

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

THE RISE OF POLITICAL ISLAM: HAMAS' 2006 ELECTORAL VICTORY

OMAR KHRAISHAH  
SPRING 2013

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for a baccalaureate degree  
in International Politics (International Political Economy Option)  
with honors in Political Science

Reviewed and approved\* by the following:

Dr. Arthur Goldschmidt Jr.  
Professor Emeritus Middle East History  
Faculty Reader

Dr. Gretchen Casper  
Associate Professor Political Science and Asian Studies  
Thesis Supervisor and Honors Adviser

\* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

## ABSTRACT

On January 25, 2006 candidates fielded by Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, convincingly won the Palestinian Legislative Congress (PLC) election, securing 74 of the 132 parliamentary seats. The results of the election stunned the world, as Hamas became the dominant party in the Palestinian National Authority (PA), the Palestinian interim self-government body, replacing the secular nationalist Fatah party which had dominated the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole representative of the Palestinian people since 1968. The election results generated great concern among the Western world and their Arab allies, as it created obvious uncertainties regarding the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, while challenging America's vision for democracy in the Middle East. Despite these alarming concerns and contradictions, the United States accepted the results of the PLC election, but refused to deal with Hamas through diplomatic maneuvers aimed at isolating the new Palestinian government. Hamas failed to submit to US pressure, and the fragile Palestinian unity government collapsed over power sharing disputes.

This paper examines the victory of Hamas in 2006 within the greater context of the rise of political Islam throughout the Middle East. First it examines the factors which polarized the Palestinian political field: the disempowering of national institutions, the fragmentation of land and society, the role of foreign influences, and the effects of election under occupation. The polarization of the political field is an often overlooked aspect of Hamas' electoral victory. It was essential in setting the stage for Hamas' triumph by obstructing Fatah's ability to compensate for its lack of legitimacy (unlike many of its authoritarian counterparts throughout the Arab world), while splitting the Palestinian population's allegiance into rivaling secular and Islamic camps after decades of the PLO's unchallenged monopoly on political power. The next segment of this paper logically addresses the major failures of Fatah, by highlighting its failure to advance Palestinian liberation against the expanding grip of Israeli occupation, its unwillingness and inability to represent the Palestinian people, its rampant corruption, and its division between an old and new guard in the years following the *al-Aqsa Intifada* and leading up to the 2006 election. The third section of this paper examines how Hamas capitalized upon the political and social vacuums in the occupied territories through its extensive social welfare services and its commitment to meet the needs and demands of the Palestinian people. These elements form the core of Hamas' popularity and the group highlighted this reality in its well organized and shrewd election campaign strategy, entitled "Change and Reform." The final portion of this paper effectively discredits those who attribute Hamas' electoral victory to an ambiguous Islamization and radicalization of Palestinian society by drawing upon Palestinian public opinion polls and surveys accompanied by Hamas' moderated stance before the election. Hamas' electoral victory in 2006 is not an indication of radicalization trends in Palestine, but a result of the polarization of the Palestinian political field which led to and accentuated the various shortcomings of Fatah, while allowing Hamas to exploit its rival's weaknesses and appeal to the population through its extensive social welfare network.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	iii
List of Tables.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
The 2006 Palestinian Election: Background and Consequences.....	1
Explaining Political Islam's Ascendance in the Middle East.....	6
Polarization of the Political Field: Factors Promoting Vulnerability in Palestine.....	10
The Shortcomings of Secular Nationalism: The Failures of Fatah.....	22
Political Islam as a Social Movement: The Allure of Hamas.....	38
Islamization and Radicalization Trends in Palestine? .....	49
What Can Be Learned from the Palestinian Experience? .....	54
Bibliography.....	56

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Voting results by district.....	4
Figure 2: Timeline of events leading up to the 2006 election (1993-2006).....	5
Figure 3: Palestinian perspectives on the roots of internal division.....	20
Figure 4: Palestinian territorial fragmentation since 1946.....	21

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Voting results.....	4
Table 2: 2004 Palestinian Authority performance ratings .....	36
Table 3: 2004 Palestinian Authority general approval ratings.....	37
Table 4: Voting outcome based on selected demographic factors.....	48
Table 5: Palestinian voting priorities.....	53

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*To my mentor Dr. Goldschmidt,  
for his boundless devotion to my success*

*To my mother Zinat,  
for the countless sacrifices she has selflessly made on my behalf*

*To my father Muhammad (1951-2003),  
who inspired me to always strive to make a difference in this world*

## The 2006 Palestinian Election: Background and Consequences

On January 25, 2006 candidates fielded by Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, convincingly won the Palestinian Legislative Congress (PLC) election, securing 74 of the 132 parliamentary seats. It was reported that 980,000 out of the 1,273,000 eligible Palestinians voted in the election which was observed by 900 credentialed international monitors. The election was deemed free and fair, as all of the 1,008 polling stations opened on time, and security forces provided unobstructed access for voters and monitors alike.<sup>1</sup> The results of the election stunned the world, as Hamas became the dominant party in the Palestinian National Authority (PA), the Palestinian interim self-government body, replacing the secular nationalist Fatah party which had dominated the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole representative of the Palestinian people since 1968.<sup>2</sup> The immediate consequence of the election was an obvious division of the Palestinian political field between the incumbent secular nationalists and the Islamists, two parties with little history of cooperation. PLO chairman, Mahmoud Abbas, subsequently charged Hamas' prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh, with forming the next Palestinian government, under the condition that Hamas accept a two-state solution to the conflict, the eventual recognition of Israel, and an end to armed resistance, all positions that challenged Hamas' "Basic Positions for Governance."<sup>3</sup> Haniyeh proclaimed: "This agreement was anticipated because the

---

<sup>1</sup>Aaron Pina, "Palestinian Elections," *Congressional Research Center Report for Congress* (Feb. 2006), *Federation of American Scientists*, (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33269.pdf>).

<sup>2</sup>Graham Usher, "The Democratic Resistance: Hamas, Fatah, and the Palestinian Elections," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Spring 2006), (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2006.35.3.20>), p.1.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p.11.

will was real and honest in the greater interest of the Palestinian people and to strengthen national unity and to protect [Palestinian] rights and principles."<sup>4</sup>

(See Table 1 and Figure 1)

The election results generated great concern among the Western world and their Arab allies, as it created obvious uncertainties regarding the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, while challenging America's vision for democracy in the Middle East. After the events of 9/11 the Arab-Israeli peace process had been dominated by the Israeli-American paradigm, largely shaped by Israel's security, the war on terror, and the subsequent marginalization of Palestinians' aspirations for a viable state. The electoral victory of Hamas, a group whose charter invokes political Islam, does not seek negotiations, does not recognize Israel, and was designated a foreign terrorist group by the US State Department in 1997, seemed to demonstrate the Palestinians' rejection of the post 9/11 peace process' parameters. Hamas' electoral victory also raised concerns about the future of Palestinian democracy, conveyed by the various "gray zones" associated with political Islam and its incompatibility with democracy: the role of *sharia* law, the use of violence, and the threat to political pluralism and civil liberties.<sup>5</sup> Similarly the Hamas victory highlights the black hole in the center of Washington's democracy mission in the Middle East, which neoconservatives sold as the cure for authoritarianism, corrupt government, and political extremism. The Bush National Security strategy insisted that only the application of power could ensure economic and political

---

<sup>4</sup>"Hamas coup in Gaza," International Institute for Strategic Studies (June 2007), (<http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-13-2007/volume-13-issue-5/hamas-coup-in-gaza/>).

<sup>5</sup>Nathan Brown, Amr Hamzawy, and Marina Ottaway, "Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring the Gray Zones," (Published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2006), p.4.



freedoms, international security and peace, and respect for human rights.<sup>6</sup> Graham Usher, a journalist stationed in the occupied West Bank, discredited this strategy for democracy as the consolidation of the new American order in the Middle East, observing that:

So far, democracy has served to undermine the order... wherever Arabs have been given a free vote, they have used the ballot box not simply to improve governance but to strengthen opposition to authoritarian and corrupt regimes and/or foreign occupation. Democracy here has not turned out to be a substitute for national liberation, but an essential tool. For better or for worse, the most credible handle of the instrument today are the region's Islamist movements.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these alarming concerns and contradictions, the United States accepted the results of the PLC election, but refused to deal with Hamas through diplomatic maneuvers aimed at isolating the new Palestinian government. Immediately following the election the US pressed the other members of the Quartet (the UN, the EU and Russia) to issue a statement ordering a review of all future assistance to the Palestinians. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice immediately embarked on a tour to various Arab states, urging them not to finance the Hamas-led government.<sup>8</sup> Hamas failed to submit to US pressure, and the fragile Palestinian unity government collapsed over power sharing disputes. Abbas, emboldened by Western support, dissolved the unity government and formed an emergency government in the West Bank city of Ramallah. This move was rejected by the Gaza-based Hamas government as illegal, leading to two rival, parallel governments in Gaza and Ramallah. In the weeks and months following Hamas' electoral victory, the PA received increasing levels of lethal and nonlethal support from the United States. The PA's presidential guard grew to 3,500 men. One battalion was deployed to Gaza, triggering a

---

<sup>6</sup>Thomas Lynch, "Kristol Balls: Neoconservative Visions of Islam and the Middle East," (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, School of Advanced Study, 2008), *International Politics* 45, (<http://commons.wvc.edu/jminharo/pols101/Articles%20to%20Choose%20From/Neoconservatism%20and%20Foreign%20Policy.pdf>), p.45.

<sup>7</sup>Graham Usher, "The Democratic Resistance: Hamas, Fatah, and the Palestinian Elections," p.3.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p.9.

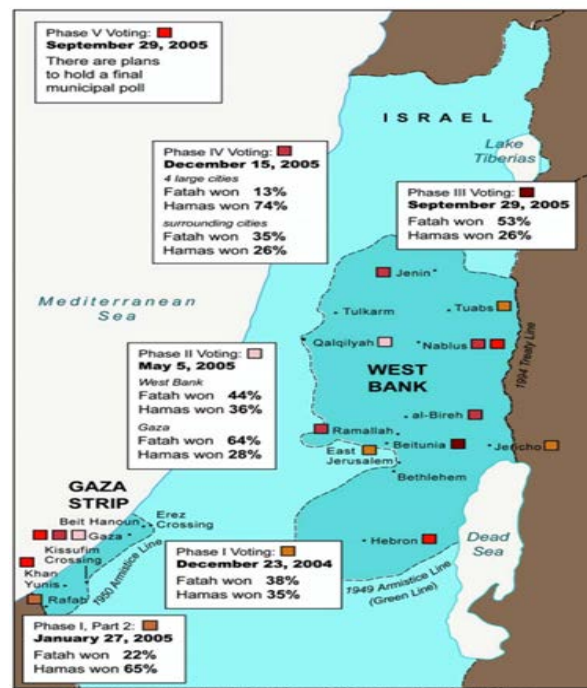
strong reaction from Hamas.<sup>9</sup> On June 7, 2007 Hamas preemptively attacked Fatah positions throughout the Strip and within one week essentially controlled all of Gaza.<sup>10</sup>

(See Figure 2)

Table 1: Voting results <sup>11</sup>

Candidates	Seats Won
Change and Reform (Hamas)	74
Fatah Party	45
Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine	3
The Third Way Party	2
The Alternative Party	2
The Independent Palestine Party	2
Independents	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>

Figure 1: Voting results by district<sup>12</sup>

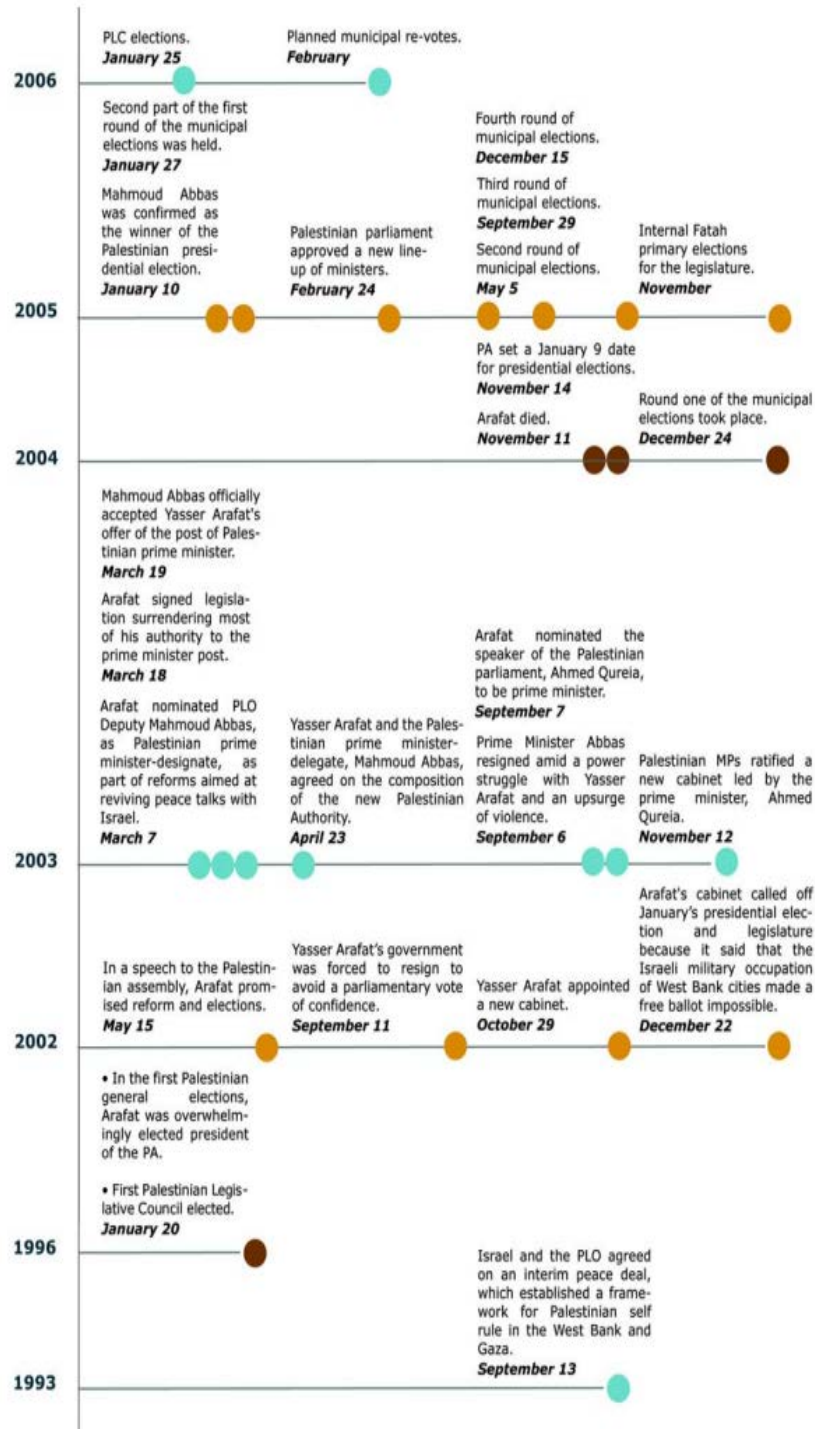


<sup>9</sup>Hamas Coup in Gaza.

<sup>10</sup>Jonathon Schanzer, *Hamas vs. Fatah: The Struggle for Palestine*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.107.

<sup>11</sup>Pina, p.10.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid,p.21.

Figure 2: Timeline of events leading up to the 2006 election (1993-2006)<sup>13</sup><sup>13</sup>Ibid, p.20.

### **Explaining Political Islam's Ascendance in the Middle East**

This paper examines the victory of Hamas in 2006 within the greater context of the rise of political Islam throughout the Middle East. Academics such as Muhamad Olimat, a professor of Middle East politics at the University of South Florida, blame the Fatah-Hamas conflict and the broader failures of democracy in the Middle East on the West's fear of Islam, namely “its failure to understand Islam, Muslims, and the *sharia*; its fear of an Islamist takeover, and its fear of a theocratic-populist model of government resulting from popular election.”<sup>14</sup> These fears are central to Olimat's explanation of the “Fourth Wave of Democratization,” a period defined by the gains of political Islam and Islamists' electoral success commencing in the late 1980's.

It is crucial to understand the roots behind the emergence of political Islam, because, as Olimat's “Fourth Wave” demonstrates, Islamic groups have become popular and credible political parties. Consequently, it is impossible to accept democracy in the region without recognizing and engaging Islamic parties. We have already seen Islamic parties win major electoral victories in Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco. As the Arab Spring turns into the Arab Winter we are likely to see more Islamic political groups come to power. These victories are not spontaneous as often depicted by Western media outlets, but represent long running social, economic, and political perspectives and preferences. The first step to accepting political Islam's place in Middle Eastern democracy is to understand the conditions which led and continue to lead to its ascendance. Fear of Islam as a political force in the Middle East can only be overcome through knowledge and engagement. Failing to understand is not only detrimental to the prospects for democracy in the Middle East, but to regional stability as well. This is evident by the overwhelming shortcomings of the neoconservative vision for democracy in the Middle East.

---

<sup>14</sup>Muhamad Olimat, “The Fourth Wave of Democratization,” *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 2.25 (2008), p.37.

There is a wealth of theories that explain and assess the political, cultural, and social environment which set the stage for the rise of political Islam throughout the region. A Palestinian scholar, Jamil Hilal, identifies the polarization of the political fields in Arab countries with a history of occupation (Lebanon, Iraq, and Palestine) in order to highlight the factors which promote vulnerability in these nations and consequently add to the appeal of Islamic parties amongst a politically and socially divided population. Many academics accuse current political leaders and systems of lacking legitimacy, forcing their populations to look elsewhere for more accountable sources of representation. Mark Tessler, a political science professor at the University of Michigan, centers his research on the political culture of the Middle East. Based on a series of surveys and polls in Morocco, Algeria, Palestine, and Egypt, Tessler concludes that Arab populations are “deeply discontent with existing political arrangements, [and] many may favor an alternative that incorporates both the democratic principles of choice and accountability and the Islamic principles of justice and protection of the weak.”<sup>15</sup> John Esposito, a professor of Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, identifies Islamic revivalism as a global reassertion rather than a product of the Iranian revolution. He identifies the failures of secular nationalism (liberal and socialist forms of Arab nationalism) in providing a sense of national identity or producing strong and prosperous societies, as “the governments in Muslim countries, mostly nonelected, authoritarian, and dependent on security forces-have been unable to establish political legitimacy.”<sup>16</sup>

In addition to assessing the environments which set the stage for the ascent of political Islam, political scientists and cultural theorists examine how Islamic movements appeal to significant segments of Arab society. Esposito conveys how many Islamic groups pursue a bottom-up

---

<sup>15</sup>Mark Tessler, “Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitude Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries,” *Comparative Politics* 34 (2002): p.16.

<sup>16</sup>John Esposito, “Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace,” *Current History* (Jan. 1994).

approach, in hopes of gradually Islamizing Arab society through words, preaching, and social and political activity. Roel Meijer, professor of Middle Eastern history at Radboud University and Glenn Robinson, a research partner with the Council of Foreign Relations, advance this conclusion within the frameworks of the social movement theory. They highlight how structural changes in the relations between governments and their citizens raise the importance of the grassroots social welfare programs of political Islam groups, allowing these groups to mobilize large segments of society.<sup>17</sup> Asher Susser, a fellow at the Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University, counters these theories by downplaying the relevance of social welfare, arguing that Islamists performed well in elections because Islam is deeply embedded in the social fabrics of Arab societies. Esther Webman, a professor at Tel Aviv University, associates the rise of political Islam as part of a greater trend of radicalization in the region, emphasizing Islam's holy war against the West and its sanctioning of violence. Meir Litvak, another professor at Tel Aviv University, builds upon Webman's work by conceptualizing the radicalization of Palestinian society, emphasizing the religious aspects of the Palestinian national movement within the greater context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.<sup>18</sup>

This thesis draws upon a few of the aforementioned theories to shed light on the electoral success of Hamas, while discrediting others as legitimate explanations. First it examines the factors which polarized the Palestinian political field: the disempowering of national institutions, the fragmentation of land and society, the role of foreign influences, and the effects of elections under occupation. The polarization of the political field is an often overlooked aspect of Hamas' electoral victory. It was essential in setting the stage for Hamas' triumph by obstructing Fatah's

---

<sup>17</sup>Glenn Robinson, "Hamas as a Social Movement," *Rutgers University* (May 2002): (<http://www.eden.rutgers.edu/~spath/385/Readings/Robinson%20-%20Hamas%20as%20Social%20Movement.pdf>).

<sup>18</sup>Meir Litvak. "The Islamization of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: The Case of Hamas." *Middle Eastern Studies* <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4283922> . ser. 34.1 (1998): 148-163. *JSTOR*. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4283922>), p.10.

ability to compensate for its lack of legitimacy (unlike many of its authoritarian counterparts throughout the Arab world), while splitting the Palestinian population's allegiance into rivaling secular and Islamic camps after decades of the PLO's unchallenged monopoly on political power. Moreover, the division and vulnerability of the political fields created and further magnified the consequences and various shortcomings of Fatah. This led to a legitimacy crisis in the PA and consequently forced the Palestinian people to look for alternative sources of credible, efficient, and effective government. The next segment of this paper logically addresses the major failures of Fatah, by highlighting its failure to advance Palestinian liberation against the expanding grip of Israeli occupation, its unwillingness and inability to represent the Palestinian people, its rampant corruption, and its division between an old and new guard in the years following the *al-Aqsa Intifada* and leading up to the 2006 election. The third section of this paper examines how Hamas capitalized upon the political and social vacuums in the occupied territories through its extensive social welfare services and its commitment to meet the needs and demands of the Palestinian people. These elements form the core of Hamas' popularity and the group highlighted this reality in its well organized and shrewd election campaign strategy, entitled "Change and Reform." The final portion of this paper effectively discredits those who attribute Hamas' electoral victory to an ambiguous Islamization and radicalization of Palestinian society by drawing upon Palestinian public opinion polls and surveys accompanied by Hamas' moderated stance before the election. Hamas' electoral victory in 2006 is not an indication of radicalization trends in Palestine, but a result of the polarization of the Palestinian political field which led to and accentuated the various shortcomings of Fatah, while allowing Hamas to exploit its rival's weaknesses and appeal to the population through its extensive social welfare network.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup>*Palestinian Parliamentary Elections*, (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/palestine/pa-elections2006.htm>).

### **Polarization of the Political Field: Factors Promoting Vulnerability in Palestine**

The late, distinguished French Sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, defines the boundaries of the political field by the parties, movements, and political organizations operating within it, all of which are competing to capture or influence the center of power. The political field is composed of systems of rules and procedures for the legitimization of power, as well as civil society organizations and social movements which function within the institutions of the national political field. Bourdieu labels the ongoing socioeconomic processes and relations with international and regional powers as the main factors which influence the political field of a country.<sup>20</sup> Naturally these same factors need to be assessed when examining the degrees of political polarization within a field.

Political polarization occurs when two political movements cannot settle their disputes, which grow due to a faltering of social and political institutions. This heightens vulnerability to foreign meddling in domestic affairs and ultimately manifests into a “power struggle that drives political sloganeering and the creation of alliances with regional and international power centers.”<sup>21</sup> Assessing the degree of political polarization in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories, Arab societies which have undergone democratic elections under foreign occupation, is a crucial step to understanding the rise of political Islam in those states. Hilal found that these countries all suffered from a lack of national identity due to severe degrees of external intervention. Consequently premature elections, without a constitutionally mandated dispute resolution

---

<sup>20</sup>Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question* (London: Sage Publications, 1993), p.4.

<sup>21</sup>*Human Development Report 2009/10 Investing in Human Security for a Future State occupied Palestinian territory*, United Nations, 2010, ([http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/arabstates/palestine/NHDR\\_Palestine\\_En\\_2009-10.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/arabstates/palestine/NHDR_Palestine_En_2009-10.pdf)), p.10.



mechanism, accelerated the internal strife within all of the aforementioned societies.<sup>22</sup> The political polarization of the Palestinian field not only illuminates the current state of polity and disunity between Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank, but explains how the Fatah lost its tight grip over its constituency well before the 2006 election. These factors of political polarization forced Fatah to rely on unpopular measures which were not only ineffective and isolated it from the general Palestinian population, but directly contributed in the rise of Hamas' popularity.

(See Figure 3)

The weakening and fracturing of representative Palestinian national institutions is the underlying reason for the polarization of the Palestinian political field. The splintering of these institutions is largely due to the misguided transformation of the PLO into the Palestinian Authority following the Oslo peace process along with Israel's aggressive expansionist policies. From its creation in 1964 up until the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the PLO embodied and became synonymous with the Palestinian national movement through its extensive social welfare institutions and professional unions. The PLO encompassed various autonomous organizations with ideologies ranging from leftist Marxist-Leninism to right wing pan-nationalism, but remained extremely well organized and efficient by operating under the principles of consensus. Even its staunchest critic, Hamas, was careful to acknowledge and even praise its patriotic successes. The beginning of the downfall of the PLO can be traced to Israel's invasion and siege of Beirut in 1982. Two of the PLO's main constituents, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PLFP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), moved to Damascus, while the rest of the PLO's main organizations were relocated to distant Tunis. This severely crippled the PLO's ability to shape the Palestinian movement or even communicate with Pales-

---

<sup>22</sup>Jamil Hilal, "The Polarization of the Palestinian Political Field," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39.3 (2010): 24-39, *JSTOR*, (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2010.XXXIX.3.24>), p.28.

tinians within the occupied territories. These new divisions became apparent during the first *Intifada*, in which the PLO observed, rather than shaped, the unfolding events in Palestine. Three years later the PLO was dealt another serious blow when its major international ally, the Soviet Union, collapsed. At the same time most of the PLO's alternative sources of foreign aid from Western and other Arab states were suspended in response to the PLO's pro-Saddam stance during the first Gulf War.<sup>23</sup> This position led to the “confirming and exacerbating [of] the pre-existing trend towards Palestinian isolation on the Arab and international fronts, and [precipitated] a crisis within the PLO and the Palestinian community itself.”<sup>24</sup> Ironically, the move of the PLO to the occupied territories after the signing of the Oslo Accords accelerated the deterioration of vital Palestinian national institutions.

Jamil Hilal portrays the marginalization of Palestinian national institutions as Yasir Arafat injudiciously attempted to transform the PLO into the PA. Hilal asserts that Arafat's sidelining of the PLO in hopes of empowering the PA was “shortsighted because it was anchored in two mistaken beliefs: that statehood was on the horizon, and that the PA was capable of replacing the PLO as the dominant force in the Palestinian political field.”<sup>25</sup> Arafat focused solely on achieving Palestinian statehood, as he increased his presidential powers at the expense of the democratic structure of the PLO. He favored symbolic measures toward statehood over securing Palestinian control over lands, natural resources, and the economy. The late Palestinian scholar, Edward Said, was one of the first outspoken critics of the Oslo Accords and the formation of the Palestinian Authority, deeming the agreement a “Palestinian Versailles.” Said scrutinized the terms that

---

<sup>23</sup>Lamis Andoni, “The PLO at the Crossroads,” University of California, 1991, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2537365.pdf?acceptTC=true&>), p.55.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Hilal, “The Polarization of the Palestinian Political Field,” p.28.

were designed to facilitate economic development in the Palestinian territories because they guaranteed that 80 percent of the Palestinian economy would remain dependent on Israel, including Palestinian exports, manufacturing, and labor for the foreseeable future.<sup>26</sup> Arafat dissolved and restructured many of the PLO's leading institutions, such as the Palestinian National Congress and the PLO's Executive Committee, in order to bring their operations within realm of the PA's control (in accordance with US and Israeli pressures). The rapid transfer of power from the PLO to the PA made the political field extremely vulnerable to internal polarization and external manipulation.<sup>27</sup> Said decried a stifling of opposition groups outside of the PLO, namely Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which were not given any form of representation within the PA. The PA justified this by identifying these groups as illegitimate terrorist organizations, which intended to damage Palestinian national unity and interests.<sup>28</sup>

Popular PLO-related trade, women's, professional, and worker's unions gradually stopped holding conferences, and could no longer mobilize large segments of Palestinian society in the occupied territories. Before the signing of the Oslo Accords these "mass organizations were open-access structures with public agendas, aiming to mobilize the largest number of students, workers, women, and youth."<sup>29</sup> In the early 1990's the civil society organizations in the West Bank and Gaza comprised a powerful infrastructure of resistance against political domination, whether it be at the hands of the Israelis or the Palestinian Authority. Palestinians from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds were well aware of the presence of the NGO's, and frequently

---

<sup>26</sup>Edward, Said, "The Morning After," *London Review of Books* (Oct. 1993), p.5.

<sup>27</sup>Hilal, "The Polarization of the Political Field," p. 29.

<sup>28</sup>Said, p.6.

<sup>29</sup>Islah Jad, "NGOs: Between Buzzwords and Social Movements," (Taylor&Francis, 2007), *Development in Practice* 17, (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/25548261.pdf?acceptTC=true>), p.624.

utilized them as forums for political discussion and activity. The decline of this form of popular grass root structure began after Oslo with the rise of institutional politics: politics practiced strictly within the realm of parties and unions.<sup>30</sup> After the 1996 presidential and legislative elections Fatah dominated institutional politics, winning 64 of 88 seats. Moreover,

because of the election law and also because the elections were boycotted by the opposition (Islamist parties and the main left parties within the PLO). This put enormous amount of power in the hands of the head of the PA who came to combine this new position with that of the leadership of the ruling party (Fatah), and with the chairmanship of the Executive Committee of the PLO.<sup>31 32</sup>

Following the second *Intifada*, US and EU forces pressured the PA to allow more horizontal flexibility for civil society groups.<sup>33</sup> This also hindered civil society groups' ability to represent the Palestinian public, as it led to the "emergence of a Palestinian globalized elite, tied more closely to the global actors - in other words international NGOs and donors - than to local constituencies."<sup>34</sup>

While the PLO remained the dominant Palestinian organization in theory, the closure of its leading institutions in order to establish the PA left Palestinian communities in the diaspora as well as Palestinians living in Israel without representation, effectively crushing the unity of the Palestinian nation. Said voiced strong concern for the Palestinians who lived in the diaspora, as the new Palestinian Authority had few to no mechanisms to protect their interests. The Oslo agreement essentially forfeited their coveted right of return. Israel took advantage of the disinte-

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>MEDEA. European Institute for Research, (<http://www.medeas.be/en/countries/occupied-palestinian-territories/palestinian-legislative-council-plc/>).

<sup>32</sup>Jamil Hilal, "Civil Society in Palestine: A Literature Review," *Foundation for Future*, ([http://foundationforfuture.org/en/Portals/0/Conferences/Research/Research%20papers/Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Palestine\\_English.pdf](http://foundationforfuture.org/en/Portals/0/Conferences/Research/Research%20papers/Civil_Society_in_Palestine_English.pdf)), p.14.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Jad, p.625.

gration of the Palestinian institutions during the second *Intifada*, through a combination of systematic targeting and destruction of PA infrastructure, including its main administrative complexes (Arafat's presidential complex and quarters), its ministries, and the headquarters of civil society headquarters.<sup>35</sup>

The crippled institutions of the Palestinian Authority could do little to prevent the fragmentation of Palestinian territory in the face of Israeli colonization of the West Bank and Gaza, another prominent aspect of the polarization of the Palestinian political field. Fragmentation of the Palestinian homeland has been a central feature of Palestinian history ever since the Egyptians took administrative control over the Gaza Strip, and the Jordanians annexed the West Bank. However, the creation of Israeli settlements under the cover of the Oslo peace process splintered the Palestinian territories in an unprecedented manner. Mustafa Barghouti, a Palestinian democracy activist, described the Oslo process as a seven-year truce observed largely by Palestinians, while it was exploited for colonial gains by Israel. The issue of settlements had been assigned to the final status negotiations of the Oslo Accords. As a result the Israelis took 40,000 acres of Palestinian land for the purpose of developing new settlements in the period following the Declaration of Principles, while construction had started on over 400 km of exclusively Israeli roads throughout the territories.<sup>36</sup> This dense network of Israeli roads created in the post-Oslo period separated and isolated large Arab population centers, strengthening Israel's colonial grip over the occupied territories.<sup>37</sup>

(See Figure 4)

---

<sup>35</sup>Hilal, "The Polarization of the Political Field," p.30.

<sup>36</sup>David Lea, Ed, *A Survey of Arab-Israeli Relations*, 1st ed (London: Europa Publications, 2002), p.162.

<sup>37</sup>Nigel Parsons, *The Politics of the Palestinian Authority* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), p.227.

Israel retained control over people's movement between different regions of the occupied territories, a violation of the Oslo Accords which had declared the territories “a single territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved.”<sup>38</sup> Mahmoud Abbas proclaimed, “if the confiscation of Palestinian land is not stopped, we will not find anything to negotiate over in the future.”<sup>39</sup> However, the confiscation of land did not stop; two years after the final status negotiations Israel took another 10,000 acres of land.<sup>40</sup> The construction of Israel’s West Bank barrier in 2005 furthered the isolation and separation: it affects a total of 11.9 percent of Palestinian land and completely surrounds 3.4 percent of West Bank land, leaving over 12,000 Palestinians cut off from the rest of the West Bank.<sup>41</sup> In the years leading up to the 2006 election East Jerusalem was completely cut off from the remainder of the West Bank, which the Israelis separated into four major enclaves through a series of checkpoints and physical barriers: the north (Nablus and Jenin), central (Ramallah), south (Hebron and Jericho), and east (Jordan valley). Gaza was left virtually isolated from the West Bank and the rest of the world. To address this discontinuity the *Agreement on Movement and Access From and to Gaza* was signed between Israel and the PA in 2005. This agreement aimed,

to promote peaceful economic development and improve the humanitarian situation on the ground. Consensus was achieved on: (i) the opening of the international Egypt-Gaza border at Rafah; (ii) commercial crossings from the Gaza Strip into Israel; (iii) facilitation of the movement of people and goods within the West Bank, including a plan to reduce obstacles to movement; and (iv) facilitation of the movement of peoples between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank through bus and truck convoys.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup>Samih Farsoun and Aruri Naseer, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, 2nd ed, (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 2006), p. 251.

<sup>39</sup>Lea, p.162.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>B’Tselem, *Barrier Statistics*, ([http://www.btselem.org/separation\\_barrier/statistics](http://www.btselem.org/separation_barrier/statistics)).

<sup>42</sup>*Human Development Report 2009/10 Investing in Human Security for a Future State occupied Palestinian territory*, p.57.

This agreement was largely ignored as Israel continued to maintain extensive control over the movement of Gazans through its exclusive command over the six land crossings into the strip and frequent military incursions into Gaza. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) found that a year after the Agreement on Movement was signed “the ability of Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip to access either the West Bank or the outside world and the flow of commercial trade remained negligible while movement within the West Bank was even more restricted than the previous year.”<sup>43</sup> The impact of Israel’s expansionist policy on the PA’s legitimacy and general ability to govern will be further addressed in the next section of this paper.

This degree of territorial fragmentation created and reinforced social and economic disparities between regions, districts, and local communities. UNDP focus groups conducted in the Gaza Strip found that political divisions were likely to be restructuring Palestinian society based on political factional lines.<sup>44</sup> The aforementioned restrictions upon Palestinian movement only accentuated these widening gaps between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, undoubtedly contributing to Hamas' consolidation of power and increased legitimacy in the Gaza Strip.<sup>45</sup> Jonathan Schanzer, vice-president at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracy, predicted the disintegration of Palestinians self-rule areas into two geographically entities five years before Hamas' electoral victory. After 1950 the West Bank grew more prosperous due to investment by the Jordanian government, while Gaza was neglected under Egyptian occupation. The gap increased after 1967 as Israel placed tight restrictions upon the territories. While the West Bank sustained constant interaction, trade, and development with the greater Arab world through its border with

---

<sup>43</sup>Ibid, pp.57-58.

<sup>44</sup>*Human Development Report 2009/10 Investing in Human Security for a Future State occupied Palestinian territory*, p.80.

<sup>45</sup>Hilal, “The Polarization of the Palestinian Political Field,” p.31.

Jordan, Gaza, which borders the barren Sinai Peninsula, had significantly lower levels of prosperity and ties to the Arab world.

The demographics of the two territories further exacerbated the socioeconomic divisions. Refugees from the Arab defeats in 1948 and 1967 composed 67 percent of Gaza's population, and only 27 percent of the West Bank's population. This is a key reason for the economic differences between the two areas: in 1999 more than 40 percent of Gazans lived under the poverty level, while only 11 percent of West Bankers lived under the poverty line. Khalil Shikaki, a prominent Palestinian sociologist, claims that these different circumstances are the source of animosity and mutual suspicion between the inhabitants of the two territories.<sup>46</sup> Sara Roy, a Senior Research Scholar at Harvard University, attributes the split to an atomization of social relations, a weakening of the notion of a larger collective identity, and the reemergence of tribalism and kinship in the Palestinian territories.<sup>47</sup> This disintegration of a unified Palestinian identity has made the territories extraordinarily susceptible to external influences.

Foreign domination has long led to interference and manipulation in Palestine, as it inflated internal disputes, without an unbiased third party political force that could mediate between the parties. The Israeli occupation is the most direct form of foreign influence on the Palestinian territories, but other regional powers have exploited the polarization of Gaza and the West Bank for their own interests. In recent years Fatah has been backed by the “moderate” Arab states: Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies, while Hamas received support from the “radical” anti-Western Iranian and Syrian regimes. Efforts to bridge the political, societal, ideo-

---

<sup>46</sup>Khalil Shikaki, “Palestinians Divided,” *Foreign Affairs* 81.1 (2001): 89-105, *JSTOR*, (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20033005>).

<sup>47</sup>Sara Roy, “Palestinian Society and Economy: The Continued Denial of Possibility,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 3 (Summer 2001): 5-20, *JSTOR*. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2001.30.4.5>), p.9.



logical, and economic gaps in Palestine were dismal, as both parties were influenced by the entrenched and conflicting positions of their regional backers.<sup>48</sup> The devastation of social and economic infrastructure following the *al-Aqsa Intifada* left Palestinians increasingly dependent on regional and world powers (mainly the United States), for economic assistance.

The extent of this divide in Palestinian society became apparent to the world with the 2006 election and its devastating aftermath. In the years leading up to the 2006 election, the United States pressured Mahmoud Abbas to undermine Hamas, while liberalizing politically. The United States pressed Abbas to hold the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary election prematurely, acting under the reductionist concept which equated Western democracy with free parliamentary elections and ignored the fact that effective democracy requires civil liberties and freedoms which are severely limited by colonial domination.<sup>49</sup> The election was held without any sort of national dialogue about their objective and in the midst of aggressive settlement expansion and increased Israeli military operations against the Gaza Strip. While the election featured a plurality of parties acting under some degree of national consensus and a general respect for one another's authority, dual political authority was almost inevitable due to a lack of state sovereignty and democratic institutions.<sup>50</sup> Hilal advocated for a national discussion as "elections in a society under direct foreign occupation or domination, unless held with a clear and predetermined agenda and a post-election strategy for advancing the cause of independence and self-determination, are almost bound to compound the already-existing problems within the political national field."<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup>Hilal, "Polarization of the Palestinian Political Field", p.1.

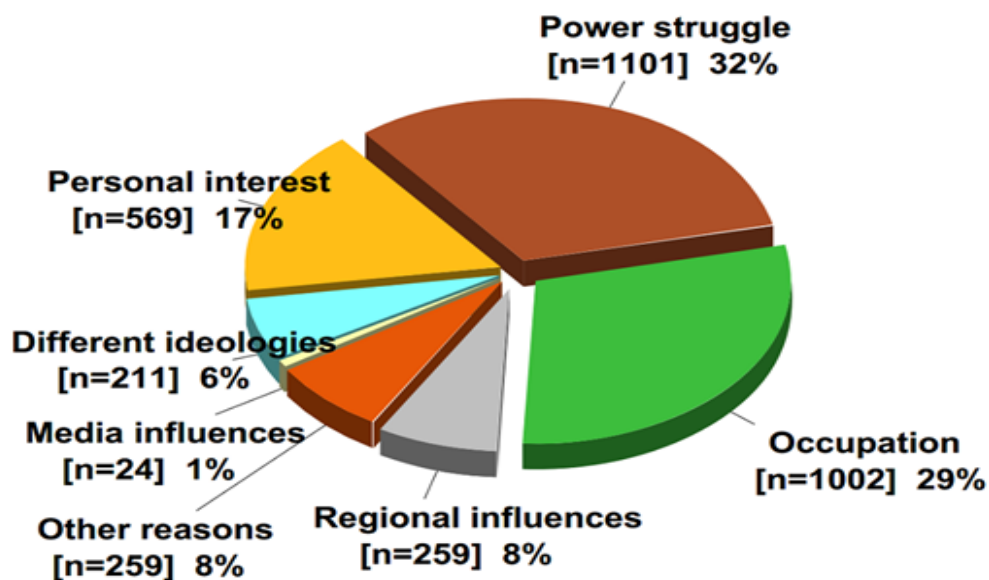
<sup>49</sup>Ibid, p.13

<sup>50</sup>*Human Development Report 2009/10 Investing in Human Security for a Future State occupied Palestinian territory*, p.76.

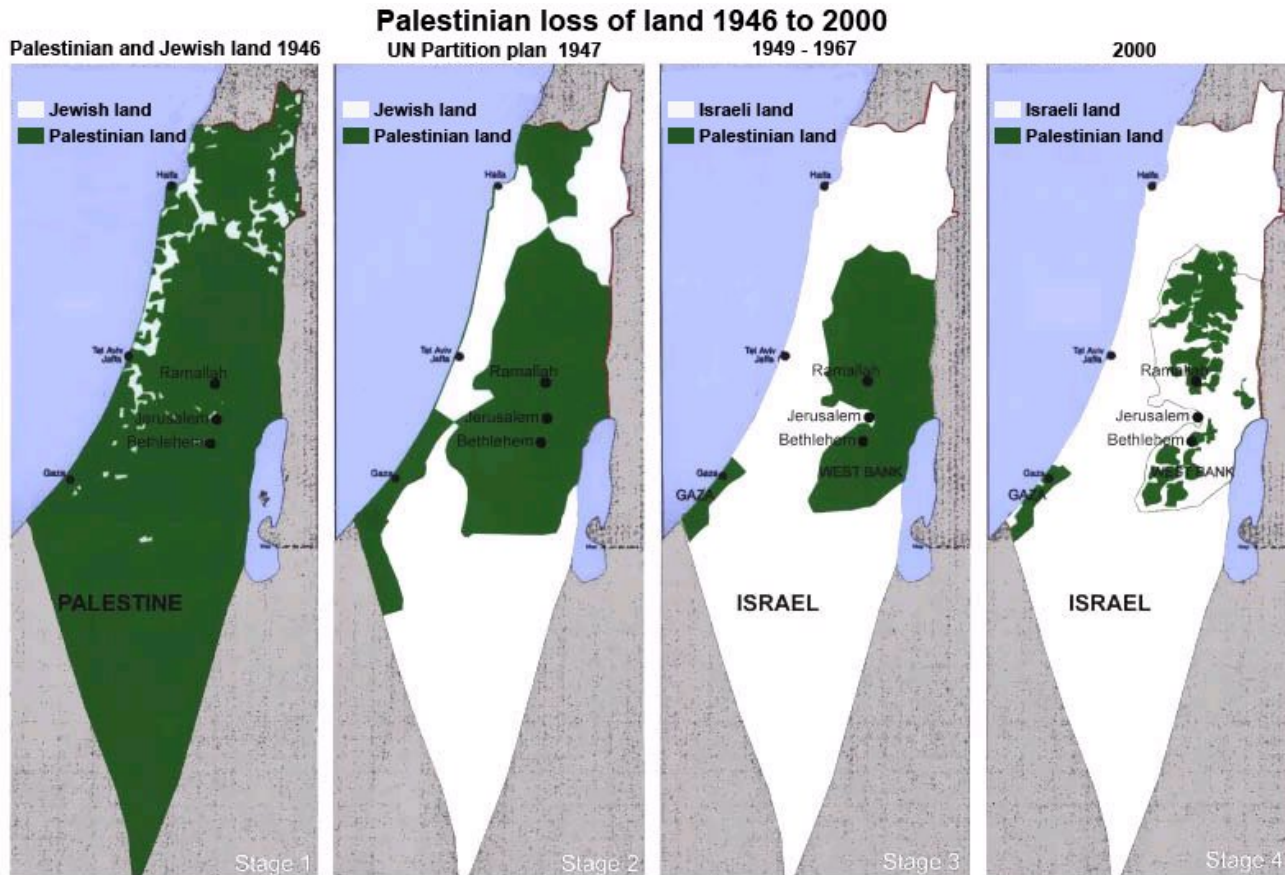
<sup>51</sup>Ibid, p.14.

Due to a lack of any intermediary or cooperative agreement, the Palestinian people were forced to choose between Fatah, a party that represented the dismal status quo, or Hamas, a party with a history of armed resistance but which promised change and reform. While the polarization of the Palestinian field provides a background explanation for how the Palestinian public became weakened, divided, and vulnerable, it does not explain why the majority of Palestinians chose Hamas over Fatah. It is logical to first examine the failures of Fatah, as many of the factors of polarization distanced the Palestinian population from its traditional leadership, and Fatah's ill-advised attempts to compensate for its decline only further isolated it from the Palestinian people.

Figure 3: Palestinian perspectives on the roots of internal division<sup>52</sup>



<sup>52</sup>Ibid, p.78.

Figure 4: Palestinian territorial fragmentation since 1946<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup>Pamela Olson, *Fast Times in Palestine*, (<http://fasttimesinpalestine.wordpress.com/2009/10/13/maps-of-israel-palestine>).

### **The Shortcomings of Secular Nationalism: The Failures of Fatah**

The rise of political Islam in the Middle East is closely associated with the lack of legitimacy of the current regimes throughout the region. Olimat attributes the awakening of political Islam to the failures of nationalism and Arab regimes. He claims that the Arab masses viewed Islam as a way out of their hopeless situation, which they blamed on their secular Arab nation-states and is shaped by,

the fragmenting [of] the Arabs, an agonizing Arab cold war, civil wars, failing to use the region's oil wealth to develop the Arab world, centralizing power in the hands of an unquestioned leader, state repression, institutional corruption, mismanaging national resources, and widespread violation of human rights by the (secret) police state.<sup>54</sup>

Esposito expands on Olimat's arguments, claiming large segments of Arab society viewed the current political establishments, as westernized, secular elite, whose members are solely concerned with power and privilege.<sup>55</sup> Hillel Frisch, a researcher at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Lisa Anderson, the president of the American University in Cairo, argue that most Arab presidential political systems are rooted in neo-patrimonial practices in which,

presidential regimes in the region mimic monarchies because monarchy presents some advantages to the state makers in the Middle East, the most important of these advantages being the ability to make alliances with rural notables, whose relatively new pedigrees do not threaten the state and, therefore, permits the state to lay the groundwork for the growth of bourgeois capitalism.<sup>56</sup>

Fareed Zakaria, an editor for Time Magazine, adds that the lack of political parties, free press, or pathways for dissent, have left the mosque the sole place in Arab society which could not be outlawed, and where hatred and opposition toward the regime could grow.<sup>57</sup> Many Arab regimes were and continue to be keenly aware of opposition's sentiment, but after exhausting ways of

---

<sup>54</sup>Olimat, p.23.

<sup>55</sup>Esposito, p.3.

<sup>56</sup>Hillel Frisch, "Modern Absolutist or Neopatriarchal State Building? Customary Law, Extended Families, and the Palestinian Authority," Cambridge University Press, 1997, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29 (1997), (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/164584.pdf?acceptTC=true&>), pp.342-343.

<sup>57</sup>Fareed Zakaria, "Islam, Democracy, and Constitutional Liberalism." *Political Science Quarterly* 119.1 (2004), p.13.

compensating for their lack of legitimacy they were forced to liberalize to some degree. The late Harvard political scientist, Samuel Huntington, wrote extensively about the role elections played in his “Third Wave” of democratization. His research indicates that authoritarian rulers sponsored elections mainly to remedy their declining legitimacy at home, to follow the prevalence of international democratic norms, and to obtain international respect and foreign aid.<sup>58</sup>

Fatah's lack of legitimacy mainly stems from and was certainly magnified by the polarization of the political field. Its shortcomings are defined by the demise of the peace process throughout the Oslo period and second *Intifada*, an increasingly authoritarian style of rule under Arafat and Abbas, a distortion of the Palestinian economy associated with PA corruption, and an internal split between an old and new guard. The latter is conceptualized by the elitist theory of democracy, which predicts that when political elites in a society disagree on ideology and bargaining principles, democracy is likely to suffer, the regime will lose control over its population, and the country's overall stability will diminish.<sup>59</sup> Given the aforementioned restraints on the PA to hold on to power in a divided political field and even within its own ranks, Abbas elected to hold elections in a desperate attempt to regain legitimacy in the eyes of the Palestinian people and the international community.<sup>60</sup>

The most significant blow to the Palestinian Authority's legitimacy is the failure to achieve the most minimal of concessions from Israel throughout the Oslo peace process, the very agreement which gave birth to the PA. There is a clear correlation between the deterioration of the

---

<sup>58</sup>Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Oklahoma City: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).

<sup>59</sup>Curtis Smith, "Elitism vs. Pluralism: Of Robert Dahl, the Working Middle Class Vote and the 2008 Presidential Election," *KCKCC E-Journal*, KCKCC, 2009, (<http://www.kckcc.edu/ejournal/archives/october2008/article/elitismVsPluralism.aspx>).

<sup>60</sup>Hilal, “The Polarization of the Political Field,” p.36.

peace process and popular support for Hamas and other Islamic factions. During the early years of the Oslo period (1994 and 1995), when chances for a political settlement were high, support for Hamas declined while support for Fatah reached an unprecedented 55 percent of the Palestinian electorate. The signing of the Oslo Accords marked what was supposed to be a new era in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Palestinians acquired a sense of hope, which had been lacking ever since the *Nakba* in 1948. Immediately after the signing of the agreement, residents of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank were asked “how did this agreement affect your attitude towards the PLO,” 46.5 percent claimed it had improved it, while only 19 percent said the agreement had negatively affected it. Sixty percent of Palestinians felt that the Declarations of Principles under the Oslo Accords, “constituted a realistic step that may lead [them] to a Palestinian state,” while only 33 percent disagreed.<sup>61</sup> This feeling of hope can best be summarized by Arafat's speech on the lawn of the White House during the signing ceremony in which he proclaimed, “My people are hoping that this agreement which we are signing today marks the beginning of the end of a chapter of pain and suffering which has lasted throughout this century.”<sup>62</sup>

Unfortunately the terms of the Oslo Accords essentially doomed the peace process as soon as they were signed, as they plunged the Palestinian people and their institutions into a profound, moral, cultural, and identity crisis.<sup>63</sup> While Arafat claimed the Oslo Accords would bring his people out of their century-long suffering, he failed to consider the extent and address the roots of this suffering, which includes the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians during the *Nakba*, Israel's destruction of more than four hundred Palestinian villages, and 35 years of occupation. The right

---

<sup>61</sup>Parsons, p.63.

<sup>62</sup>“Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, Texts and Speeches, White House, Washington, 13 September 1993,” *Israel's Foreign Relations: Selected Documents*, Volume 13-14: 1992-1994, (<http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0jkh0>).

<sup>63</sup>Parson, p.251.

of independent statehood, repatriation of both 1948 and 1967 refugees, and the restitution of illegally confiscated land, were not demanded by Arafat, using international law and UN resolutions as a framework during the negotiation process.

The Oslo Accords hardly constituted a peace agreement, but rather an agreement on methods and timetables for reaching a lasting solution, which were constantly violated and delayed. Oslo II successfully divided the West Bank into three Zones; Zone A (3% of the West Bank, and six main cities), Zone B (covering 27% of the West Bank and 450 villages), and Zone C (covering 70-73 % of the West Bank). Israeli soldiers were supposed to be deployed in Zone A for only a period of six months. Israeli forces and Palestinian police were supposed to share authority in Zone B, with Israelis' having "overall security authority," while Zone C remained under complete Israeli control.<sup>64</sup> This deployment of Israeli troops gave the Palestinian Authority control over less than 4% of historic Palestine; most of the PLO's authority was confined to the two small semi-autonomous regions of Gaza and Jericho. The Palestinian attitude toward this division of land and control is best reflected by a joke suggesting that the Palestinians should abandon the Arab nationalist colors of black, white, green, and red, and adopt a more modest chili for Gaza and banana for Jericho to depict the true scope of its authority.<sup>65</sup> By 2000, the year a final solution was supposed to be in place, a poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPRS) found that only 23 percent of Palestinians believed a peace settlement with the Israelis would be possible.<sup>66</sup> After the failed Camp David summit, support for Hamas

---

<sup>64</sup>Ibid, p.250.

<sup>65</sup>Parsons, p.44.

<sup>66</sup>*Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2000, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2000/p1a.html#views>).

rose incrementally while support for Fatah dropped to 37 percent, and when the *al-Aqsa Intifada* erupted support for Fatah dropped to 29 percent.<sup>67</sup>

The limited power granted to the Palestinian Authority after the Oslo Accords was completely absorbed by Arafat and then Abbas. Arafat combined the Palestinian civil, political, and military functions into one government, forging an authoritarian regime. By controlling the press and delegitimizing any potential opposition groups, Arafat averted many potential challenges to his rule. The executive power of the PA was not shared with any other branches to provide a minimal set of checks and balances.<sup>68</sup> The PA had no accountability to the local population. Oslo was centered on the PA's ability to enhance Israeli security through an executive designation of power, leaving few impediments on the deployment and utilization of security services.<sup>69</sup> Nathan Brown, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, noted that Fatah's leaders avoided creating channels of democratic accountability by using,

its revolutionary legitimacy to advance its claim to represent Palestinians without any formal structures for doing so. Occasional international criticism and constant domestic criticism of the growing authoritarianism led PA leaders to develop (or allow to develop) a host of structures, laws, and plans promising to make Palestine democratic. But even as these grew more detailed, they were rarely allowed to develop in ways that would transform the nature of Palestinian governance.<sup>70</sup>

Even though twenty-five ministries were created under the same provision in the Oslo Accords which established the Palestinian Legislative Council, Arafat retained tight control over all decisions.

---

<sup>67</sup>Sara, Roy, " Hamas and the Transformation(s) of Political Islam in Palestine," *Current History* 102.660 (2003): <http://www.currenthistory.com>, (<http://www.currenthistory.com/Article.php?ID=123>).

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Nathan Brown, *Evaluating Palestinian Reform*, 2005, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CP59.brown.FINAL.pdf>), p.3.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.



The parliament was overwhelmingly subordinate to the executive branch of the PA. Brown found that “in any direct confrontation with the president, the PLC almost always backed down, sometimes in humiliating fashion.”<sup>71</sup> The PLC was mandated with reviewing the annual budget for fiscal irregularities, investigating corruption, and drafting legislation that challenged the authoritarian streak emerging within the PA. The PLC also drafted the Basic Law, an interim constitution, but it lacked any mechanism to force the president to approve the laws. The PLC “had to satisfy itself with periodic assurances from the president that he was mulling over the matter.”<sup>72</sup>

This authoritarian shift in the PA was met with a great deal of backlash, which only encouraged Fatah to tighten its grip on power. Many Palestinians rejected the extreme concentration of power in the executive branch of the PA. By 2002, 47% of Palestinians supported altering the political system to a pure parliamentary system where the power would be placed in the hands of an elected prime minister, reducing Arafat’s presidency to an entirely ceremonial position.<sup>73</sup> In 2003, 86 percent of Palestinians supported internal and external calls for political reform.<sup>74</sup> This number grew to 93 percent in 2004, with only 51 percent believing that the PA would implement the set of reforms demanded by the PLC. Moreover, 42 percent of Palestinians viewed the PA as the primary hindrance to reform, compared to 39 percent who blamed the Israe-

---

<sup>71</sup>Ibid, p.9.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>*Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2002, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2002/p6a.html>)/.

<sup>74</sup>*Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2003, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2003/p7a.html>).

li occupation. At the same time opposition forces received the highest level of positive evaluation amongst the public, with a 53 percent approval.<sup>75</sup>

The disenchantment with the PA only emboldened the Palestinian security apparatus. The Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem, “gathered testimony from numerous Palestinians accusing the [security] service of illegal abduction, arrest without warrant, detention for lengthy periods without judicial scrutiny, refusing legal representation, refusing family visits, and the use of harsh torture techniques.”<sup>76</sup> These findings are reinforced by reemphasizing Arafat's and Abbas' stifling of the once vibrant civil society in the Palestinian territories. Almost immediately after the PA was established it began to systematically suppress the NGO's, viewing them as an obstruction to the state-building process. NGO's were put under extensive surveillance by the Ministry of Social Affairs and its intelligence services, forbidding any criticism of the authorities and essentially crushing and reversing social democratization trends.<sup>77</sup>

Under direct Israeli rule all Palestinians suffered from exclusion, but under PA control new economic classes and elites who enjoyed special benefits and privileges (denied to the majority of Palestinian society) were created. Frisch linked Arafat's style of governing to that of a neo-patrimonial ruler who weakened governing institutions in order to raise the affluence of kin-based corporate groups, while halting democratization efforts in an attempt to transform an unrestricted revolutionary group into a constrained political party.<sup>78</sup> Rex Brynen, a professor at the University of Calgary, supported Frisch's findings by looking at the make-up of the Palestinian

---

<sup>75</sup> *Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2004, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2004/p13a.html#reform>).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Mehran Kamrava, “What Stands between the Palestinians and Democracy?” *Middle East Quarterly* 4.2 (1999): 3-12, *Middle East Forum*, (<http://www.meforum.org/456/what-stands-between-the-palestinians-and-democracy>).

<sup>78</sup> Frisch, p.351.

Authority. Brynen found that the PA's cabinet members did not represent Palestinian society, but were dominated by traditional elites and middle class professionals.<sup>79</sup> An article in *The Jerusalem Report* exposed this behavior by claiming that Arafat called local activists in Hebron and implored them not to run in local elections there, while making sure that large affluent families were well represented in elections.<sup>80</sup> Throughout Arafat's and Abbas' terms in office Palestinian nationalism became increasingly measured by support for the PA's expanding security apparatus and a patronage system devoid of political legitimacy, rather than by Palestinian self-determination and political rights. The PA favored stability at the expense of liberty and fairness, and many Palestinian people came to view the regime as, “*hamiha haramiha*” (its protector is its thief).

Corruption became the infamous backbone of the PA's system of patronage and the most measurable way the president bypassed the PLC.<sup>81</sup> In 1995, 16 percent of PA revenues were moved from the Ministry of Finance to the direct (and unaccountable) control of Arafat. By 1997 this number grew to 26 percent or 145 million dollars.<sup>82</sup> Two years later the Palestinian Authority had accumulated about 307 million dollars in offshore accounts, which could not be checked or scrutinized by Israel, international donors, or other uncorrupted members of the PA.<sup>83</sup> This drastic increase in the transfer of funds served to undermine the legitimacy of the PLC by obstructing its ability to review the budget. Brown observed that,

---

<sup>79</sup>Rex Brynen, “The Dynamics of Palestinian Elite Formation,” University of California, 1995, *JSTOR*, (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2537878.pdf?acceptTC=true>).

<sup>80</sup>Parsons, p.196.

<sup>81</sup>Brown, *Evaluating Palestinian Reform*, p.10.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Rex, Brynen, *Public Finance, Conflict, and Statebuilding: The Case of Palestine*, McGill University, 2013, (<http://www.mcgill.ca/icames/sites/mcgill.ca/icames/files/PalestinePublicFinance2.pdf>).

the executive—in this case largely the president himself—reacted to the loss of authority on paper by paying the law’s provisions little respect. The budget was routinely submitted late, final accounts at the end of the year were not submitted at all, and the information that did reach the PLC was fragmentary or vague. The minister of finance was regularly embarrassed in public PLC sessions by his inability to provide accurate information or explain irregularities, but his humiliation was a price that Arafat seemed quite willing to pay. After Arafat’s death, his former finance minister publicly unburdened himself, explaining that Arafat had simply told him to resign if he did not like the grilling he received.<sup>84</sup>

The Palestinian people were well aware of and extremely concerned about rampant corruption within the PA's ranks. The death of Arafat in 2004 only added to the public doubt of the PA's capacity to combat corrupt practices. This is evident by looking at the results of local elections in 2004 and 2005. Although at the national level voters' preferences matched Fatah's, with an emphasis on the peace process and a restoration of law and order; at the local level voters' considerations actually favored the Islamists, with a focus on clean government and efficient social services.<sup>85</sup> A 2005 survey conducted by the PCPRS shows that 87 percent of Palestinians viewed the PA as corrupt, while 95% believed that *wasta* (connections) are essential in public hiring.<sup>86</sup> Khalil Shikaki labels corruption as the PA's Achilles heel; he cites a 2005 PCPSR survey results, which found that the level of corruption among candidates has been the most important consideration of Palestinian voters, followed by a candidate's education, religiosity, position on the peace process, and lastly his political affiliation.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, a post-election survey found that 25 percent of voters viewed corruption as the most important consideration when voting for the various party lists. Seventy-one percent of those who considered corruption the most important con-

---

<sup>84</sup>Brown, *Evaluating Palestinian Reform*, p.10.

<sup>85</sup>Jamil Hilal, Hamas’ Rise as Charted in the Polls, 1994–2005,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35.3 (2006): 6-19, *JSTOR*, 13 Dec. 2011, (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2006.35.3.6> ).

<sup>86</sup>*Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2005, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2005/p16a.html#domestic>).

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid*, p. 6.

sideration ended up voting for Hamas compared to only 19% for Fatah and 11% for the other lists.<sup>88</sup>

(See Tables 2 and 3)

The PA's corruption crippled the public and private sectors of the economy, exacerbating the already wide social gaps within Palestinian society. One year before the 2006 legislative election 92.8 percent of Palestinians believed the economic conditions were either bad or mediocre and 73.3 percent were worried or very worried about their livelihood. A total of 64.4 percent did not believe the PA was capable of creating jobs. Nearly 53 percent of Palestinians did not believe the PA was committed to improving their quality of life and 48.6 percent did not believe that Mahmoud Abbas had an economic plan to combat the financial crisis in the territories.<sup>89</sup> Roy links these sentiments to the PA's protectionist and corrupt system of economic management, marked by the absence accountability, transparency, and recourse for its inability to offer economic access or protection to the vast majority of Palestinians in the territories.<sup>90</sup> The PA exploited the Palestinian economy through its state-dominated monopolies, which were mainly under the personal control of individuals in the PA bureaucracy. According to the State Department, after the second *Intifada* there were at least thirteen state dominated monopolies in the Gaza Strip, all of which cooperated closely with the Israeli suppliers in controlling the imports of basic commodities (such as flour, sugar, cooking oil, meat, tobacco, petroleum, etc.). This type of transfer of income from poorer groups of society to the PA's new political elite earned the PA

---

<sup>88</sup>*Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2006, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2006/exitplcfulljan06e.html#corruption>).

<sup>89</sup>*Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2005, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpo.org/polls/poll146.htm>).

<sup>90</sup>Sara Roy, "Palestinian Society and Economy: The Continued Denial of Possibility." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30 (Summer 2001): 5-20, *JSTOR*, (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2001.30.4.5>), p.9.

hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The growing disparity between the rich and the poor depressed the wages of Palestinian workers and allowed the PA to employ them cheaply while preserving its system of patronage and dependence.<sup>91</sup>

While economic stability became a key concern for Palestinians, political affiliation became increasingly important to Palestinian voters as the spectrum of conflicting ideologies within a single political party expanded. The most prominent example of this split is the widening schism between Fatah's new and old guards. Major drifts between the older leaders of Fatah who were founders and members of the PLO during its exile in Amman, Beirut, and Tunis, and its younger leaders, who emerged during the first *Intifada*, shattered the unity of the party. These splits were accelerated due to a combination of Arafat's and Abbas' unpopular authoritarian styles, the demise of the peace process, a growing security vacuum in the territories, a collapsing economy, and increasing foreign interference. The divide commenced with power sharing issues as soon as the old guard returned to the Palestinian territories after the signing of principles in 1994. The new guard demanded more transparency, accountability, a campaign against corruption, and a more direct confrontation with Israel (embodied by its calls on Arafat and then Abbas to endorse the *al-Aqsa Intifada* goals and methods).<sup>92</sup> The new guard proposed to reverse the polarization of the Palestinian political field through a national unity government with members of Fatah along with senior members of Islamist opposition groups and issued calls for democratization with respect for the rule of law, an independent judiciary, a stronger legislature, and more efficient public institutions.<sup>93</sup> The young guard did not derive its legitimacy from Arafat and thus

---

<sup>91</sup>Ibid, p.10.

<sup>92</sup>Shikaki, "Palestinians Divided."

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

was not constrained by the strict hierarchy represented by the old guard. The new guard was able to ally with Islamist groups and “take control of crumbling civil institutions and deter any attempts by the PA security services at a crackdown.”<sup>94</sup>

This split within Fatah was only extenuated by the weakening of national institutions along with the social fragmentation of the Palestinian population, which contributed to the rapid disintegration of the Palestinian security forces, one of the few concrete gains from the Oslo agreement. This robbed the PA of its primary purpose and operating framework, as PA affiliated militias degenerated into factionalized armed gangs, which threatened government officials and civilians. These armed groups operated under new names such as the *al-Aqsa* Martyrs Brigade, and the Forces of the *Badr*, all of which acted as autonomous units within the Palestinian national movement.<sup>95</sup> The political fragmentation and militancy during and following the *al-Aqsa Intifada* led to internal lawlessness and violence in both the West Bank and Gaza. Months before the election 86 percent of Palestinians felt they lacked personal security and safety.<sup>96</sup> Sara Roy attributes these conditions to the absence of a governing institution that could provide any meaningful public service, any real system of accountability, appeal or justice, or any program of economic growth or development.

When Abbas came to power he preferred using elections as a road to change, under the mistaken assumption that he would win in any straight election because his core policies of ceasefire, reform, and negotiations with Israel enjoyed widespread support in Palestine. Abbas avoided disarming rival groups before the election because he feared accelerating the deteriora-

---

<sup>94</sup>Shikaki, “Palestinians Divided,” p.95-96.

<sup>95</sup>Roy, “Palestinian Society and Economy: The Continued Denial of Possibility,” p.14.

<sup>96</sup>*Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2004, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2004/p13a.html>).

tion of the security situation in the occupied territories. Consequently, elections formed the core of his failed effort to forge a new “Abbasian” Fatah out of the corpse of the old “Arafatist” Fatah.<sup>97</sup> Abbas naively hoped the election would restore his and the PA's legitimacy in the eyes of the Palestinian people and the international community.

Abbas also assumed the election would bridge gaps within Fatah, as he failed to understand the risks involved in hastily pushing a crumbling party through an election. Fatah's campaign was severely disadvantaged by internal rivalry. One week before the election there were 120 Fatah candidates running as “independents” against 130 “official” Fatah candidates. Most of these independents were running to protest against the way that official lists for the elections were chosen.<sup>98</sup> Those who had entered the election as independents refused to withdraw, essentially splitting Fatah's vote. Shikaki writes that this divide “reinforced the image of a deeply divided party riddled with corruption and of self-interested cadres fighting for personal privileges.”<sup>99</sup> Eventually many of the independents were persuaded to withdraw from the election, not through organizational discipline but through a combination of cash incentives, the promise of PA positions, and land in Gaza that had been recently evacuated by the Israelis. Those who refused to withdraw fragmented the Fatah vote, specifically in key districts such as Khan Yunis, mid-Gaza, Ramallah, Salfit, and East Jerusalem.<sup>100</sup>

The results of the election demonstrate how detrimental this divide proved to be for Fatah. Under the Palestinian electoral system half of the 132 Legislative Congress seats are won in district races decided by a majority vote, while the other 66 are won in a proportional national sys-

---

<sup>97</sup>Graham Usher, “The Democratic Resistance: Hamas, Fatah, and the Palestinian Elections,” p.6.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid, p.8.

<sup>99</sup>Shikaki, “Hamas’s Rise as Charted in the Polls, 1994–2005,” p.12.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid, p.13.



tem, where the number of candidates elected from a party is proportional to the percentage of national votes that the party receives. In the district elections Hamas won 45 seats of the 66, while Fatah only secured 17. It is important to note that Hamas candidates did not even win a majority of the popular vote, but just a plurality of 37.5 percent, while the remaining 63.5 percent of the vote was split between official Fatah candidates, independent Fatah candidates, and other various PLO factions.<sup>101</sup> This is conveyed by the following statement issued by the PCPRS on election day:

Fatah's fragmentation, displayed clearly in the large number of "independent" Fatah candidates gave Hamas an overwhelming victory despite the fact that its candidates won the district vote by an average not exceeding 41% to Fatah's 34% with Fatah's "independents" and other candidates winning an average of 25% in the districts. What insured Hamas' great victory in the electoral districts was the fact that for each Hamas candidate there were 6 opposing candidates leading to a significant waste of the nationalist vote. Has Fatah been able to maintain a decent level of cohesion and discipline, for example by convincing its "independent" candidates to stop their futile race, its average district vote would have risen to 39% which would have increased its total district seats by 16 more seats to a total of 33.<sup>102</sup>

One can observe this trend in the national election, as Hamas won 44% of the national vote and was awarded 29 seats from the 66-seat national list. Fatah won 28 seats as the remaining 56 percent of the popular vote were split among Fatah and four other PLO lists. Based on this divide Hilal and many other election analysts concluded that "Hamas did not win the elections-Fatah lost them."<sup>103</sup> It is still necessary to examine how Hamas and other Islamic parties were able to exploit the failures of secular nationalist regimes and appeal to Arab populations, in order to fully understand the rise of political Islam.

---

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>*Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2006, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2006/exitplcfulljan06e.html#corruption>).

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

Table 2: 2004 Palestinian Authority performance ratings<sup>104</sup>

<b>West Bank and Gaza</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Reject</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
The wide-spread nepotism in the governmental employment's process	94.4	4.1	1.5
The growth of power and richness in the hands of governmental officials	87.6	8.5	3.9
Using governmental positions with the aim of satisfying personal interests	91.0	6.6	2.4
Illegal appropriation of commercial guarantees	81.4	9.8	8.8
Lack of a fair and independent judicial system	84.6	11.4	4.0
Illegal attacks and appropriations of either public or private properties	70.8	20.5	8.7

<sup>104</sup>Fabio Forgione, *The Chaos of the Corruption: Challenges for the Improvement of the Palestinian Society*, 2004, Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, (<http://www.phrmg.org/Corruption%20in%20the%20Palestinian%20Authority.htm>).

Table 3: 2004 Palestinian Authority general approval ratings <sup>105</sup>

<b>Palestinian Authority Leadership</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>West Bank</b>	<b>Gaza Strip</b>
Excellent	3.8	3.5	4.2
Good	16.3	16.5	16.0
Fair	34.4	36.2	31.4
Poor	43.2	40.9	47.0
No opinion	2.4	2.9	1.4
<b>The Palestinian Legislative Council</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>West Bank</b>	<b>Gaza Strip</b>
Excellent	4.0	4.1	3.8
Good	17.0	19.1	13.4
Fair	35.3	37.4	31.6
Poor	40.2	35.5	48.4
No opinion	3.6	4.0	2.8
<b>The Judicial System</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>West Bank</b>	<b>Gaza Strip</b>
Excellent	4.6	5.1	3.6
Good	23.5	23.4	23.6
Fair	30.6	31.3	29.4
Poor	37.6	35.1	31.8
No opinion	3.8	5.1	1.6
<b>Palestinian Universities</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>West Bank</b>	<b>Gaza Strip</b>
Excellent	25.7	26.7	23.8
Good	42.5	41.7	43.8
Fair	20.4	19.5	21.8
Poor	9.4	9.2	9.8
No opinion	2.1	2.8	0.8
<b>Civil Societies</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>West Bank</b>	<b>Gaza Strip</b>
Excellent	14.3	15.3	12.4
Good	41.4	41.4	41.4
Fair	27.4	27.4	27.4
Poor	13.5	11.4	17.0
No opinion	3.6	4.4	2.0
<b>PA Security Forces</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>West Bank</b>	<b>Gaza Strip</b>
Excellent	3.9	3.5	4.6
Good	14.3	13.4	15.8
Fair	30.5	33.5	25.4
Poor	48.3	45.9	52.4
No opinion	3.0	3.7	1.8

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

### **Political Islam as a Social Movement: The Allure of Hamas**

Historically Islamists have been viewed as a respected force in Arab society; consequently, regimes permitted them to function without excessive state harassment compared to other political parties. Islamic parties capitalized on this relative freedom by establishing welfare organizations, youth and sports clubs, day-care centers, schools, health clinics, and food banks. Olimat points out that Islamic relief organizations, designed to meet the needs of the poor and those neglected by the state, provided services which could not be matched by their relief counterparts or the state.<sup>106</sup> This social activism opened the door for political participation. Esposito describes how demands for democratization following the fall of the USSR and mass demonstrations stemming from economic failures forced many regimes to liberalize politically and allow partially free or free elections.<sup>107</sup> The results of these elections stunned many authoritarian regimes that underestimated Islamic groups' ability to convert their social work into success at the ballot boxes.

Glenn Robinson places Hamas and similar organizations within the framework of the social movement theory to highlight how their role as social movements led to their political success. The social movement theory focuses on the group-social contexts and contends that choices that individuals make are based on changing contexts, relations, and networks. The theory recognizes how structural changes, such as the polarization of the Palestinian political field, created political opportunities for opposition groups to fill social and power vacuums.<sup>108</sup> The social movement theory also focuses on mobilizing structures as key variables in discerning how

---

<sup>106</sup>Olimat, p.23.

<sup>107</sup>Esposito, p.3.

<sup>108</sup>Robinson, p.4.

groups recruit like-minded individuals, socialize new participants, and mobilize contention.<sup>109</sup> Robinson notes that not all similar structural changes produce similar political outcomes. The outcomes often depend upon how groups take advantage of change through cultural framing, a group's ability to "effectively popularize its ideology, [and] provide clear summations of its ideology that resonate with its target audience."<sup>110</sup> In order to comprehend the roots and extent of Hamas' popularity in Palestine it is essential to: (1) view how Hamas took advantage of the structural changes caused by the polarization of the Palestinian political field, (2) pinpoint which sectors of Palestinian society supported Hamas, and (3) examine how Hamas translated this support base into votes through its clever and efficient campaign efforts.

After the first *Intifada* Hamas began to seize political opportunities in order to close the gap with its rival Fatah. In 1991 Hamas did not adopt the pro-Saddam stance of Fatah. It condemned both the invasion of Kuwait and the US-led offensive against Hussein. As Fatah lost much of its financial support Hamas' financial support increased.<sup>111</sup> Hamas started building alliances with the new guard of Fatah as well as other left wing Palestinian factions, following intensive collaboration during the first *Intifada*. After extensive interaction in Israeli prisons, leftist groups and Hamas publicly formed an alliance against the peace process.<sup>112</sup> This alliance was symbolically significant, as it marked Hamas' entry in mainstream politics while contributing to

---

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>Robinson, p.129.

<sup>111</sup>Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp.88-89.

<sup>112</sup>Khaled Khaled, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice*, (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000), pp.119-125.

the disintegration of the traditional pillars of the PLO.<sup>113</sup> Jeroen Gunning, a professor of Middle East Studies at Durham University, argued that by 1992 Hamas was in position to defeat Fatah electorally, citing Hamas' 1993 victory at Bir Zeit University, a traditional hotbed of support for Fatah. Gunning views the Oslo peace process as "a response to Hamas' growing strength ... designed to enable Fatah to regain the upper hand."<sup>114</sup>

While Fatah had a stake in the success of Oslo, Hamas had a vested interest in derailing it. By raising hostilities with Israel Hamas could directly undermine Fatah's legitimacy and capture the support of the growing number of Palestinians who were disenchanted by the Oslo peace process.<sup>115</sup> While support for Oslo declined, Palestinians still supported the principles of peace and co-existence, forcing Hamas to limit violent opposition to retaliation for specific gross Israeli acts of aggression against Palestinians. Gunning claims that maintaining public support was essential for Hamas' political survival; consequently, as support for violence diminished among the public Hamas shifted its focus to nonviolent social and political activism.<sup>116</sup> Towards the end of Arafat's reign the growing divisions within the PA compelled him to open negotiations with Hamas in an effort to convince the group to join the PLO. Gunning argues that "Fatah needed Hamas' participation to increase the system's legitimacy, while it could ill afford Hamas' continued opposition to the system."<sup>117</sup> The urgency to incorporate Hamas into the PLO was accelerated by

---

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>Jeroen Gunning, *Hamas in Politics Democracy, Religion, Violence* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp.42-43.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid, p.46

<sup>116</sup>Ibid, pp.47-48.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid,p.50.

threats from the PA's new guard to engage in parallel negotiations with Hamas and other Islamist groups.

Hamas utilized its wealth of local networks to fill the voids left by the disconnected and ineffective post-Oslo Palestinian civil society. Hamas' charities and institutions were not dependent on Western donations, allowing them to maintain a great deal of autonomy over decisions. Hamas' organizations became substantially more effective in addressing Palestinian needs. Hamas run organizations developed a reputation for accountability that was severely lacking in a field discredited by corruption allegations.<sup>118</sup> The PA feared empowering local leaders within its own ranks; as a result it allowed the disintegration of its own civil society institutions and became dependent on Hamas' charities. The growing economic crisis in the territories only served to deepen this dependency.<sup>119</sup>

While the West mainly views Hamas as a terrorist group, its ability to mobilize the Palestinian people comes from its expansive institutional networks. Its networks continue to be far more important than any of its individual heads, including its titular leader, Ahmed Yasin.<sup>120</sup> Hamas' mosque-based, medical, educational, and explicit political institutions historically have provided priceless and irreplaceable services to thousands of Palestinians. The political opposition to Arab regimes is prohibited or severely restricted from participating in the public sphere, so regime opponents have often been forced to develop support in the private and semi-private realms. These almost always revolve around the mosque, the one institution that states could never overtly challenge. Islamic environments continue to be the sole legitimate sphere to discuss Arab politics in many societies. The Palestinian case follows this trend, as the mosque be-

---

<sup>118</sup>Ibid, p.45

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid, p.17.

came the focus for the development of Islamism, political opposition, and social services (none of which are mutually exclusive). The growing Islamist movement can be quantified by the mosque building boom in the occupied territories, as the number of mosques doubled in Gaza between 1967 and 1987, while the West Bank saw an average annual increase of 40 new mosques in this same period. Most of these mosques were controlled by *al-Mujamma al-Islami* (the Islamic Association of the Muslim Brotherhood), which Hamas took over after its creation in 1988. The *Mujamma* combined religious and social activities, by building schools, hospitals, charitable associations, sports clubs, nursing schools, and activity rooms for women to interact, all of which were often located within the mosques.<sup>121</sup>

The *Mujamma* spread its influence outside of the mosque as well, creating both formal and informal bonds linking Palestinians through social service institutions within its medical and educational branches. Hamas founded the Scientific Medical Association in 1997 which provided medical clinics, dental facilities, and blood banks, effectively countering the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (founded by Arafat's brother in 1968). Hamas' Association for Science and Culture, provided elementary education for thousands of Palestinian children. Hamas operates the Islamic University of Gaza, which has been a key center of its support base. Hamas founded the Islamic Worker Unions in 1992 to defend Palestinian workers against unfair economic policies of the corrupted Palestinian Authority. The group is estimated to spend 95 percent of its 70 million dollar annual budget on these social welfare institutions.<sup>122</sup>

The impact of Hamas' social welfare programs on the 2006 election can be measured by how lower income and more vulnerable sections of Palestinian society favored Hamas over Fa-

---

<sup>121</sup>Ibid, p.18

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.



tah. Poorer Palestinians have traditionally comprised the bulk of Fatah's and Hamas' constituencies. This is partially because of the worsening socioeconomic situation in the territories, with the overall poverty rate in the occupied territories rising from 20 percent in 1999 to 60 percent in 2003.<sup>123</sup> Hamas' rise in the charts can be partially attributed to the social class polarization discussed earlier, as more Palestinians began to differentiate between Fatah and Hamas based on the social class to which they belonged. Surveys conducted by the PCPRS in 1997 found that only 16 percent of Palestinians viewed Hamas as representing the poor, but by 2004 the figures had risen to 58 percent. Conversely, in 2004 only 35 percent of the poor saw Fatah as representing them, which is significant when one c the high level of impoverishment throughout the territories.<sup>124</sup> A growing percentage of the lower and middle class members of Palestinian society began to send their children to universities throughout the territories starting in the 1990's, which only expanded Hamas' pool of potential activists.<sup>125</sup> All groups who were outside of the paid wage labor force, such as students and housewives, formed the bulk of Hamas support, because they benefited the most from its institutions. Over 62 percent of Hamas' support comes from women. This backing has increased with the decline of the PA's social services and the rise of Hamas' support system.<sup>126</sup> Hilal conducted in depth interviews with Hamas supporters in the West Bank two years before the 2006 election in order to verify the findings of the PCPRS surveys. He identifies disenchantment with the Oslo process, economic hardships, and general PA mismanagement as attitudes shared by the interviewees. He adds that many of the interviewees

---

<sup>123</sup>Ibid, p.11.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Jamil Hilal and Mushtaq Khan, "State Formation under the PNA," (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2000), pp.64-119.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

were once supporters of Fatah, but came to view Hamas as more capable of returning and protecting Palestinian society and values.<sup>127</sup>

(See Table 4)

Hamas exploited Palestinian disenchantment with Fatah, while emphasizing its indispensable role as a social movement by campaigning for the 2006 election under the banner of “Change and Reform.” In the previous 1996 PLC election, and the 2004 presidential election, Hamas did not run, viewing running as pointless because the political and electoral systems were still dominated by Fatah. Following its remarkable achievements in the local municipal elections in 2004 and 2005, Hamas changed its boycott policy and in March 2005 announced that it would run in the next PLC election. Hamas immediately began its campaign which aimed to convince the Palestinian population that it was a credible political party and not just a social movement looking to indoctrinate Palestinians with its Islamist ideology and agenda. Upon announcing its intention to participate in the election, Hamas released a 14 page electoral platform. Its platform explained its rationale for entering the election and its goals for the future of Palestinian society, while downplaying its traditional stance on armed resistance. The opening statement of the document demonstrated how Hamas was compelled to run in order to fulfill its “duty to reform the Palestinian reality and alleviate the suffering of [its] people, reinforcing their steadfastness and shielding them from corruption.”<sup>128</sup> One of the biggest surprises of their agenda and examples of their commitment to change was the near absence of any reference to armed resistance in their campaign. Although Hamas had typically portrayed itself as an uncompromising resistance

---

<sup>127</sup>Hilal, “Hamas’s Rise as Charted in the Polls, 1994–2005,” p.12.

<sup>128</sup>Menachem Klein, “Hamas in Power,” *The Middle East Journal* 61.3 (2007): 442-459, *JSTOR*, (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4330419>), p.3.

movement, in its electoral platform it only refers to armed struggle as a legitimate means to end the occupation once.<sup>129</sup>

The majority of the document wisely drew attention to the flaws of Fatah's regime, by promising a seemingly utopian vision for the future of Palestinian civil society and democracy, shaped by the demands and preferences of the Palestinian people (as depicted through the PCPRS surveys cited above). In its campaign Hamas emphasized its commitment to organize a new Palestinian political system featuring political freedoms, pluralism, and a strong focus on accountable governance and reform. Hamas pledged to recreate Palestinian society, “based on political pluralism and the rotation of power, the political system of [Palestinian] society and its reformist and political agenda [would be] be oriented toward achieving Palestinian national rights.”<sup>130</sup> Hamas promised to reverse Fatah's encroachment on the public freedoms and citizen rights in order “to achieve equality before the law among citizens in rights and duties; bring security to all citizens and protect their properties and ensure their safety.”<sup>131</sup> Hamas guaranteed that it would institutionalize these commitments through implementations of reforms for fighting corruption and by developing civil society and government branches with a focus on monitoring and assuring government accountability. Hamas' platform frequently referred to corruption as the main obstacle to national unity. The group assured the Palestinian people it would investigate financial corruption, the efficiency of the executive system, work to decentralize and delegate power and participation in decision making, and remove partisan, personal, or social considerations when appointing government officials.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup>Ibid, p.6.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid, p.4.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid, p.8.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid, p.23.

Hamas' campaign rhetoric shaped its campaign practices in a very visible and concrete manner. Its campaign headquarters were mainly located in urban spaces such as refugee camps, while Fatah focused on villages where it could focus on and bolster its traditional clan support. These types of clan allegiances still existed in urban areas, however in towns and cities they were diluted and much less significant. Hamas centered its campaign efforts around these urban locations, knowing that it had a better chance of persuading urban based individuals to break from their clan's historic ties to Fatah.<sup>133</sup> These approaches to campaigning were indicative of the broader basis of operation for both of the parties. Gunning captures the differences in their methods, noting that, "while Fatah's leadership was mired in internal rivalries, making deal with clan elders and selecting candidates on the basis of the faction's debt to them including many linked to financial corruption and abuse of power, Hamas' leadership was busy developing a program and list which won the confidence of the voters."<sup>134</sup>

Hamas was well aware of the importance of securing grass root votes and following through with an agenda that voters could identify with. In the weeks leading up to the election it took extraordinarily measures to secure these channels of support. In the immediate aftermath of local municipal elections in 2004 and 2005, newly elected Hamas members showcased what they would do if its members were elected at the national level. Four weeks after being elected in the West Bank village of Bidya, Hamas officials replaced the archaic system of water pipes and bought new electric transformers to improve the electricity throughout the village. The previous Fatah government had let this vital infrastructure deteriorate. In al-Shiyukh near the West Bank city of Hebron, a newly elected Hamas council installed street lamps. Similarly, in Deir al-Balah

---

<sup>133</sup>Gunning, p.150.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid, p.151.

near Gaza City, Hamas-led councils “reinforced the roads, they cleaned the beaches, [and] they decorated the streets with flowers and lights.”<sup>135</sup> Hamas videotaped its members organizing some of these activities and used the footage to promote its image during the 2006 election.

Unlike Fatah, Hamas acted in unanimity while presenting these campaign promises (despite how controversial they appeared to members of its traditional support center) and ran a credible, far-reaching, and transparent campaign. After issuing its platform, Hamas offered a *hudnah* (long term truce) to Israel. Hamas appointed a media consultant, Nashat Aqtash, to transform Hamas' image from that of a militant organization to that of a legitimate political party.<sup>136</sup> In line with its campaign platform, Hamas candidates did not mention the destruction of Israel or its own militant activities in their campaign speeches, but stressed day to day issues of the common Palestinian.<sup>137</sup> Hamas' campaign demonstrated its organizational discipline, as it presented a unified list for the election, with no independent Hamas candidates dividing their support base. Hilal notes “the contrast in electoral behavior of the two movements seemed to illustrate the reasons for Hamas' rise.”<sup>138</sup> At a time when Palestinian unity was at an all-time low, even Palestinians who did not support Hamas' politics accepted the fact that Hamas was the most likely party to reverse years of polarization, protect the rights of the Palestinian people, and advance the Palestinian national movement. Many scholars reject or ignore these findings and associate the rise of Hamas in Palestine with an Islamization and radicalization of Palestinian society.

---

<sup>135</sup>Ibid, pp.152-153.

<sup>136</sup>

Chris McGreal, “New-look Hamas spends £100k on an image makeover,” *The Guardian*, 20 Jan. 2006, (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/jan/20/advertising.marketingandpr>).

<sup>137</sup>Mahjoob Zweiri, “The Hamas Victory: Shifting Sands or Major Earthquake?” *Third World Quarterly* 27.4 (2006): 657-687, *JSTOR*, (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4017731>).

<sup>138</sup>Hilal, “Hamas’s Rise as Charted in the Polls, 1994–2005,” p.11.

Table 4: Voting outcome based on selected demographic factors<sup>139</sup>

	<b>Voting Hamas</b>	<b>Voting Fateh</b>	<b>Voting Others</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Hamas received slightly more votes from women than men (44% vs. 42%)	Fateh too received slightly more votes from women than men (45% vs. 42%)	Other lists received less votes from women than men (12% vs. 16%)
<b>Refugee status</b>	Hamas received more votes from refugees than from non-refugees (46% vs. 42%)	Fateh received an equal percentage of vote from refugees and non-refugees (43% vs. 42%)	Other lists received less votes from refugees compared to non-refugees (11% vs. 16%)
<b>Age:</b> Young: 18-33 years Middle age: 34-47 years Old: over 47 years	Support for Hamas increases among the old reaching 52% and decreases to 47% among the middle aged, and decreases further to 42% among the young	Support decreases considerably among the old (31%) and increases to 37% among the middle aged and increases further to 46% among the young	Support for other lists increases among the old and the middle aged (17%) and decreases among the young (13%)
<b>Education</b>	Support for Hamas increases among the illiterates (50%), and drops to 43% among those with 6-12 years of education, and remains at the same level (44%) among those with two or more years of college education	Support for Fateh drops considerably among the illiterates (34%) and increases to 43% among those with 6-12 years of education, and remains at the same level (42%) among those with two or more years of college education	These are no important differences in support for the other lists based on educational attainment
<b>Profession</b>	Support for Hamas increases among merchants (49%), followed by housewives (47%), professionals (46%), laborers (45%), students (42%), and employees and the unemployed (41% each)	Support for Fateh decreases considerably among merchants (28%) and increases among professionals (36%), laborers (37%), housewives (42%), students and employees (44% each) and the unemployed (51%)	Support for the other lists increases among merchants (23%), laborers and professionals (18% each), students and employees (14% each), housewives (12% each) and the unemployed (9%)
<b>Work Sector</b>	Support for Hamas is greater among those working in the private sector than those working in the public sector (45% vs. 42%)	Support for Fateh is weaker among those working in the private sector compared to those working in the public sector (37% vs. 43%)	Support for the other lists is slightly greater among those working in the private sector compared to those working in the public sector (18% vs. 16%)
<b>Religion</b>	Support for Hamas among Palestinian Muslims is naturally higher than among Palestinian Christians (45% vs. 5%)	Support for Fateh among Palestinian Muslims is higher than among Christians (42% vs. 31%)	Support for the other lists drops among Muslims compared to Christians (13% vs. 46%)
<b>Income :</b> Low Income: less than NIS 1200 Mid Income: NIS 1201-2400 High Income: more than NIS 2400	Support for Hamas increases among low income voters (46%) and decreases among mid income voters (44%) and decreases further among high income voters (40%)	There are no important differences in support for Fateh based on income levels	Support for other lists drops among low income voters (12%) and increase among mid income voters (15%) and high income voters (17%)

<sup>139</sup> *Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2006, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2006/exitplcfulljan06e.html#corruption>).

### **Islamization and Radicalization Trends in Palestine?**

A few scholars have concluded that the Palestinians preferred Islamists, simply because they represented their authentic culture, and preserved the spirit and collective Islamic identity of the people. Asher Susser argues the private individual donations of *zakat* money by wealthy West Bankers to sponsor Hamas' campaign can largely be explained by purely religious motives.<sup>140</sup> Susser adds that even Fatah had to conform to the expectations of the overwhelming Islamic nature of Palestinian society. He explains how Mahmoud Abbas had to make up for his secular image by declaring he was a good Muslim in multiple speeches, and by fusing Islamic language and symbols as instruments for political mobilization. Susser depicts the Islamic identity of Palestinian society by citing a poll conducted by an-Najah University, which found 46 percent of the Palestinian public fully supported a political system based on *sharia* law.<sup>141</sup> The traditional nature of Palestinian society supposedly provided Hamas with a highly fertile ground for its expansion. Meir Litvak utilizes these arguments by framing the rise of Hamas in Palestine as a transformation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict into a religious war, basing his argument entirely upon statements from Hamas' Islamic charter. Litvak claims that the conflict is not about land and soil but faith and belief with a focus on armed struggle over any compromise with the Jewish state.<sup>142</sup> These arguments both implicitly and explicitly link the success of Hamas in free and transparent elections with support for Hamas' violent Islamic agenda by the Palestinian people. While there are certainly radical elements within Hamas and Palestinian society, Palestinian pub-

---

<sup>140</sup>Asher Susser, "The Rise of Hamas in Palestine and the Crisis of Secularism in the Arab World," Brandeis University- Crown Center for Middle East Studies (Feb. 2010), (<http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/ce/CE1.pdf>), p.18.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>142</sup>Litvak, p.149.

lic opinion after the second *Intifada* indicates these elements were marginalized and had little impact on the results of the election.

It is important to realize that support for sharia law does not equate to rejection of democratic principles; similarly support for political Islamist groups is often based on non-religious reasons. A 1999 survey of political and religious attitudes in Palestine found that only 24 percent of Palestinians viewed Islam and democracy as incompatible, and “that those who support political Islam ... are actually more likely than others to believe that a political system based on Islamic law can be democratic.”<sup>143</sup> Out of the 74 Hamas legislators only 12 had administrative roles in a mosque, with only four of the 12 working as imams. The other nine had secondary professions outside of the mosque and largely secular roles within the mosque, such as distributing charitable donations to the poor. Many of the remaining legislators had secular backgrounds as engineers, medical doctors, and “secular” university professors.<sup>144</sup> Gunning concludes that Hamas’ appeal was not based on pure piety but rather its integrity and efficiency. These virtues may have been inspired by religious affiliation, but can be admired by all members of Palestinian society.

Following the devastation of the second *Intifada*, the excessive Israeli responses to Hamas’ military attacks posed high economic costs on the Palestinian population. As a result, “the mass base of support for Hamas, no longer tolerated extremism in any form.”<sup>145</sup> The Israeli unilateral disengagement plan from Gaza in 2005 changed the order of Palestinian priorities, placing eco-

---

<sup>143</sup>Tessler, p.161.

<sup>144</sup>Gunning, p.163.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid, p.8.



conomic well-being above ending the occupation, and further reducing the appeal of violence.<sup>146</sup> Similarly increased public support for Islamists did not weaken the public's willingness to support compromise. A majority of Palestinians were willing to accept a two-state solution, even one which forced Palestinians to recognize Israel as a Jewish state. A PCPRS public opinion poll conducted in June of 2003 found that 52 percent of Palestinians supported this formula (with 46 percent opposing it). By September 2005 the number supporting this solution had jumped to 63 percent (while opposition dropped to 35 percent).<sup>147</sup> In Septembers of 2005 a PCPSR poll found that 73 percent of Palestinians supported the establishment of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders.<sup>148</sup>

(See Table 5)

In recent years Hamas has proven extremely flexible in adjusting its positions to meet the Palestinian consensus. Its moderated election platform with an emphasis on social reform and diminished emphasis on armed resistance and *Jihad* represents the priorities of the Palestinian people. Dr. Menachem Klein, an Israeli professor of political science at Bar-Ilan University, attributes Hamas' political flexibility to its activities and constant interactions with the general public through its social welfare networks. He goes as far as to say that the “public-at-large is no less a foundation of Hamas' existence than the ideology of the movement and its leadership.”<sup>149</sup> Klein states that the difference between Hamas' platform of change and reform and its Islamic Charter is not an attempt to deceive the Palestinian population, but an attempt at change and moderation.

---

<sup>146</sup>Khalil Shikaki, “Willing to Compromise Palestinian Public Opinion and the Peace Process,” *United States Institute of Peace* (Jan. 2006): *JSTOR*, ([www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)), p.9.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*, p.11.

<sup>148</sup> *Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*, 2005, <http://www.pcpsr.org>, (<http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2005/p17a.html>).

<sup>149</sup> Klein, p.4.

This is exemplified by the candidates Hamas put on its party list for the 2006 election. The pro-Israeli Washington Institute for Near East Policy found that out of a list of 74 Hamas legislators only three were accused of direct involvement in armed resistance against Israel. Gunning concludes that “by limiting the number of candidates known for their resistance record, Hamas seems to recognize that involvement in armed resistance does not equate with political expertise.”<sup>150</sup> Whether Hamas intended to maintain the moderated stances outlined in its electoral platform after the 2006 election is beyond the scope of this paper. The fact that Hamas felt the need to soften its stance on armed struggle against Israel immediately after announcing its election bid, represents the Palestinian people's interest in improving living conditions in the territories through peace and compromise with Israel.

The fundamental problem in Palestine before the election was that the majority of the people did not have options, future, or power. An Islamic group did not win the 2006 election because people were against political and economic change, but because they were denied it. The Palestinian people choose Hamas based on its social work and its rhetoric for a pluralistic healthy civil society that would empower them, not because they supported the destruction of Israel or the establishment of a *sharia* based form of government.

---

<sup>150</sup> Gunning, p.178-180.

Table 5: Palestinian voting priorities<sup>151</sup>

In April 2004, a survey of the views of Palestinian residents toward current economic and social conditions showed that 38 percent of Palestinian families regard obtaining food as their foremost priority. Another twenty-one percent of families rank work as their first priority, and 20 percent rank financial support as their first priority. Another 8 percent rank educational services first, and the same percentage rank health services first.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the results of Poll No. 19, issued by the Development Studies Programme (2004), showed that improvement of the economic situation and provision of internal security are among the most important priorities:

**Distribution of Palestinian Priorities by Areas of Concern and Region**

Areas	West Bank & Gaza Strip	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Improving the economic situation	35%	33%	37%
Providing internal security	18%	19%	16%
Reducing the unemployment problem	10%	10%	9%
Combating corruption	8%	6%	10%
Supporting the cause of persons with disabilities	7%	8%	6%
Strengthening rule of law	3%	2%	4%

In terms of occupation-related issues, ending the occupation, removal of the occupation forces from Palestinian areas, and halting construction of the Separation Wall have come to occupy a permanent place on the list of Palestinian priorities

<sup>151</sup> *Palestine Human Development Report 2004, UNDP*, ([http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/arabstates/palestine/Occupied%20Palestinian%20Territories\\_2004\\_en.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/arabstates/palestine/Occupied%20Palestinian%20Territories_2004_en.pdf)).

### **What Can Be Learned from the Palestinian Experience?**

The events following the election resulted in the complete separation and isolation between Fatah (West Bank) and Hamas (Gaza Strip), with a total collapse of the fragile Palestinian democratic experiment. The attempts to reconcile between the two parties have been unsuccessful thus far, and prospects for Palestinian unity are bleak. Understanding why Hamas won the election allows Fatah, Hamas, and the international community to comprehend and meet the demands and needs of the Palestinian people. This is essential for the future of Palestinian democracy, and any future peace settlement between Palestine and Israel. It also provides guidelines for how to avoid conflict and solve the current crisis in Palestine. Arab regimes throughout the Middle East usually cite the “hijacking” of democracy by Islamists in Iran, Algeria, and Gaza to justify their own authoritarian rule. Ultimately this will only add to the appeal of Islamists, as it prevents the mobilization of alternative opposition groups who cannot use the sanctity of the mosque as a platform for political participation. By thwarting participation in politics and brutally oppressing Islamists, authoritarian regimes are only providing incentives for Islamic parties to reject the democratic process and to hold on to any power they can acquire through inaugural elections, political violence, or both. Denying legitimate outlets for expression forces Islamists and other members of society to resort to acts of violence and terrorism in order to make their voices and concerns heard.

If Arab regimes fail to liberalize, to represent their people's views, and to fulfill the social and economic needs of their populations, the Middle East will remain vulnerable to radical elements and rogue actors. If Arab regimes open up the political field to their opponents it will strengthen their political systems by promoting strong political parties, creating checks and balances on government control, and removing the incentives and ability of political Islamic groups

to seize power and behave recklessly. A strong political system will create trust between Islamists and other political groups by developing a political culture which respects norms and procedures. Hamas and other Islamist groups also need to prove they are credible political parties capable of making more than just speeches. This can only be accomplished by adhering to the norms of the democratic system and respecting its values. If Islamic groups can accomplish this they will discredit Western and authoritarian regimes' claims and fears regarding the incompatibility of Islam with democracy. The Arab Spring has inspired democratic trends throughout the Arab world; it has even fostered reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas officials (with the newly appointed Egyptian regime serving as a mediating force). As the Arab Spring continues to spread throughout the Middle East, leaders of Fatah and Hamas are more likely to realize that the current status quo is unacceptable, and work together to unite Palestine under a truly democratic system.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andoni, Lamis. "The PLO at the Crossroads." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1991. Web. 5 Jan. 2013. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2537365.pdf?acceptTC=true&>>.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *Sociology in Question* (London: Sage Publications, 1993): Print.
- Brown, Nathan J, Amr Hamzawy, and Marina Ottaway. "Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring the Gray Zones." Published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2006): Print.
- Brown, Nathan. *Evaluating Palestinian Reform*. N.p.: n.p., 2005. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Web. 5 Jan. 2013. <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CP59.brown.FINAL.pdf>>.
- Brynen, Rex. "The Dynamics of Palestinian Elite Formation." N.p.: University of California, 1995. *JSTOR*. Web. 6 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2537878.pdf?acceptTC=true>>.
- Public Finance, Conflict, and Statebuilding: The Case of Palestine*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. *McGill University*. Web. 6 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.mcgill.ca/icames/sites/mcgill.ca/icames/files/PalestinePublicFinance2.pdf>>.
- Esposito, John. "Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace." *Current History* (Jan. 1994): n. pag. Print.
- Farsoun, Samih K, and Naseer H. Aruri. *Palestine and the Palestinians*. 2nd ed. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2006. Print.
- Forgione, Fabio. *The Chaos of the Corruption: Challenges for the Improvement of the Palestinian Society*. N.p.: n.p., 2004. *Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group*. Web. 5 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.phrmg.org/Corruption%20in%20the%20Palestinian%20Authority.htm>>.
- Frisch, Hillel. "Modern Absolutist or Neopatriarchal State Building? Customary Law, Extended Families, and the Palestinian Authority." N.p.: Cambridge University Press. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29 (1997) Web. 5 Jan. 2013. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/164584.pdf?acceptTC=true&>>.
- "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, Texts and Speeches, White House, Washington, 13 September 1993," *Israel's Foreign Relations: Selected Documents*, Volume 13-14: 1992-1994, <<http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0jkh0>>.
- McGreal, Chris. "New-look Hamas spends £100k on an image makeover." *The Guardian*. N.p., 20 Jan. 2006. Web. 5 Jan. 2013. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/jan/20/advertising.marketingandpr>>.

Gunning, Jeroen. *Hamas in Politics Democracy, Religion, Violence*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008. Print.

"Hamas coup in Gaza." *International Institute for Strategic Studies*. N.p., June 2007. Web. 5 Jan. 2013. <<http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-13-2007/volume-13-issue-5/hamas-coup-in-gaza/>>.

Hilal, Jamil. *Civil Society in Palestine: A Literature Review*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. *Foundation for Future*. Web. 5 Jan. 2013. <[http://foundationforfuture.org/en/Portals/0/Conferences/Research/Research%20papers/Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Palestine\\_English.pdf](http://foundationforfuture.org/en/Portals/0/Conferences/Research/Research%20papers/Civil_Society_in_Palestine_English.pdf)>.

"Hamas' Rise as Charted in the Polls, 1994–2005." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35.3 (2006): 6-19. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2006.35.3.6> .>.

"The Polarization of the Palestinian Political Field." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39.3 (2010): 24-39. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2010.XXXIX.3.24> .>.

Hilal, Jamil, and Mushtaq Khan. "State Formation under the PNA." London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2000. Print.

Hroub, Khaled. *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice*. Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000. Print.

*Human Development Report 2009/10 Investing in Human Security for a Future State occupied Palestinian territory*. N.p.: United Nations, 2010. *UNDP*. Web. 5 Jan. 2013. <[http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/arabstates/palestine/NHDR\\_Palestine\\_En\\_2009-10.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/arabstates/palestine/NHDR_Palestine_En_2009-10.pdf)>.

Huntington, Samuel. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Oklahoma City: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993. Print.

Jad, Islah. "NGOs: Between Buzzwords and Social Movements." N.p.: Taylor&Francis, 2007. *Development in Practice* 17. Web. 5 Jan. 2013. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/25548261.pdf?acceptTC=true>>.

Kamrava, Mehran. "What Stands between the Palestinians and Democracy?" *Middle East Quarterly* 4.2 (1999): 3-12. *Middle East Forum*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.meforum.org/456/what-stands-between-the-palestinians-and-democracy>>.

Klein, Menachem. "Hamas in Power." *The Middle East Journal* 61.3 (2007): 442-459. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4330419> .>.

Lea, David, Ed. *A Survey of Arab-Israeli Relations*. 1st ed. (London: Europa Publications, 2002): Print.

Litvak, Meir. "The Islamization of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: The Case of Hamas." *Middle Eastern Studies* <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4283922> . ser. 34.1 (1998): 148-163. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4283922> .>

Lynch, Thomas. "Kristol Balls: Neoconservative Visions of Islam and the Middle East." London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, School of Advanced Study, 2008. *International Politics*. Web. 5 Jan. 2013.

<<http://commons.wvc.edu/jminharo/pols101/Articles%20to%20Choose%20From/Neoconservatism%20and%20Foreign%20Policy.pdf>>.

MEDEA. European Institute for Research, n.d. Web. 5 Apr. 2013.

<<http://www.medeabe/en/countries/occupied-palestinian-territories/palestinian-legislative-council-plc/>>.

Mishal, Shaul, and Avraham Sela(2000). *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Olimat, Muhamad. "The Fourth Wave of Democratization." *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 2.25 (2008): 16-48. Print.

Olson, Pamela. *Fast Times in Palestine*. n.d. Web. 5 Apr. 2013.

<<http://fasttimesinpalestine.wordpress.com/2009/10/13/maps-of-israel-palestine/>>.

*Palestine Human Development Report 2004*. N.p.: n.p., 2004. *UNDP*. Web. 5 Apr. 2013.

<[http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/arabstates/palestine/occupied%20palestinian%20territories\\_2004\\_en.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/arabstates/palestine/occupied%20palestinian%20territories_2004_en.pdf)>.

*Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Jan. 2013.

<<http://www.pcpsr.org/about/about.html>>.

*Palestinian Parliamentary Elections*. N.p., n.d. Web. 5 Apr. 2013.

<<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/palestine/pa-elections2006.htm>>.

Parsons, Nigel. *The Politics of the Palestinian Authority*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005. Print.

Pina, Aaron D. "Palestinian Elections." *Congressional Research Center Report for Congress* (Feb. 2006): 10. *Federation of American Scientists*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33269.pdf>>.

Robinson, Glenn. "Hamas as a Social Movement." *Rutgers University* (May 2002): n. pag. <http://www.eden.rutgers.edu>. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.eden.rutgers.edu/~spath/385/Readings/Robinson%20-%20Hamas%20as%20Social%20Movement.pdf>>.

Roy, Sara. "Hamas and the Transformation(s) of Political Islam in Palestine." *Current History* 102.660 (2003): n. pag. <http://www.currenthistory.com>. Web. 13 Dec. 2011.

<<http://www.currenthistory.com/Article.php?ID=123>>.



“Palestinian Society and Economy: The Continued Denial of Possibility.” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 3 (Summer 2001): 5-20. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2001.30.4.5> .>.

Said, Edward. "The Morning After." *London Review of Books* Oct. 1993: n. pag. Print.

Schanzer, Jonathan. “A Gaza-West Bank Split? Why the Palestinian Territories Might Become Two Separate States.” *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* (July-Aug. 2001): n. pag. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.meforum.org/333/a-gaza-west-bank-split>>.

*Hamas vs. Fatah: The Struggle for Palestine*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

*Separation Barrier*. B'TSELEM, 1 Jan. 2011. Web. 5 Jan. 2013. <[http://www.btselem.org/separation\\_barrier/statistics](http://www.btselem.org/separation_barrier/statistics)>.

Shikaki, Khalil. “Palestinians Divided.” *Foreign Affairs* 81.1 (2001): 89-105. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20033005> .>.

“Willing to Compromise Palestinian Public Opinion and the Peace Process.” *United States Institute of Peace* (Jan. 2006): n. pag. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <[www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)>.

Smith, Curtis. "Elitism vs. Pluralism: Of Robert Dahl, the Working Middle Class Vote and the 2008 Presidential Election." *KCKCC E-Journal*. KCKCC, 2009. Web. 5 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.kckcc.edu/ejournal/archives/october2008/article/elitismVsPluralism.aspx>>.

Susser, Asher. “The Rise of Hamas in Palestine and the Crisis of Secularism in the Arab World.” Brandeis University Crown Center for Middle East Studies. (Feb. 2010): n. pag. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/ce/CE1.pdf>>.

Tessler, Mark. “Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitude Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries.” *Comparative Politics* 34 (2002): 337-354. Print.

Usher, Graham. “The Democratic Resistance: Hamas, Fatah, and the Palestinian Elections.” *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Spring 2006): n. pag. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2006.35.3.20> .>.

Usher, Graham. *The Politics of Internal Security: The PA's New Intelligence Services*. N.p.: University of California, 1996. *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Web. 5 Jan. 2013. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2538181.pdf>>.

Zakaria, Fareed. “Islam, Democracy, and Constitutional Liberalism.” *Political Science Quarterly* 119.1 (2004): n. pag. Print.

Zweiri, Mahjoob. “The Hamas Victory: Shifting Sands or Major Earthquake?” *Third World Quarterly* 27.4 (2006): 657-687. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4017731> >.

# ACADEMIC VITA

Omar Ramsey Khraishah

4107 Connecticut Avenue Apt. #107 NW Washington DC 20008 [ork5002@psu.edu](mailto:ork5002@psu.edu)

## EDUCATION

---

**The Pennsylvania State University: Schreyer Honors College** *University Park, PA, Class of 2013*  
BA International Political Economy: Concentration in Middle East Studies.

**Honors: Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.** Schreyer Honors Scholar. Strategic and Global Security Scholar. Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. Phi Sigma Alpha Honor Society. Gilman International Scholar. Shibley Memorial Scholarship in Middle East Studies. President's Award.

**Involvement:** Agora Liberal Arts Journal: Print Editor. Students for Justice in Palestine: Head of Relations. Arab Student Union: Vice President.

### **University of Jordan**

*Amman, Jordan 2011-2012*

Intensive Modern Standard Arabic Study.

### **Edmund Burke Preparatory School**

*Washington DC, Class of 2009*

Top 3 in Class. Model UN: President. Student Activity Committee: President. Leadership Committee: Retreat Leader. Varsity Soccer: Captain. Varsity Basketball: Captain.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

---

### **National US Arab Chamber of Commerce**

*Washington DC, Aug.-Dec.2012*

#### *Program Assistant*

- Conducted research on topics related to U.S. Arab trade
- Assisted with planning and recruiting for trade missions to and from the Arab world

### **National Democratic Institute: North Africa Division**

*Washington DC, May- Aug. 2012*

#### *Program Assistant*

- Composed programmatic and political updates for donors and consultants
- Organized flight and accommodations for 104 foreign diplomats at International Leaders Forum 2012
- Composed news feeds and donor reports based on multiple French, Arabic, and English media sources

### **Jordan Business Development Center**

*Amman, Jordan, Nov. 2011- May 2012*

#### *Training Coordinator*

- Developed training curriculums in Marketing, Entrepreneurship, International Trade
- Fostered strategic supply and business linkages in international trade for small and medium enterprises
- Coordinated marketing ventures and collected testimonials, photographs, and footage for publications

### **Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies**

*Ramallah, Palestine, Jun.- Sept. 2011*

#### *Research Assistant*

- Conducted research for various studies and articles published by the Center
- Redesigned website for the Center

### **Buckley Sandler Financial Services LLP**

*Washington DC, Jun. 2008- Aug. 2010*

#### *Paralegal*

- Researched and conducted interviews with clients to gather background information

## **SKILLS**

---

**Languages:** Native Fluency in English. **Advanced in Levantine Arabic.** Working Proficiency in French.

**Technical:** MS Office Excellence: Word, Excel, Publisher, Powerpoint. Firebug Web Design. SPSS. Stata.  
Advanced Research Skills: LexisNexis, JSTOR, ProQuest.

**Geographical Expertise:** Middle East and North Africa.