

## Abstract

Familialism played an important role in the Arab society before the phase which witnessed the birth of the regional modern state. Familialism continues to affect all aspects of Arab social life, in spite of the rise of modern state institutions, because policies of the modern Arab state were not conducive to substantial changes in social relationships.

After the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PAN), there was so much debate about the relationship of the PNA with traditional groups. This relationship was very important, because it was considered as an indication for change and transformation, which the Palestinian society witnessed during the years of struggle. The PNA used to introduce itself to the world, as a modern political entity. However, on the domestic level the PNA insisted to remain governed by the logic of family and tribe, which provides it with support, strength, and survival.

This study deals with the relationship between familialism and political system in Palestine, and points out at some cases in Arab states. It covers the period from 1994 to 2000. The selection of this period was not done in a random or arbitrary manner, but it was very much intended. The year 1994 witnessed the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, which had jurisdiction on all Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In addition, it witnessed the Presidential and Legislative elections, as well as the appointment of municipal and villages' councils in all populated areas.

This study attempts at exploring the impact of PNA's policies on the traditional (familialism) components based on the assumption, which states that "the policies of PNA strengthen the familialism model in Palestine".

The study begins by discussing the relationship between the Authority and familialism, in an attempt to portray a picture of the status quo, through studying familialism and clannishness. The study tackles also the creation of regional states, together with its policies towards traditional components (familialism). It also takes into consideration the relationship between familialism and the structure of the political authority (government and parliament), as well as the governmental administrative apparatus. This reflects the extent of interference and continuation between the past and present. It also shows that traditional values still persist in the Arab regimes, which are not more than tribal regimes based on fanaticism, which follow the dynasties pattern, in republican or monarchy political system.

It also reviews the relationship between familialism and authority in Palestine (during the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate, Jordanian rule of the West Bank, Egyptian rule of Gaza Strip, and the Israeli occupation), before the inception of the Palestinian Authority. The study shows that the PA adopted similar policies in terms of maintaining relationships with traditional forces, and tried to use them in a way that serves its interest, to prohibit the creation of a Palestinian entity, political forces, and ideological parties. In addition, the study dealt with the role and policies of PA in reinforcing familialism, embodied in maintaining tribal judiciary next to official judiciary.

The PNA also paid attention to the impact of kinship in hiring for governmental positions, local councils, and the creation of institutions to care for traditional groups. This is evident in the PNA's activation of the roles of tribal leaders, which was severely curtailed during the 1987 Intifada. The study also dealt with the needs that are met and fulfilled by traditional elements, and the circumstances, which allowed for traditional loyalties to play a role in society. Such circumstances include weakness of civil society organizations, absence of independent judiciary, citizenship, harsh economic conditions, and prevailing culture.

We may conclude that regimes which governed Palestine, played a major role in reinforcing and supporting familialism. The study shows that the PNA strived to maintain the same social structure, which was maintained by previous regimes. Further, the PA relied on this structure to complete its control on society. It proved that familialism will be reinforced and strengthened in the future Palestinian entity, if the PA continues on this path, and if the democratic process remains in jeopardy.