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Introduction

The Maccabi Kafr Kana soccer team is one of several hundred Arab soccer clubs that take part in the Israeli Football Association (IFA). At the end of the 1995/6 season, after climbing to the second division, the team went on a tour to Jordan. The tour's highlight was supposed to be a game against the al-Wihdat soccer team, which represents the Palestinian refugee camp near Amman and bears its name. In Jordan, al-Wihdat is identified with Palestinian nationalism and the Palestinian struggle, and this particular sportive encounter was intended to emphasize the shared identity of Palestinians from both banks of the Jordan river. A few minutes before the scheduled start of the game, al-Wihdat's managers appealed to Kafr Kana's manager and sponsor, Fayṣal Khatib, with an unusual request in the world of sports: to exclude his three Jewish players from the match, or at least to ensure that no Hebrew would be used during the game.

Khatib rejected this request firmly, arguing that in his view his team consists of only soccer players, and that he never distinguishes between Arabs and Jews. In addition, he pointed out that the Jewish players on the team do not speak Arabic, and could therefore communicate with the coach only in Hebrew. In the end, after a long debate and a delay of several days, the game took place as a mini soccer match in a closed hall and without a crowd. In that game, Maccabi Kafr Kana beat the famous Palestinian team 3:2. Three different players who did not speak or understand Arabic scored the goals for Kafr Kana . . .

Soccer and dilemmas of national identification

The Kafr Kana–al-Wihdat incident illustrates the well-known complexity of the social location of the Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel. This

term refers to one million Arabs, about 16 percent of Israeli citizens, and includes those Palestinians who were not uprooted during the 1948 war and subsequent expulsions, and have remained under Israeli rule. The participation of Arabs from Israel in a sportive encounter in Jordan stemmed from a sense of the shared identity of Kafr Kana residents and the Palestinian refugees in al-Wihdat, some of them originally from Kafr Kana itself. However, the encounters that were allowed to occur following the Oslo accords in 1993 and the Israeli–Jordanian peace treaty in 1994 have taught both sides that long-term socio-political processes have shaped divergent social identifications and political orientations.

In spite of this, it would still be impetuous to explain the confrontation between Palestinians from both sides of the Jordan river as evidence of the alienation of Arabs in Israel from their identity as Palestinians. Similarly, the solidarity shown by the Kafr Kana management with the Jewish players does not prove that integration into the Jewish Israeli majority has become a realistic option for the Palestinian citizens of Israel. The source of that incident is the paradoxical role that soccer plays for the Palestinians in Israel: an *integrative enclave*. The integrative enclave is a social sphere that is ruled by a liberal-integrative discourse of citizenship – in sharp contrast to the ethnic discourse that governs the Israeli public sphere in general. It is a sphere which permits a limited and well-bounded inclusion in Israeli citizenship. This study is concerned with explaining the emergence of soccer as an integrative enclave and in tracking the ways it has been constructed as such.

As Palestinians by their ethno-national identification and Israelis by citizenship, the Palestinians in Israel face persistent predicaments regarding their socio-political location and self-presentation for several interrelated reasons. First, historically, Israel as a Jewish state was established in 1948 on the ruins of the local Palestinian society – and this historical association is the major anchor of the Palestinians' collective memory and national identity. This zero-sum game narrative makes the holding of both self-identifications, Palestinian and Israeli, extremely challenging; therefore, diverse strategies have been developed to solve the dissonance (Bishara 1999).

Second, the Palestinians in Israel face contradictory expectations by Israeli Jews and by Palestinians outside Israel. Rabinowitz (2001) characterizes the Palestinians in Israel as a "trapped minority": "... a segment of a larger group spread across at least two states. Citizens of a state hegemonized by others, its members are alienated from political power. Unable to influence the definition of public goods or enjoy them, its members are at the same time marginal within their mother nation

abroad" (Rabinowitz 2001: 1). As such, the status of a trapped minority contradicts the standardized symbolic structure of national identity (Anderson 1991; Weitman 1973), which is intolerant of ambiguities and incongruity between ethno-national affiliation and political boundaries. While their Arab-Palestinian identity places them in the position of "an enemy within" for the Jewish majority, they are simultaneously considered suspicious – "Israelified Arabs" – by Palestinians outside Israel.

Third, but no less important, as Arab citizens in a state that defines itself as Jewish, they suffer from diverse forms of prolonged discriminatory policies in diverse spheres (Benziman and Mansour 1992; Dichter and Ghanem 2003). They are systematically excluded from the major political, economic, and social centers of power in the state, their culture and language hold an inferior status in Israeli public life, and they are alienated from the exclusivist Jewish–Zionist symbols of the state. At the same time, they do not see any realistic political alternative to the current situation. A viable Palestinian state does not exist, and a return of the Palestinian refugees which will transform the demographic balance in their favor is unlikely to occur. In addition, with all the above-mentioned deficiencies they still enjoy more political freedom and economic opportunities than any other Palestinian group (refugees and Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) and even than most Arab citizens in neighboring countries. These contradictions further complicate questions of belonging and identification.

Nevertheless, in spite of these contradictions, it does not seem that Arabs in Israel collectively abandoned being active players in either of these two spheres. Smooha (1999) has shown that the percentage of Arab citizens who identify themselves as both Palestinians and Israelis rose significantly between 1976 and 1995. According to Smooha, the politicization of the Arab minority in Israel since 1967 signifies a gradual integration into the Israeli public sphere, and hence, the demonstration of Palestinian identity in itself is part of an "Israelification process." Although criticizing the methodology of self-labeling used by Smooha, many scholars of the field have recognized that both Israeli and Palestinian spheres are highly relevant for understanding the identification, self-presentation, and political orientations of the Arab citizens of Israel. This recognition has brought scholars to identify and investigate the diverse strategies that enable the Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel to cope with the tension created by their sensitive location in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. These strategies could be divided into two crude major theses: *separation* and *substitution*.

The separation thesis has different versions but it generally asserts that different dimensions of identification coexist in total separation, and each dimension gains prominence in different spheres. This separation is attained by means of psychological mechanisms such as compartmentalization and through the process of becoming politically indifferent (Peres and Yuval-Davis 1969). The separation thesis reverberates in later studies such as Rouhana's (1988), which argues for the distinction between emotional (Arab-Palestinian) and formal-instrumental (Israeli) elements of identity. Other versions of the separation thesis reject the distinction between a "shallow" civic component opposed to a deeply rooted but suppressed national component (Bishara 1999; Suleiman 2002). As 'Azmi Bishara argues, "in a long term social process the tool becomes a part of the person who uses it" (Bishara 1999: 176), and therefore Israeli identity is more than instrumental, even though it is perceived as contradicting Palestinian identity.

According to the substitution argument, Arabs in Israel tend to distance themselves from clear national or civic identifications and try to emphasize non-national identifications – communal, religious, clannish, or local (Bishara 1999; Ghanem 1998). This distancing is facilitated by their peripheral status vis-à-vis Jewish-Israeli society, as well as Palestinians living outside Israel. This double marginality enables the Arabs in Israel to define their identity without the need to commit themselves to either one of the two referent groups (Al-Haj 1993).

Soccer, I argue in this study, is an outstanding sphere for practicing both separation and substitution strategies. For this purpose, I have modified the separation thesis from the field of social psychology (which focuses on internal psychological mechanisms) into a combination of dramaturgic, macro-constructive and conflictual sociological approaches. Irving Goffman noted that individuals perform different roles depending upon their audiences and situations (Goffman 1959). A "role conflict" might emerge when there is a potential contradiction between the expectations stemming from different roles. A crucial precondition for a successful performance and impression management in such circumstances is the strict segregation of various spheres of life that maintains the separation of diverse audiences.

From this point of view, soccer is part of a wider strategy facilitating the spatial segregation of divergent identifications. The incident in Jordan resulted from an unexpected interruption of the separation strategy, within which soccer is used by fans, players, and managers as a means to gain acceptance by Israeli Jews. The contradictory expectations deriving from their being simultaneously citizens of Israel and members

of the Palestinian people, have taught the Arabs in Israel, as a collective, to insert wedges between various spheres of life, and to assign different functions to each sphere. In this context, the soccer sphere is constructed to serve as an enclave of integration, in which the Palestinian citizens of Israel attempt to suspend their national identification as Palestinians; and in so doing, maintain inwardly and outwardly a circumscribed display – in time and in space – of civic partnership with the Jewish majority. In al-Wihdat, the different roles of the Kafr Kana residents as Palestinians and Israelis collided, since the audiences (Jewish Israeli players and Palestinian dwellers of a refugee camp) were not kept separate, and soccer's regular character as an "integrative enclave" could not be smoothly displayed.

The substitution strategy is also significant for understanding the importance of soccer for the Palestinians in Israel, since they do not fit the standardized model of national identity. One way to interpret the mushrooming of Arab soccer teams in Israel during the 1990s (see chapter 2) is to see them as a reflection of local patriotism, as a form of identification that does not endanger the Arabs' status as Israeli citizens. However, channeling local pride to the soccer field promises additional benefits. Despite trans-nationalist tendencies arising from the globalization of consumptive patterns, massive labor migration, and the decline of the nation-state's political power, national models of citizenship are still highly relevant (Koopmans and Stathan 1999); the meta-discourse of nationalism still governs people's minds and directs them towards certain foci of collective identification. Thus, when the option to adopt a certain national identity is seen as problematic, people may create alternative spheres that simulate several of the main attributes of a nationalist experience. Soccer provides many Arab men with a secure sphere of competitive masculinity, horizontal fraternity, and identification with flags and emblems; and at the same time, it avoids both Palestinian and Israeli national narratives (see chapter 6).

Due to the central place of soccer in the leisure culture of Arab men in Israel, and due to the increasing visibility of Arab soccer players in the Israeli public sphere, soccer is much more than another "interesting angle" for the investigation of Arab–Jewish relationships. The over-representation of Arab teams in the IFA is striking. While the Arabs in Israel make up only 16 percent of the population, in the 1997/8 season 42 percent of the senior clubs in the IFA represented Arab villages or cities, or Arab neighborhoods in the mixed cities. By the 2004/5, season the ratio of Arab teams was reduced to 36 percent, which is still more than double the relative share of the Arab population in Israel. In the 2003/4

season, Arab soccer was the focus of public attention as two Arab teams, from Sakhnin and Nazareth, played simultaneously in the Premier League (the highest division),[1] the former even winning the State Cup (see chapter 8).

Soccer as a political tool

The prominence, visibility, and success of Arab soccer teams and players mentioned above have both a political background and potential political implications. The sports arena has, on the one hand, a considerable symbolic power, and is therefore a sphere where political resources are readily available (Allison 1986). On the other hand, sports in itself is not stamped by any particular value system; it is a flexible tool for potential action in different directions (Hoberman 1997). These characteristics turn the sports arena into a "contested terrain" (Bourdieu 1988; Hartmann 2000), an arena in which struggles are waged over the potential meanings that can be attributed to it, and over the formulations of identities that are derived from these meanings. The concept of "contested terrain" reverberates with Gramsci's idea about culture as a political tool, which is used by the dominating groups in society but might be used just as well by subordinated groups to undermine the political status quo (Gramsci 1971). It follows that events which take place in the arena of sports have a role in struggles over the construction, shaping, and undermining of collective identifications.

Therefore, the construction of the integrative enclave is not a harmonious and coordinated process. Rather, the potential power of soccer games to produce symbols with a variety of different implications has made them a battleground of meanings: different social agents attempt to politicize or depoliticize soccer according to their interests. They try to articulate various meanings based on their ideology and their interests, and these meanings reflect different definitions of collective identities for the Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel.

Hence, soccer games in Israel are played on two different levels: the first level is on the field, where professional excellence is a requisite for winning. The second level is in the broader public sphere, in which power relations between various agents are expressed in the battle over collective consciousness. The main axis of this battle is the following subtle

[1] The Israeli soccer league is divided into six divisions (until 1999 only five). The top division was named in 1999 the Premier League, the second – the National League, and the third – the Countrywide League. For the sake of simplicity I use in this book the hierarchal number to refer to each division – second division, third division, and so on.

dialectic: an opportunity for integration into Jewish-Israeli society and acceptance by the Jewish majority versus a stage for promoting political protest and national pride. These aspirations are not totally contradictory and can even be complementary (Smooha 1999). Nevertheless, their simultaneous appearance entails an inherent tension on the level of subjective experience (Bishara 1999).

The tension between these two poles is related to the dual, elusive nature of ethnic minorities' empowerment in sports, especially in its *intensive inclusion* mode (Sorek 2003). In this mode, individuals and teams of the minority are intensively involved in the most popular sports of the majority, sometimes achieving notable over-representation in certain fields. On the one hand, this kind of ethnic empowerment always has its "subversive" aspect, which is identified with separatist tendencies or the aspiration to construct isolated social enclaves. On the other hand, when this empowerment is achieved within the framework of a state-oriented institution, it reaffirms the legitimacy of domination by the majority and represents integrative tendencies. These complicated relations are exemplified even in cases where sports empowers non-national ethnic minorities, such as the Pakistani minority in Britain (Werbner 1996), and the African-American minority in the United States (Hartmann 2000; Wiggins 1994). This dualism is especially visible, however, when the minority articulates its identity in nationalist terms and connotations (Boyle 1994; Finn 1991; Gallagher 1997).

In the case of Arab soccer in Israel, this duality is especially pronounced because of the intensity of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and because for the Palestinians, the establishment of the state of Israel meant a colossal tragedy of dispossession, exile, and colonization. At the same time, this state, with its exclusively Jewish symbols, is visibly present on the soccer field. The IFA, which constitutes the overall framework for soccer games, is a state organization, responsible for representing the state in international soccer. The second major prize in Israeli soccer is called the "State Cup," and the president of the state personally awards it. Important league games that are broadcast on television are preceded by the playing of the Israeli national anthem, *ha-Tikva*, and most of the teams – including Arab teams – belong to organizations historically identified with Zionist political parties. The stamp of the state is even evident upon the players' bodies through the symbols of the sports organizations, unmistakably Zionist in origin, printed on their uniforms. At the same time, as previously mentioned, this is the public sphere in which the visibility of Arab citizens is most pronounced.

Beyond arguing that there is a tension and that a battle over meaning is taking place, this study demonstrates that we can also identify a temporary winner in the battle, or at least temporary dominant meanings. As this book's sub-title – *The Integrative Enclave* – implies, I argue that the integrative orientation of soccer takes precedence in present-day Israeli soccer. This integrative orientation is constructed by several actors. Arab fans on the bleachers tend to cheer their teams in Hebrew and avoid national confrontation or political protest (see chapter 8); in the Hebrew media, soccer is represented mainly as a pioneer of coexistence between Arabs and Jews. This unexpected "alliance of meanings" stemming from the ad hoc shared interests of the Hebrew media and the Arab soccer fans is strong enough to overcome the more nationalist and highly politicized tones that can be found in the Arabic-language sports press (see chapter 5). The dominance of this integrative discourse is reflected as well by my findings that Arab men who go to soccer stadiums are more likely to vote for Zionist candidates and parties than those who do not attend soccer games. These same men are less likely to be proud of their Palestinian identity (see chapters 4, 6, and 8).

This exclusion of political protest and Arab-Palestinian national symbolism from the stadium is seemingly paradoxical. Since the removal of the Military Government in 1966, and especially since Land Day in 1976,[2] the Arab minority in Israel has been extensively politicized, and this politicization has been growingly articulated in Palestinian nationalist terms. The political calendar of the Arabs in Israel contains certain dates during which national history is commemorated, such as the *Nakba* (the destruction and expulsions of 1948), the Kafr Qasim massacre in 1956,[3] Land Day, and the bloody events of October 2000 when thirteen Arab demonstrators were killed by Israeli police. These days are marked by public and widespread rallies and demonstrations at which the Palestinian flag is raised and national songs are sung. Memorials to the martyrs – a pillar in the construction of many national identities – have been established to commemorate those who were killed in these events. Some Arab schools take their students on "heritage trips" to destroyed Palestinian villages. These trips emphasize the Palestinian

[2] On March 30, 1976 six Palestinians (five of them Israeli citizens) were killed by Israeli police during protests against governmental land expropriations. The day is considered a turning point in the development of national consciousness among the Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel.

[3] On October 29, 1956 a group of peasants from Kafr Qasim returned to the village from their fields, not aware that their village was under curfew. Forty-seven of them were shot dead by Israeli troops.

collective fate more than that of the actual villages that were razed. Further, since the signing of the Oslo accords in 1993, Palestinian national symbols are no longer illegal, and the Palestinian flag is commonly seen at political demonstrations held by the Arabs in Israel.

Against this backdrop, and in the light of the nationalist orientation of Arab-Palestinian sports in the pre-1948 period (see chapter 2), one might expect that the latent potential in soccer to provide a dramatic expression for the conflict between two mutually hostile social groups would turn the bleachers into an arena in which a vocal political protest would be manifested and the Arab-Palestinian minority's national identification would be strongly emphasized. This expectation becomes even stronger in the light of several well-known cases in which the success of national minorities in soccer turns the stadium into a central location for political protest and the expression of nationalist feelings. For example, the Athletic Bilbao team represents the Basque minority in Spain (MacClancy 1996); the Barcelona team represents Spain's Catalonian region; the Sporting Youth of Kabylia club in Algeria served as a rallying point for the Amazigh ethno-nationalist cultural movement (Silverstein 2002); and al-Wihdat – a Palestinian team in Jordan – gives its fans an opportunity to vocalize their identity as a national minority (Tuastad 1997).

Surprisingly enough, however, despite the significant place that Arab men in Israel give to sports in general and to soccer in particular, soccer is far from being a site for political resistance or explicit national identification.

One does not see Palestinian flags in the bleachers of Arab soccer teams; the songs, cheers, and swearing are largely taken from the verbal repertoire of Israeli soccer supporters as a whole, and mostly lack a national-based uniqueness. Outbreaks of violence are no more common at games between Arabs and Jews than at other games. In addition, the Arab soccer stars who play in Israel's leagues seek to downplay their national identity, instead emphasizing their professional identity. Even though the ethno-national cleavage constitutes the deepest chasm in Israeli society, and even though the Palestinian citizens have developed diverse forms of political national protest, these processes have only rarely and marginally diffused into the soccer bleachers, where the integrative discourse still prevails. This study strives to solve this paradox.

At the same time, it is noteworthy that this integrative discourse is not translated into a tangible change of the discriminatory character of the state. As a consequence, soccer might play a conservative political role that legitimizes the political, social, and economic inferiority of the Arabs

in Israel. Seeing sports as a political sphere has been part of academic discourse since the emergence of neo-Marxist criticism of sports in the 1970s (Brohm 1978; Gruneau 1983; Hoch 1972; Vinnai 1973). These studies were followed by a plethora of Gramsci-inspired studies (Hargreaves 1986; McKay 1991; Sage 1998; Sugden and Bairner 1993), as well as a wave of feminist critique of sports in the 1980s and 1990s (Birrell and Cheryl 1994; Burstyn 1999; Hargreaves 1994; Lenskyj 1986; Messner and Sabo 1990; Theberge 1995). Still, the popular belief that sports is an autonomous area and that "one should not mix sports and politics" is very widespread in public discourse, even after years of academic criticism (Gruneau 1993).

The gap between academic discourse and public discourse on sports is not a coincidence; the attempt to mark a specific sphere as apolitical can be a successful tactic for achieving certain political goals (Allison 1986). This is precisely one of the secrets of sports' efficiency as a political weapon in social conflicts – it appears to be innocent, even somewhat childish, identified with "irrational" worlds, such as the worlds of leisure, play, and entertainment. The consistent presentation of Arab involvement in Israeli soccer as "apolitical" is a major component in the political function that soccer serves in Israel (see chapters 6 and 8).

"Modernity" as power

Another major attribute of sports that makes it powerful is its popular identification in many contexts with modernity. Functionalist writers view sports as a modern substitute for traditional foci of solidarity (Coles 1975; Curtis, Loy, and Karnilowicz 1986; Edwards 1973). The Weberian historian of sports, Allen Guttmann, considers sports to be an expression and reflection of the modern-industrial existence and a scientific world (Guttmann 1978). Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning see the evolution of modern sports as a major element in the "civilizing process" of British society, a process that is characterized by decreasing tolerance for sights of violence in the public sphere. As a result, a need emerged for a social sphere where regulated forms of violence were permitted (Elias and Dunning 1986).

In this book I am not interested in either validating or confronting these perspectives. Rather, I treat "modernity" first and foremost as a powerful discourse which plays a specific role in colonial contexts (Mitchell 2000), and sports as an important element in the production of this discourse. What is vital for understanding the political role of sports in the Israeli–Palestinian context is its representation as "modern,"