

## Chapter 1

# Introduction

This book is about the causes, patterns, and goals of civic activism among subaltern, homeland minorities and how and why they seek to reconstruct the meaning of the civic in ethnic states. It is also an effort to enhance our understanding of how and for what purpose intellectual elites mobilize national minorities and institutionalize their political visions and interests in civic and human rights organizations. Why and when do homeland minorities mobilize and activate civil society organizations to achieve collective goals? What types of groups and individuals carry out this venture, and to what extent does their civic activism reflect the emergence of a new type of social capital that assists them to achieve their common goals? To what extent and why do homeland minorities conceive the civic sphere as a necessary avenue through which they promote their interests and represent their identity in ethnic states? To what extent can reconstructing the meaning of the civic in ethnic states assist homeland minorities in overcoming their subordination to the exclusive power of ethnic majorities in ethnic states? To what extent does decolonizing the public sphere from ethno-national underpinnings form a strategy of struggle for homeland minorities in their search for freedom and equality? The answers to these questions are governed by three environmental conditions.

The first concerns the power structures in which civic activism takes place. These structures can vary greatly. One of the major variations relates to the nature of the political regime, which can include both democratic and nondemocratic regimes with liberal, pluralistic, and egalitarian values and ethnic, illiberal, and nationalistic regimes. Another major variation in power structures relates to the positions of the social agents therein. In

asymmetric power structures, the spaces to maneuver and resources afforded to different agents is a major factor in explaining their behavior. In this regard, one has to differentiate between power structures that result from a colonization process that renders indigenous peoples minorities in their own homeland and other national experiences in which the difference between indigenous and immigrants does not exist.

The second condition influencing patterns of civic activism among subaltern homeland minorities is the state's policy toward this type of activism. In this regard, one can differentiate between instances in which the state is open for change in order to represent all its citizens and acts to protect the spaces afforded to certain groups to promote their worldviews, interests, and values and the other contexts in which the state has an exclusive hegemonic national ideology serving a dominant majority and excluding other social groups that are transformed into "immigrants" in their own homeland. In this vein, one could also differentiate between two types of states. The first prioritizes a universal national identity that is inclusive of all citizens, based on equal citizenship. The second type of state does not yet possess a fully developed national identity, despite the domination and privilege it affords to certain social groups (Brubaker, 1996). Whereas the first of each differentiation is characterized as civic-republican, the second is seen as ethnic and could be either ethno-republican or ethnocratic.

The third condition dictating patterns of civic activism is the cultural and normative environment in which civic activism takes place. Here, one can differentiate between two contexts. The first is an open and inclusive environment based on prioritizing individual liberty, autonomy, and equality. The second is traditionalist and based on an exclusivist common good that is often associated with a patriarchal social structure, a theologically committed culture, or both; these factors limit the values of the former and instead promote a belief system that can violate basic civic values.

The first contribution of this book is conceptual. It demonstrates that the conceptualization of social mobilization, especially of subaltern homeland minorities based on an epistemology of compliance, or groups' adherence to legal, political, and social norms, is not only misleading, but also empirically and normatively inaccurate. An epistemology of compliance views power relations from the perspective of the dominant institutional order and therefore focuses on exploring existing gaps between norms and behavior (Brosig, 2012). Such an epistemology, which is very dominant in institutionalist and functionalist traditions, including state-centered approaches, is not only empirically misleading, but also normatively prob-

lematic. It takes the dominant normative system and power structure for granted and thereby justifies the prevalent control mechanisms (Parsons & Harding, 2011; Jorgensen, 2010; Harding, 1993). It also views any behavior not compliant with the system as deviant and therefore illegitimate. This approach gives priority to obedience and conformity and decontextualizes political behavior, thereby missing one of the most central dimensions of non-consent, namely *dissensus* (Ranciere, 2010).

This book presents an alternative approach to the understanding of subaltern homeland minorities' political behavior. It argues that by focusing on the politics of minorities' civic mobilization, we can better understand the complexities of the field of power, especially in societies characterized by ethnic conflict and asymmetric power relations. It is argued that in such contexts, it is disagreement and contention that truly reveal the dynamics of power, manifested in the struggle of homeland minorities to transform the power structure in which they act from an exclusive nationalist one that submits them to a colonizing project into a civic political structure in which they enjoy full, equal access to decision-making mechanisms and share the values of the common good.

In broader terms, this study demonstrates that by not committing to rigid, pre-given conceptualizations of something that is ultimately dynamic, we can better understand the collective behavior of subaltern social groups (Higgs, 2001). This approach allows us to examine the ideas, motivations, and concerns behind groups' social behavior, especially when it comes to their challenge of unjust political structures. It also allows us to examine the extent to which the civic activism of members of subaltern homeland minorities leads to the rise of a counter-public based on *philia* (civic friendship), as depicted by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1906), developed by Arendt in *Men in Dark Times* (1968), and turned into a necessary condition for achieving genuine justice by Schwarzenbach (1996) and Leontsini (2013).

For the purpose of illustrating this alternative approach, the following pages explore why and how subaltern homeland minorities mobilize, and demonstrates that such occurrences happen when the terrain of power relations does not grant them spaces to influence their environment, become part of the sovereign civic community, express their identity, promote their interests, and translate their expectations into policy through the active participation in the conventional political system. It is assumed that when these spaces are blocked, social groups would mobilize to overcome the structural constraints that limit their sense of being part of the civic community and constrain their political efficacy. They would use any opportunities given to them to

assert their will to engage, represent their identity, and empower themselves as legitimate agents in the states in which they live. This book demonstrates that this pattern of behavior is particularly salient in states characterized by asymmetric power relations, ethnical structures, and the promotion of policies of internal colonization vis-à-vis subaltern homeland minorities. In other words, these subaltern groups are motivated by a sense of inherent unfairness that instigates patterns of collective dissent and behavior that go beyond the dominant party's conceptualization of normative political behavior.

In the following pages, we argue that the mobilization of subaltern homeland minorities is motivated in particular by these groups' elites, particularly their grievances and political aspirations (Gurr, 2015). The emerging elites of subaltern homeland minorities are not satisfied with individual rights. They aspire to transform unjust power structures and promote the integration of their identity, interests, and worldviews in the face of policies that set limits on their ability to translate resources and social capital into political power. When the political elites of subaltern homeland minorities conceive of formal political structures as limiting their maneuvering spaces, they seek alternative channels to materialize their social capital and promote their group's aspirations. Civil society activism becomes a central avenue of collective conduct to overcome the constraints imposed by the formal political structures. The civic realm, which is not completely autonomous from the state, still allows subaltern homeland minorities the avenues necessary to assert their identity and promote their interests. Such patterns of collective action and the relationship between civic activism and the state become an interesting avenue to explore.

The study of civil society—or, as Etienne Balibar calls it, “civility”—is a well-established area of the literature in which elites are portrayed as transformers of the power structure in which they maneuver to maintain spaces for contention. These spaces allow them to have a say in institutionalizing power relations (Balibar, 2002) and enable them to achieve relative autonomy from the state, especially illiberal states, which view homeland minorities as a threat to their identity. Elites of subaltern homeland minorities not only use the opportunities made available by the state's inability to control all avenues of life, but they also seek to prevent the institutionalization of power structures that eliminate their groups' ability to take part in defining the main concepts and structures of power. In other words, these elites not only challenge power relations and transform states' values to protect their own interests, but they also do so to enable a new civil, rather than ethnic, political language, as the language of the state.

The following analysis demonstrates that to conceptualize civic mobilization of subaltern homeland minorities as an articulation of civility, it must not be considered a homogenous phenomenon. Conceptualizations of challenges to the hegemonic power and politics of control is legitimate only when it takes into consideration the internal differences of the subaltern groups' own diverse belief systems.

By voicing their discontent with structures of domination, subaltern homeland minorities promote not only their own identity and interests, but also their right to internal disagreement. This disagreement could be manifested through different modes of social capital. In the following pages, we explore a case study that delves into the specific types of social capital that lead to these disagreements, namely religious patriarchal connectivity and civil professional networks. These two characteristics cause group members to be divided among themselves and compete for social loyalty in order to transform the dominant power structure.

Although these cleavages could become a burden on subaltern homeland minorities' abilities to achieve their goals, they also represent the plurality and measures of mutual recognition and tolerance that legitimate their struggle for justice. Whether these subgroups are granted a legitimate place by others or whether they plant seeds of distrust among the different factions reveals the extent to which their efforts against the dominant power structure is ultimately effective. Considering the treatment of these differences, especially between those relying on traditional modes of social capital and new civil initiatives that challenge the basic values and social structure of society, is an interesting analytical perspective that promotes a genuine understanding of subaltern homeland minorities' mobilization.

Any analytical venture of subaltern homeland minorities should be aware that the level of availability of social capital could become an opportunity for the dominant power structure to maintain the status quo. Groups' treatment of their internal differences have a direct impact on their ability to address the asymmetric, valuational, and political order. Sustained disagreement and competition for these resources enable the hegemony to demonstrate its liberal and pluralistic character, while delegitimizing or at least belittling the struggle against it. In the following pages, we examine how limitations to groups' social capital impacts subaltern groups' efficacy.

The following analysis uses Palestinian civic activism in Israel to verify its theoretical arguments and thereby provides empirical evidence about subaltern homeland minorities' civil activism in postcolonial contexts. As we explore each of the analytical frameworks of civil society and its modes

of activism, we highlight its prevailing causes and patterns of mobilization. Further, this book introduces new observations on civic activism in ethnic states in a unique and infrequently examined context.

Civic activism in ethnic states with postcolonial settings is not sufficiently addressed in the literature. Exploring its causes and pattern in this context sheds new light on aspects of civic activism that go beyond the liberal settings that dominate the literature. This context enables us to explore the characteristics of civic activism more deeply than their mere functional efficacy and provides us a deeper examination into their meanings and implications on asymmetric power. Such an endeavor enables us to overcome current limitations in the civil society literature, especially those that blur activism's particularities, and reveals that civil society does not always take place in a welcoming and receptive environment.

Civic activism that seeks to transform power structures and reconstruct the meaning of the civic so that it represents the expectations of all citizens equally faces unique conditions in illiberal postcolonial settings. Exploring such a reality enables us to examine the nature and genuineness of states' commitments to democratic values and civic ideals and how their policies toward civic activism, especially of subaltern homeland minorities, relate to the discourse on democracy and liberal equity.

Further, the present context also enhances our understanding of the salience of traditional norms and patterns of social organization in subaltern movements. The civic activism of subaltern homeland minorities, which are not necessarily homogenous, is an interesting phenomenon through which we can explore the diversity of the struggle against unjust power structures. In this context, the civic activism we explore promotes a culture that not only challenges the illiberal state, but also values of the civic activists, who on their part seek to transform their own society as well. In the following pages, we explore these important differences between affirmative and transformative perceptions of the civic in traditional societies.

In this regard, we examine the patterns of civic practices that emerged in the last several decades among Palestinian citizens of Israel (PCI). The following pages explore the relationship between the social and economic changes taking place in the PCI and the emerging civil society networks engaged in the struggle not only for collective rights on the political, cultural, and economic levels, but also for the transformation of the entire exclusively ethnic power structure into an inclusive civil one. There has been a substantial growth in civil society organizations (CSOs), popular committees, and youth movements that implement this undertaking and mobilize the

broader public to construct an oppositional consciousness that resists the marginalizing, repressive, and silencing policies of the state. Not only does this case represent a new approach to conceptualizing Israeli politics, but it also provides a rich empirical example for challenging well-known assertions in the literature on civic activism.

This examination reveals that emerging Palestinian elites' political desires to harness their power in the reconstruction of Israel's civic sphere uses external and internal economic resources; this, we argue, is the primary factor responsible for the PCI's unique pattern of civic activism. For the purpose of making this argument, the following pages provide new data on the PCI's emerging middle class, demonstrating that its sociopolitical elites are continually opening autonomous avenues for subaltern segments of their society to reconstruct the civil environment in Israel. One of the central avenues they are pursuing is the institutionalization of civic activism to use the legal and political opportunities given by the state to contest its policies of repression and marginalization.

This case study provides evidence as to the self-constitution of a subaltern homeland minority group in a political context characterized by conflict, domination, and colonization. It also enables us to delve deeply into the efforts of the emerging sociopolitical elite to translate its assets into social capital.

Any discussion of Palestinian civic activism in Israel must begin with a discussion of its background and its relationship with the state. When exploring the history of the Palestinian minority and the state's attitude toward it, we refer to two significant variables and compare them with other cases that appear in the literature. The first variable is the role of the PCI's indigeneity in its identity and history. This element, as the author has illustrated in a previous book (Jamal, 2011), is a significant factor governing the behavior of the Palestinian minority, its self-perceptions, and its environment. The other variable is the state's evolving, exclusivist identification as Jewish and its prioritization of this aspect of its identity over its functioning as a democracy, as manifested in the Nation-State Law, legislated in July 2018 (Abramovitch, 2018). The ramifications of the state's Jewishness on the status and rights of the PCI plays an integral role in the formation and utility of non-Jewish civil society. These two variables, which are complementary and dialectically interrelated, render this case study an interesting example through which we can explore the meanings and ramifications of civic activism in a context that could be defined as a "state of exception" (Agamben, 2005).

The PCI are part of a nation that is in conflict with the state in which they practice their citizenship. Based on this conflict, the PCI, as a homeland minority, demands an inclusive and civil, rather than ethnic and exclusivist, public and political sphere in which it has the opportunity to be taking part in determining the public good and its practices. That said, one must note that both parties' engagement in the broader Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with all that entails—historical injustices, physical and symbolic violence, and mutual mistrust—is an integral part of the PCI's identity. The centrality of these factors in the PCI's identity creates a constant and intrinsic ideological, political, and civil tension between themselves and the state. This tension is the impetus for the civic activism explored in this book, which covers Israel's policies toward land, housing, health, education, welfare, and other civil realms.

Israel's policies toward the PCI have been characterized by the continuous passage of legislation that empties Palestinian citizenship from any substantial meaning. By contrast, Palestinian politics in Israel demonstrates the insistence of Palestinian citizens on protecting their national Palestinian identity and demanding full citizenship rights in the state. The tension between these two characterizations and the role played by CSOs in managing their manifestations and repercussions are central topics to be explored. The story and characteristics of the emerging CSOs' networks are told through the discussion of the unique combination of theories and empirical data amassed over the last decade. The perspective of the author and his experience as an academic and civic activist render the following study unique. It is both an academic and practical endeavor, comprising a rich analysis of the history, data, and reflections of more than 10 years of personal engagement in the field.

The meaning of the civic is usually determined by the state through its legal and political mechanisms. Therefore, civic meaning is often characterized as statist, which in turn is perceived to be not only normative and natural, but also neutral and universal (Connolly, 1973; Mitchell, 1991). This ontological bias renders mere participation in civic activism as something that strengthens the given political order. Any alternative conception of civic activism—for example, one that does not support the pre-given political conditions—is viewed as an illegitimate form of mobilization. However, such a perspective abolishes the political aspect of civic activism, emptying it of its humanity and its intent to reconstruct the conditions and values under which one lives (Arendt, 1958). This is especially true in illiberal ethnic states, such as Israel.

The State of Israel is legally defined as Jewish, despite the fact that more than 20% of its population are not Jews. The hegemonic power structure in Israel, especially in the last several decades, has demonstrated the extent to which the dominant ideology of the state and the majority of the Jewish public are characterized by an epistemology of loyalty and compliance. Despite the structural pluralism reflected in the Israeli public sphere, it seems that a very strict spirit of procedural majoritarianism guides participation therein. Therefore, the civic in such cases submits to conditions set by majority rule, regardless of the values and perceptions it promotes. Disputing these values or perceptions and their manner of determination therefore is not considered by the state and the Jewish majority to be civic, but rather a betrayal of it.

This study demonstrates that Israel's conception of the civic stands in complete opposition to the genuine meaning of what Hannah Arendt called the *vita activa* (Arendt, 1958, 1968). Arendt's conceptualization of the civic is open not only to debating the values and patterns of collective and personal conduct with an a priori determined political community, but also to challenge the guiding political community itself. This community's boundaries are not fixed, and the transformation of its embedded power relations are encouraged to be transformed (Ranciere, 2010). Arendt's conceptualization of the *vita activa* promotes civic disagreement and communication to shape the conditions in which groups live together. Therefore, civil society is based on the continuous search for emancipation and the transformation of entire systems under which one lives. The civic is therefore an everchanging pattern of civility that not only overcomes the hegemony's political biases, but also serves an avenue through which one is liberated (Balibar, 2014, 2002). In this context, the concept of praxis, as explicated in the Aristotelian tradition, reviewed by Arendt in her theorization of the human condition, becomes very central. This concept of praxis is based on the plurality of the human condition, the necessity of communication in order to constitute the civic community and the eternal renewal of society by the continuous regeneration of society by new beginnings (Habermas, 1973).

Moreover, much of the literature on civic activism entails a liberal bias, which is committed to individualism, egalitarianism, rationalism, voluntarism, and pluralism (Smith, 1997). It assumes a given culture and a common good as condition of civility. However, these assumptions should be conceived as a result of the civic process itself. The patterns and complexities of subaltern minority groups, especially indigenous national groups that seek to reconstruct the avenues of civility in which they counter discriminatory

and repressive power structures, particularly in ethnic states, is an important avenue of research that has not been addressed in the literature on collective action or on civil society.

The following analysis differentiates theoretically between the legal-procedural and the substantive dimensions of the civic. It demonstrates that this differentiation is political and a product of political power relations rather than existing a priori to them. Specifically, this study explores the conditions, both inside and outside Israel's Palestinian CSOs, that determine their aims and approach to reshaping the public sphere. This case study aids in our exploration of this theoretical argument in the context of a conflict between a hegemonic, ethno-national majority and an indigenous, subaltern national minority.

Our examination of the PCI entails not only exploring the boundaries of the civic, but also verifying its substance. Civic activism that counters a non-egalitarian political order cannot be viewed in exclusively ethnic terms, as it not only serves the interests of the minority group, but it also defends civic values that are applicable to all citizens, regardless of their origin or identity. The PCI's civic activism therefore is examined not only based on the extent to which it counters state policies to uproot Palestinian history, remold Palestinian identity, and repress efforts to integrate its view of the common good into that of the state. It also examines the extent to which this activism promotes egalitarianism, tolerance, freedom, and equality as common values that define the state and society in which it lives.

Any examination of civic activism must relate to the "civil society argument" embedded in the third wave of democratization, which posits a direct link between the growth of CSOs and the establishment of a democratic culture (Huntington, 1991; Walzer, 1992). Although one may agree with the importance of CSOs to democracy, it is doubtful that there is a unidirectional causal relationship between the two (Berman, 1997; Alexander, 2006; Edwards, 2011). The critique of this Tocquevillian tradition creates a need for a more open and pluralistic view of civic activism that incorporates subaltern experiences (Kilnani, 2001). These critiques make it clear that there is no one type of relationship between civil activism and civic values (Cohen & Arato, 1992).

Our analysis of the PCI's activism establishes that it is not the mere emergence of CSOs that determines a state's chances for democratic development. Rather, it is the dialectics between the values promoted by these CSOs and the broader encompassing political culture of the state, which enable mutual tolerance, effective plural representation, and participation

of the various social and political worldviews in determining the nature of the political regime.

The following pages demonstrate that CSOs are not essentially democratic or liberal. There are forms of civic activism that use the open civil and political spaces to promote an illiberal reality and poor democracy (Berman, 1997). By contrast, the civility of the state is determined by the ability of liberal and human rights CSOs to facilitate constructive social change and promote democratic values, such as mutual tolerance, liberty, equality, and social justice.

One of the avenues addressed in the following pages relates to the well-established constructive relationship between civil society and social capital (Putnam, 2000). This relationship, which assumes that social capital enriches civility and thereby democracy, as conceived in the pluralist tradition is questioned. This questioning is even more relevant in conflict situations such as the one examined and in traditional patriarchal society. We examine this relationship in the backdrop of a newly emerging body of literature that challenges liberal bias and demonstrates that there is not an imperative relationship between social capital and democracy. Social capital is not a trait that carries inherent effects. Its political importance originates in its ability to mobilize and transform the political conditions to promote change in the mechanisms and patterns of distribution in society (Anthias, 2007).

Examining Palestinian civic activism in the Israeli context enables us to explore new theoretical avenues such as the meaning of the civic, but not according to preconceived, liberal presumptions. It challenges the context in which most treatments of civil society are examined, demonstrating the relevance of colonialism and therefore the sensitivities of postcolonial theory for the examination of civic activism. Applying postcolonial theory to the civil society and social capital literature is not new (Chatterjee, 2001). Nevertheless, exploring its treatment through a case study that does not meet the criteria set by previous scholars of the topic could be intriguing and may add new insights that are missing from the current literature on these topics.

On the empirical level, this book provides a comprehensive picture of the civic associations that were established in the last few decades and analyzes their increasingly important role in protecting the political and cultural rights of Palestinian society. These associations also provide various services that were rendered necessary as a result of the state's policies of neglect, repression, and surveillance. Our analysis traces the major social and political transformation in Palestinian civil society in Israel, especially

the rising of the educated Palestinian middle class. It explores the way in which the latter seeks opportunities to institutionalize its impact on its political, social, and cultural environment.

The following study is conducted in the context of the social sciences and provides us with a deeper and unique exploration of the dynamic relationship between civil society and the state (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Ragin & Becker, 1992; Platt, 1992; Campbell, 1975). Examining the emergence of a homeland minority's civil society, its patterns of conduct, and its relationship with an illiberal, ethnic state helps to overcome three theoretical and two empirical shortcomings in the literature.

The first theoretical and empirical disadvantage is that very little research has been conducted on the civil society of minorities in conflict situations. A cursory examination of the professional literature on civil society and its relations with the state demonstrates that most literature assumes the existence of political and cultural homogeneity in the state and society (Cohen & Arato, 1992; Seligman, 1992; Edwards, 2004; Keane, 1998; Walzer, 1995; O'Connell, 1999; Ehrenberg, 1999). Most of the same literature also ignores the existence of national, cultural, and ethnic differences in civil society, which creates unique constraints for organizations advocating for social change. Despite the existence of common goals, many of these types of organizations find themselves operating within national or ethnic frameworks that the literature generally fails to recognize. Although in recent years there has been some reference to national, ethnic, and cultural diversity, this literature is still in its infancy and requires further analysis to demonstrate minority civil societies' unique range of activities and the challenges they face, especially indigenous civil societies, which struggle against illiberal and antidemocratic forces with limited funding (Alvarez et al., 2017; Jacobson & Korolczuk, 2017; Bodo, 2016).

By exploring a case study in which a subaltern group seeks to voice the injustice it faces in a reality in which a hegemonic majority asserts its own narrative and perceptions of justice, it is possible to expand on the literature on civic activism into new philosophical avenues. The struggle of CSOs to voice injustices in a system in which the dominant discursive regime does not allow others spaces of utterance and instead promotes a politics of silencing enables us provide an alternative theoretical framework to understanding and examining of civic activism.

The second theoretical and second empirical obstacle is an almost complete absence of foundational knowledge concerning the link between civic activism and the reconstruction of the civic among subaltern homeland communi-

ties. This is especially true when relating to the disposition of the minority toward services provided by the state. There is some literature that examines the role of CSOs in socially and politically empowering their society and their impact on advancing its economic well-being through the provision of basic services. However, this literature does not refer to dilemmas that arise in conflictual, postcolonial contexts, especially for minority CSOs who must cooperate with a state that simultaneously promotes policies of repression, surveillance, and neglect against them. In such cases, minority CSOs provide services to their population that indirectly facilitate these policies. The withdrawal of the state from service provision renders the civic sphere shallow; such a phenomenon leads to abolishing social rights that form a fundamental dimension of citizenship (Marshall, 1950).

Additionally, this book addresses the tensions between the minority's desire for autonomy from the state; its demand that the state shall not discriminate against it in various policy areas, such as land allocation and education; and the protection of vulnerable groups' rights against the patriarchal structure of the minority society itself. Specific dilemmas such as the involvement of the state in protecting women's rights are perceived by certain minority CSOs as a violation of the minority's cultural autonomy. Another dilemma that arises in this context is in the field of education, where some Palestinian organizations require equitable allocation of resources for Palestinian educational institutions, but at the same time strive to maintain minimal state involvement in determining the school curricula.

It is worth noting the distinction made by Foley and Edwards (1996) between civil society operating in states that limit the civil sphere, and states with an autonomous civil society. In the former, the activities of civil society challenge the regime, its institutions, and its policies, and strive to change the regime's nature. In the latter, the civil sphere is open, and therefore CSOs freely apply their resources to support a wide array of civil activities. This case study comes to critique Foley and Edwards's distinction and demonstrates that one ought not accept dichotomous and static differentiations of this field.

Palestinian civic activism demonstrates that the relationship between the state and civil society is not unidimensional and can assume a variety of shapes. These shapes vary across all aspects of life, such as state service provisions including health, education, and welfare; to the legal framework that defines the scope of civil society's freedom of assembly and expression. In states lacking a universal civic culture, the relationship between the state and civil society is impacted by their respective values (Smith, 1997; Verba

& Almond, 1963; Dahl, 1998). CSOs that seek to empower and develop the minority society and democratize the state could be viewed by the latter as a threat and thereby be labeled illegitimate, as we shall see later.

It follows that the existence of a free civic space does not necessarily equate with a reality in which civic organizations are able to influence state policy and promote equal treatment. Nominally enabling civic associations to challenge the state and its institutions could be employed as a means of promoting the democratic image of the state without being substantially democratic. The existence of free “civic space” in which society can operate and promote its various missions does not preclude the state from promoting inequitable policies that conflict with the concept of universal citizenship.

This book also challenges the dominant perceptions of social capital that prevail in the literature on civil society. It demonstrates that, despite the attention paid to social capital in various theoretical traditions, including critical Marxism, its treatment has been mostly limited to liberal and pluralistic democratic philosophy (Putnam, 2000). This literature assumes an ontological reality in which the dominant political culture is civil; however, this is not always the case. The pluralistic philosophy assumes that voluntarism, rationalism, individualism, and autonomy are given features of the social fabric. Although in many cases this is true, it cannot be assumed that they uniformly govern political processes. As we shall see, they are constructed through the political process rather than being a precondition of it, and their manifestations are a result of society’s struggle over its identity and the character of the political order.

Exploring Palestinian civic activism in Israel’s illiberal, postcolonial context demonstrates that social capital, as it is defined in the theoretical literature, does not aid our understanding of the complex Israeli reality in which Palestinian civic activism takes place. Examining political contexts that do not meet the existing standards in the pluralistic tradition can promote a broader understanding of the concept of social capital and its centrality in examining civic activism.

One question that arises in this context relates to the degree of cooperation between organizations and civic activists, based on their values and interests and the nature of their relationships vis-à-vis their environment. By examining patterns of civic activism, one can begin to understand how well the dominant elite succeeds in fostering organizations’ connections with their environment as a means of strengthening its social capital. This is explored by examining institutionalized networks of friendship, mutual recognition, and communication channels that strive to strengthen mutual

ties in an effort to influence state policy toward the needs of the society that it represents (Bourdieu, 1985).

In other words, this case illustrates how the lines of controversy surrounding the concept of social capital translate into the asymmetrical power dynamic between the Palestinian minority and the Jewish majority in Israel. It causes us to reflect on the assumptions of the common, pluralistic perception of social capital, especially its emphasis on the universality of social ties, trust, and reciprocity. The fact that the subaltern Palestinian minority in Israel is not part of the common conception of citizenship in Israel and therefore is not a partner in determining the state's civic virtues and political and legal cultures is an important factor to consider in examining the relationship between social capital, civil society, and the state.

The following pages demonstrate that the Israeli context is characterized by a "civic gap" between different types of citizens in accordance with their ties to the state's dominant national identity. The Palestinian struggle for the transformation of Israeli citizenship from an unequal, differential control mechanism into an equal framework of civic rights marks an important avenue for examining and expanding on the current theoretical model of social capital. This expansion takes into consideration postcolonial insights that may be of great importance to the development of this subject, which until now has fallen into the traps of the elitist discourse. By integrating the subaltern tradition into the discussion of social capital, as have Partha Chatterjee and Bhiko Parekh, the Palestinian-Israeli context brings great theoretical value to the discussion (Chatterjee, 2001; Parekh, 1995).

One of the major contributions of this book is an exploration of the extent to which Palestinian civic activism has developed elitist tendencies as a result of the birth and growth of an educated elite class over the last few decades. It explores the extent to which the emerging educated class initiates and controls various social networks and whether it manages to overcome the burdens of internal, mutually competitive dynamics and avoids segregating the resources of social power and wealth and stimulating mutual suspicion. By exploring the class origins of Palestinian CSOs, we also examine the qualities of the Palestinian civil elite, shedding light on significant ideological developments of the PCI. Because the PCI is a subaltern homeland minority, one can assume that fighting against the state's discriminatory and alienating policies would strengthen and bond civic activists for the sake of promoting the common good of the entire society.

To explore this point, the following pages examine the competitive relationships between CSOs, focusing on the levels of trust and mistrust

between the civic elite and their social environment, as well as within the elite themselves. Our empirical data help to explore these types of “gaps” between the different types of CSOs, especially the secular and the religious ones. It also aids in their social engagement and the gap in Palestinians’ levels of voluntarism in the general public and in CSOs.

If we agree with most of the literature on the state’s policies toward the PCI, arguing that the former seeks to render Palestinian citizens subtenants and second-class citizens, relegating them to segregated enclaves through a sophisticated infrastructure of exclusion, control, and supervision and intentionally neglecting their social, cultural, and financial needs, the PCI’s civic activism could be framed as a sophisticated form of resistance against these state policies. Efforts made by CSOs to promote the interests of the PCI are, from their own perspective, an opposition to the state’s policies of “hollowing out” Palestinian citizenship by robbing it of any agency. Palestinian citizenship in this context cannot mean only expressing Palestinian history and culture and challenging the state’s attempts to dismantle them, but also playing an active role in determining the meaning and contents of the Israeli common good and transforming the hegemonic power structure to recognize the basic rights and aspirations of all Israeli citizens, including its Palestinian community.

### The Methodological Framework

It is difficult to determine which method is the best for studying civic activism, as different methods will impact the type of evidence we collect. Therefore, in this research we used a range of methods; together, they comprise a unique and multifaceted contribution to the literature, which helps us to further explore various aspects of Palestinian civil society.

Many questions come to mind when tackling the subject of the PCI’s civic activism. Not all could be addressed in a single volume. The following analysis is limited to few central questions that address the main causes and motivations behind the emergence of Israel’s complicated network of Palestinian CSOs over the last few decades. The extent to which the process of establishing CSOs is related to internal sociological developments in the PCI, such as the rise of a new middle class, is another question that is addressed. Another set of questions we address reveals the similarities and differences in the meaning of civic activism for different activists and CSOs. Finally, we examine the major dilemmas that subaltern homeland

minority CSOs face in ethnic states and the extent to which one could view the process of establishing CSOs as a form of resistance against the state's discriminatory policies.

Obviously, these questions produce many subquestions, which are presented and answered throughout the text. The answers are based on empirical findings, gathered through a variety of means, including public opinion surveys, focus groups, participatory observation, and personal interviews, all conducted over the course of the last ten years. We conducted two different surveys, which included questions on civic organizations, political parties, and volunteering. The first survey was conducted in late 2006 and early 2007 among a representative sample of 807 Palestinian citizens. The second survey was conducted between September 2016 and February 2017, based on a random, representative sample of 586 Palestinian citizens. In both surveys, each participant was interviewed personally for 90 minutes. The surveys' purpose was to depict the general public's attitudes toward volunteering, the activities of Palestinian CSOs, and their contribution to the strength and well-being of the PCI. It should be noted that the surveys were not meant to measure the CSOs' representability. Instead, the surveys questions were meant to define the nature of relationship between the CSOs and the general population: the CSOs' image in the eyes of the general public; the extent to which they fulfill the public's expectations; and their ability to provide for the public's needs and promote its interests under difficult political circumstances. Respondents were asked about their ideology, religiosity, satisfaction, and expectations of and by CSOs. They were also asked questions that compared their attitudes toward CSOs and political parties. This comparison has two main purposes: first, to examine the opinions of some that Arab political parties are an integral part of civil society, mainly because they are opposition parties rather than governing ones; and second, to examine the links, as perceived by the public, between civil and partisan activity, not just structurally, but also with regard to CSOs' and parties' behavior.

The surveys reflect widespread public opinion (Shamir & Shamir, 2001). Of course, these opinions are not necessarily based on objective facts or detailed observations of CSOs' activity. They may be based on notions or ill-based impressions. Nonetheless, even uninformed public opinions reflect the general atmosphere, or the common view of the public, which carries significant social, political, and organizational implications (Dalton, 2019). The public's view of CSOs' activity can help us better explore the relationship between these organizations and the general population, and the level

of public awareness of their activities and challenges. Furthermore, public opinion may indicate the public's willingness to support or even defend these CSOs in times of need (Lax & Phillips, 2009).

Our second methodology is the focus group. Two forms of focus groups were used. The first type was a standard focus group that was organized in four different locations and at different times. The second was conducted three times through observations of meetings between CSOs leaders in three different locations.

The four regular focus groups had 46 participants in total, including 31 men and 15 women from the north, center, and south of Israel. We used snowball sampling to recruit participants. Well-known civic activists were contacted and asked about people they knew who were engaged in CSO work. Each new person led to another. The focus groups were conducted in various locations to enable a diverse group of participants to attend. The first one took place at Tel Aviv University, the second in Nazareth, and the third and fourth in the city of Baqa Al-Garbiyye. The focus groups' purpose was to clarify and discuss the general issues that preoccupy leaders and activists of CSOs. The focus group is an ideal approach to define the main issues and controversies at the center of the work of leaders and activists in specific social fields. While focus groups cannot provide wide-scale empirical data, they do enable a deeper exploration of specific relevant issues that cannot be achieved through an inclusive opinion survey, as we explain more thoroughly later.

The second type of focus group took place through three meetings of CSOs leaders in Haifa on January 29, 2016; in Nazareth on March, 18 2016; and in Shefa'amr on March 16, 2018. In each meeting, 10 to 12 leaders of various CSOs participated. The participants of the three meetings were not identical, although seven of them were the same in all three meetings. The observations of the author enable us to reflect on the common attitudes and differences in Palestinian CSOs' strategies of struggle and resistance in the face of Israel's nationalization policies and its efforts to target its international financial resources. The data collected and analyzed in these three meetings are presented in various parts of the book rather than in one separate chapter to add depth to each discussion (Boyatzis, 1998).

The third methodology we employed is the personal, semi-structured interview. We sampled 70 Palestinian CSOs' leaders and activists from across Israel. The interviews were performed throughout the research, and the outcomes are presented throughout the book in aiding our analysis of other findings. The interviews' purpose was to expand our knowledge of

various findings; thus, the information gathered during these interviews is narratively analyzed and helps to answer research questions that cannot be answered solely through the empirical data gathered from the surveys (Murray, 2003; Riessman, 1993). The semi-structured personal interviews also help to define underlying trends among various leaders originating from different backgrounds, especially secular and religious (Potter, 1997; Seale, 1999; Willig, 2003). Through this method, we were able to transform the findings into theoretical insights extracted from the situation on the ground according to the rules of grounded theory, instead of enforcing abstract theoretical frameworks on reality (Glaser, 1992; Charmaz, 2002).

The fourth methodology we use is the questionnaire, which was completed by 97 intermediate-level activists in CSOs, in an attempt to explore their views regarding CSOs' activity. We compare these responses with the public's opinions and with those of their directors and supervisors. The activists' point of view is methodologically important, as it provides an intermediate position between the public and their leadership, thus enabling us to address any unexplained gaps in their attitudes that may be explained through the activists' views. In addition to general questions about CSOs, activists' questionnaires included questions regarding their involvement in various policy and decision-making processes in their associations. The purpose of these questions is to examine the compliance between CSOs' inside dynamics and their formally declared policies to the public. It also reveals any gaps between elite leadership and intermediate-level civic activists.