial order. While the details vary, the case studies below indicate that most share similar foundations and practices, especially regarding the familial players' ability to endure throughout dramatic change. A comparative view of familial and tribal actors in the Fertile Crescent even prior to the Arab Spring that revealed their authentic strength leads to the conclusion that they have always been important players and remain so today, even if their status has been somewhat eroded.[76] The encounter with new forces, including those with clashing ideological visions, tended to end in pragmatic compromise and cooperation.

Like the Palestinians, the Shiites in Lebanon were led for generations by notables (*zu'ama*) from a limited number of families. Under the influence of religious leader Musa al-Sadr and leftist organizations, the Shiite population underwent a rapid urbanization and politicization that began to eat away at these families' sociopolitical status. In the mid-1970s, southern Lebanon was still the country's largest Shiite center although several of its prominent families were losing ground and clout, chiefly as result of the region's takeover by Palestinian organizations that eventually destroyed families' local influence networks.[77] This process was somewhat reversed in the wake of the Israeli invasion of 1982, when several families reclaimed control of their old spheres of influence under Israeli auspices. Yet new forces had emerged among the Shiites since the 1970s, first and foremost the Amal movement, which refused to allow the *zu'ama* families to resume control of day-to-day affairs. When Israel withdrew from the area of Tyre in 1985, clashes erupted between Amal and family militias. Although Amal had the upper hand, its leader Nabih Berri realized the advantage of good relations with the leading families. The 1982 emergence of Hezbollah, which

sought to expand its influence among Shiites, contributed to this decision and Amal's efforts to block Hezbollah reiterated the need to forge alliances with strong families in southern Lebanon and the Beqaa Valley.[78]

With the end of the Lebanese civil war (1975–1990) and the parliamentary elections that followed in 1992, electoral reasons improved the families' standing still further. The movements too understood that the system of personal, sectarian and regional elections gave the families' candidates an inherent advantage. The families were even more politically important in the municipal sphere, where the movements were seeking foothold. These considerations obliged Hezbollah to take the families into consideration, despite previously strong opposition to the power of the familial order.[79] Consequently, representatives of longstanding *zu'ama* families succeeded in penetrating the new political scene. This was achieved through two main channels reflecting the familial order's ability to adapt to changing circumstances in Lebanon: the first, as independent politicians who maintained good relations with the movements and ran together with them on joint lists; and two, as politicians operating within the movements' apparatuses. Interestingly, families that historically belonged to the top tier Shiite elite now comprised the bulk of those using the independent channel, suggesting a continuity of influence and independence despite four decades of upheaval. Families traditionally of the elite's second tier used the second channel, which may explain their decision to join movements as a route to social and political mobility they hoped would consolidate their status.[80] To conclude, compared to their positions before the civil war, the sociopolitical status of the Shiite families indeed declined; nevertheless, they proved more resilient than observers expected.[81]

Iraq of the Baath period offers another example of the familial order's enduring relevance amid major political shifts. Like other revolutionary regimes in the Middle East, Baath ideology opposed tribalism. Tribal leadership, such as the sheikhs' families, was perceived as a relic of feudal and colonial times that was incompatible with socialism and national unity. The government confiscated lands and took other measures that weakened the

economic and social networks of certain tribes. Nevertheless, alongside this hostile policy, the government also exploited tribalism. In order to guarantee loyal bases of support in power centers such as the Republican Guard and President Saddam Husayn's bodyguards, the government recruited forces from the same mostly Sunni tribes that produced senior government officials, most notably Saddam himself.[82] For reasons of local administration, the regime also cooperated with other tribes both Shiite and Kurdish, and supported friendly sheikhs with budgets, government jobs and other favors.[83]

Baath policy remained ambivalent until 1991, when it changed radically and became openly pro-tribal. Baram suggests three reasons for the change, which was initiated by Saddam Husayn himself. First, the army suffered severe damage during the first Gulf War, necessitating other means of ensuring stability. The Shiite uprising that erupted shortly afterwards exposed the weakness of the Baath institutions, where indoctrination and organization should have curbed such an outbreak. By contrast, the dialogue between the regime and Shiite tribal leaders proved effective, as most leaders did not join the uprising and some even sided with the regime. Secondly, as Baathist ideology failed to unite the country's various religious and ethnic groups, the regime turned to tribal heritage as an Arab and pre-Islamic common denominator. Thirdly, pro-tribal rhetoric eliminated the earlier contradiction between the regime's exploitation of tribalism while denouncing it fiercely at the same time. Iraq's tribal heritage became a cornerstone in the government project of constructing a national memory and the erstwhile hostile media became sympathetic overnight, lauding the tribal leaders' social and patriotic stance. Saddam himself made public his special relationship with the tribes. This change was also expressed in the regime's use of what it described as "tribal values" to explain its policy. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the dire consequences, for example, were retroactively explained as a necessary "tribal obligation" to defend Iraqis' honor. From a practical standpoint, the regime also increased its reliance on the tribes by appointing senior officials and commanders among them, and arming them to form militias loyal to the regime.[84]

These actions were a deliberate measure by the Iraqi regime to strengthen tribal identity, and the tribes themselves. Indeed, this policy was employed precisely because the regime recognized tribal power and wished to harness it to compensate for the weakness of its formal institutions. As in other cases, this encounter led to a interweaving of "old" and "new" that required reconciling contradictions between them. The regime reinterpreted tribal values, often removed from their past context. For their part, the tribes sometimes bent practices to accommodate the regime's interests (for example, not providing protection to lawbreakers or political opponents). From the 1950s, tribesmen – young educated people alongside older sheikhs – became increasingly present in the state's power centers.[85] This pattern was typical of elite West Bank families and is evident in Arab politics in Israel, Jordan and elsewhere.[86]

In his study about senior Egyptian politician Sayyad Mar'i, Springborg analyzes the Mar'i family and how it maintained social and political importance throughout the regimes of King Farouk, and Presidents Nasser and Sadat. During the Farouk period, Mar'i's influence network relied on the classic support bases of landed families – the clan, people from the region and villagers who worked on the landed families' land. Nasser's centralized regime increased state power at the expense of the private sector, weakening these bases of support. A series of reforms instituted by the regime to combat "feudalism" (*iqta'*) – particularly the 1952 land reform – depleted the economic and political bases of support of Egypt's landed families. At the same time, the government did not prevent the old established figures from utilizing other means of preserving their power, such as gaining positions in institutions and becoming part of the system. Like many counterparts, the Mar'is adapted to the situation by acquiring appropriate institutional and political bases of support. In the case of Sayyad Mar'i, these consisted of personal connections with President Nasser, a network based on cohorts that Mar'i studied with (many of whom also found their way into government circles), political supporters and partners, as well as clients of the patronage networks he set up in parts of the government establishment.[87]

During the Sadat period, the private sector grew stronger, reducing the state's power. This change of power centers prompted Mar'i to reverse the course he took after Nasser's rise to power. Mar'i abandoned his Nasser-era support bases and reverted to the family's old bases of local loyalties and his clan. According to Springborg, fluctuations in government power caused figures like Mar'i to maneuver between the various resources at their disposal – the clan, party membership and ideology. This led Springborg to conclude that even if the family institution was somewhat worse for wear, it remained cohesive and adapted even to the most difficult political circumstances.[88]

As long as they were willing to adapt, actors of the familial orders in the Fertile Crescent remained sociopolitically relevant in the face of momentous developments. Even when confronted with hostile rising forces, encounters tended to end in settlement of differences and integration. The familial orders' move to merge with new orders, including new elites, was not exclusively utilitarian but often reflected a state of mind and intra-familial processes that were no different from political processes among the general public. Sooner or later, new forces had to recognize the social, cultural, economic and political importance of familial orders, and this bred a conciliatory attitude. In addition, individual interests were also at play in each case. As seen, an important consideration in Arafat's relations with prominent Palestinian families was his desire to use them to block individuals and national institutions he perceived as competitors. By contrast, Saddam Husayn reinforced his connections with the sheikhs' families in order to compensate for the weakness of his own institutions. Nasser confronted the elite families' economic and cultural bases of support but allowed them to preserve their power by integrating them into the state apparatus, which became stronger during his rule.

THE FAMILIAL ORDER AND THE QUESTION OF INTEGRATION

Among Palestinians, the familial order was and remains connected to the local sphere but it was also a key contributor to the developing national arena. Its elite produced the intelligentsia and prominent

nationalist activists, and played an important role in the integration processes that unified the Palestinians into a social and political community.

The Palestinian integration processes can be schematically described as follows: In the early nineteenth century, Palestine consisted of urban centers as well as strong villages that headed clusters of smaller villages to form rural hubs. Throughout the nineteenth century, the urban elites of Nablus and Jerusalem deepened their ties with the families of the sheikhs controlling the rural hubs, although the distance from the city and other variables sometimes led to different results (Chapter 1).

The early twentieth century saw another stage, which intensified following the British occupation of Palestine. Within a few years, the village clusters and cities forged many direct ties without the mediation of the rural hubs. This reflected an increasing social and political integration and was largely the result of centralization efforts on the part of the Mandate government and the rural elites. Contrary to prevalent opinion, the 1936–1939 revolt did not halt this progress of integration. In fact, in the case of Mt. Hebron, social fragmentation caused by the revolt expedited the integration of the entire region under the city's leadership.

The War of 1948 and its aftermath advanced Palestinian sociopolitical integration with the emergence of two distinct West Bank areas with some degree of internal cohesion. Previously a peripheral region of secondary importance, Mt. Hebron aggressively extended its influence northward. Nablus, now also stronger than it was during the British Mandate, headed its own network, although it was less coherent and determined than that of its southern counterpart. The point of encounter and friction between these two networks was Jerusalem – another indication of its diminishing political position compared to the empowered Hebron and Nablus. Still, neither of the two sociopolitical networks managed to cross their regional threshold to become a countrywide system.

The 1967 occupation of the West Bank sparked and reinforced integration processes throughout the West Bank, first and foremost due to the shared experience of occupation. The older generation of

West Bank leaders failed to take advantage of this nascent national arena, which reflected the strengthening of a distinct Palestinian identity. For one, Israel prevented these leaders from establishing a West Bank-wide leadership. Secondly, and probably more significant, was the leaders' inability to cooperate with each other, even on minor matters. The founding of the NGC in 1978 was the first serious attempt to institute a West Bank-wide leadership, although young leaders of leading families also stood out there, as they did in general among the new so-called radical elite. In addition to Basam Shak'a and Fahd Qawasmeh, other nationalist mayors also appeared on the scene, including Karim Khalaf from Ramallah, Hilmi Hanoun from Tulkarem, Ibrahim Tawil from al-Bireh and Muhammad Milhem from Halhul. This new elite was usually distinguishable from its predecessors by its youthfulness and radical political orientation. Contrary to common arguments,[89] however, it was no different in its sources of income, education or social belonging. Some parts of the new elite, usually junior circles of trade unions, political activists and journalists, showed greater heterogeneity. As a whole, this group constituted an essential intermediate stage between the familial order and the formation of the national political supra-familial system that would take over the political arena, as manifest during the first *intifada*.

In contrast to the national arena, the familial order demonstrated a large degree of continuity in the local arena even after the 1980s. Three factors accounted for this. One, after national discourse became fashionable in all arenas, neither the public nor PLO saw any reason why families should not continue to be leading players in the local theaters. As we have seen, this actually served the PLO's interests by undermining the institutional infrastructure that had sprouted in the Palestinian territories. Secondly, the families remained strongly motivated to control decision-making and resources in the local theater, as these directly affected their interests. And finally, the families enjoyed a clear electoral advantage in the local theater over parties with a broader vision.

Differences between the familial order's power in the local and nationwide arenas are also evident in Arab politics in Israel and Shiite politics in Lebanon. In the Arab politics in Israel, national-level

struggles take place between rival movements, with members of the same family likely to find themselves on opposing sides. But struggles over local resources within a village are held between families, regardless of broader movement affiliation. The supremacy of the family over the movement was also apparent in inter-familial disputes, when individuals were obliged to stand by their families even against a fellow movement member.[90] Indeed, the extended family remains the main pattern of political organization in the Arab municipal arena in Israel. Shiite politics appear to have a similar division of labor in Lebanon, where the movements of Amal and Hezbollah have dominated national politics since 1992, leaving prominent Shiite families in control of municipal politics.[91]

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The familial order has enjoyed greater continuity than commonly recognized and its institutions and patterns remain influential in Palestinian social, economic and political life. The reason is simple. Like other institutions, familial order organizations tend to perpetuate themselves. That being said, historically speaking, they are not a “traditional” system that strictly preserves its characteristics but rather a dynamic complex, which draws its strength precisely from the ability to morph according to new realities. The familial order’s adaptability is largely the result of its lack of commitment – and even an aversion – to dogma. Customary law has no concrete need for Sharia in order to end a dispute; it does, however, require the understanding that pragmatic compromise is preferable to absolute justice. Elite families adapted to movements with flexible ideology like Fatah, but were less comfortable with the Marxist dogma of the leftist organizations. The need to adapt consistently compelled familial order players to compromise and redefine practices and terms. With the fading of *Qays* and *Yaman* myth in the nineteenth century, not only did the alliances based on them change but also terms such as the *saf*, which now described urban coalitions rather than the *Qays* and *Yaman* alliances. Similarly, the Islamic reform movements of the 1920s inherited the role of Sufi genealogy as a platform for creating inter-family networks.

Most networks examined in the book embodied practical goals, which were consolidated with the help of myths and ethos that obscured their true economic and political purposes. Over the long period examined here, many of those cultural bonds lost their adhesive power and were replaced with a new ethos that was more contemporary and relevant. Nevertheless, one value remained virtually unchanged – the supremacy of the collective, especially the family, over the individual interest. Convention derived from this value – one of the few components of familial order that can be defined as "traditional" – were not significantly weakened by education, *intifadas* or the rise of the Islamist movements. Thus, while the power of the family had somewhat declined, it remained culturally and practically vital in various spheres, and continues to be a consideration and resource in the daily life of individuals.

These conclusions expose several methodological weaknesses in existing literature on Palestinian society and politics, and often of other Middle Eastern societies as well. First is the generalized treatment of the fate of familial order actors vis-à-vis significant upheaval. The cases discussed here highlight coping and strategy as the most important factors in these actors' ability to retain their social and political bearing. A generalized approach is also responsible for a common failure to note the particular local conditions in the three West Bank areas that shaped processes in a different manner and pace. Religion was a central component in the fabric of life in Mt. Hebron but was less important in Nablus, where commerce was the dominant influence. The rise of Hebron over it rural environs took place a century later than the similar process in the regions of Mt. Nablus and Jerusalem. The local sphere also determined the effect of broad developments such as the decline of Sufi Islam, which had a major impact on Hebron but not in Nablus, and the wide social, economic and political transformation of the West Bank since the 1960s.

Perceiving the status of pivotal players in the familial order as a function of their relations with authorities and other dominant forces is another weakness. While good connections with the government were certainly an important resource, alternative bases of support were often available to compensate for poor relations with the

authorities. The various authorities recognized this too and their relations with the familial order were usually characterized by containment, with the understanding that it was best to harness the familial order's informal networks to their advantage. From the Ottomans to Israel and the Palestinian Authority, all governments that ruled the Palestinian highlands wittingly preserved informal networks as another instrument of control.

The final conclusion is that the encounter between the familial order and the new order was not a collision, as often described. This misconception stems from the perception of longstanding institutions as "traditional" that seems to have discouraged pursuing a more complex conclusion, despite abundant evidence throughout the different periods. The dominance of elite families in the leftist movements of the Jordanian period, the 1976 elections that showed continuity of the familial political culture rather than the opposite, and finally, strong kinship ties within Hamas – all the above attest to the ongoing strength of the informal networks based on the family, region of origin and so on. The problem, therefore, is not the evidence but the approach regarding the encounter between old and new as a zero-sum game rather than an integration that smoothed transitional stages, and served all parties' interests. This conclusion extends beyond the familial order and indeed beyond the Fertile Crescent and the Middle East to apply to any society where informal networks continue to serve a useful purpose. So long as there is a need, and the means to provide it, such networks will be with us for the foreseeable future and continue to endure through change, dramatic as though it may be.

AFTERWORD

Concluding the book warrants mention of preliminary signs of a new trend, although embryonic and unripe. A new generation of young Palestinians, born between the mid-1990s and the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, is emerging. The Palestinian counterparts of the young people globally known as "Generation Z," are often referred to in Palestinian society as the "self-absorbed generation," (*al-jil al-maslahji*). The term is clearly comparative, and

implies that unlike previous generations, especially "the revolution generation" (*al-jil al-thawra*), today's youth are individualistic and uncommitted to the collective, whether it is the family, the nation or any other collective.

Jamil Hilal maintains that this individualism is an outcome of the neo-liberal economic policy the Palestinian Authority implemented in 2005, which encourages personal economic interests rather than promoting collective ones. Other reasons for this perceived individualism may be found in the particular Palestinian conditions, especially the loss of faith in the various political organizations that have so far failed to resolve the Palestinian problem, as well as allegations of corruption and authoritarianism against both Hamas and the PA.[92] Comparison to global surveys, such as the 2016 report by the World Health Organization, reveals that perceiving Generation Z as extremely individualistic is a universal phenomenon, and not exclusive to the Palestinians. Like their Palestinian peers, young people around the world often express despair and insecurity regarding their future, as well as anti-establishment sentiments against political systems and professional institutions, primarily the media and academia. In other words, alongside the local conditions specific to the Palestinians, global trends and influences most likely play an important role as well.

The most important global development is the ongoing expansion of the internet and the proliferation of social media in the very recent years, which has impacted the Palestinians and other societies in the Middle East by causing two main shifts. First, the availability of online information has disrupted the top-down flow of information that was a key asset of the old hierarchies and helped authoritarian regimes, local clerics and family elders keep their advantage. In addition, this diffusion of power is being supplemented by the emergence of hundreds of online communities engaging Palestinians and other societies. These communities provide young Palestinians with alternative sources of identity and authority, ranging from online clerics who answer daily questions across various social media platforms, to online-based subcultures offering social encouragement for individuals on various issues, including support for lone-wolf attacks against Israelis. This does not mean that family and other

conventional communities are no longer important. The high rate of lone-wolf assailants who acted to avenge the death of relatives and friends offers an example of the enduring significance of the conventional communities.

In fact, the very act of the lone-wolf attack demonstrates the complex interpretation of individual and collective identities by members of Generation Z. On one hand, such attacks appear to be a sheer manifestation of individualism, as the assailants do not seek permission or guidance from the old Palestinian sources of authority such as their parents and the political movements. On the other hand, their actions, which often lead to their death, are the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the national or the religious collectives – or so they are perceived by many.[93] Any discussion of Generation Z must therefore address this complexity of identity, which embraces individualism but does not forgo belonging to a collective. This new hybrid identity does not adhere to the all-encompassing social and political templates dictated by the traditional collectives, and young Palestinians demand the freedom to engage in supplemental collectives of their choosing, including flexible online communities that allow mobility from one community to another. The fact that such new collectives are often firmly based on an imagined sense of belonging, whether national or religious, may be understood as an important stage in the integration of the Palestinians as a social and political community.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER 1 SOCIETY, ELITES AND NETWORKS IN THE PALESTINIAN HIGHLANDS IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

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CHAPTER 2 RE-NETWORKING PALESTINE: 1917–1947

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CHAPTER 4 FROM OCCUPATION TO ELECTIONS: 1967–1980

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