



Israeli Druze women in politics in the 21st century - supporting versus inhibiting factors

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Abstract

The study aimed to examine the attitudes of the Druze community regarding the integration of Druze women in local and National politics. The sample contained 600 participants, aged 25-65, of whom 333 were males (55.5%) and 267 females (44.5%), were randomly sampled from all residents of the Druze villages in the Galilee and Carmel regions of Israel. The quantitative questionnaire contained 11 items, and A qualitative questionnaire containing two open-ended questions, In addition, the study used a short socio-demographic questionnaire (age, gender, and education).The study found that there are those who encourage and promote the candidacy of Druze women for leading positions in politics, while others prefer to hinder the progress of Druze women, We concluded that there has been an increase in the level of awareness among members of the Druze community regarding the integration of women in local and National politics Most of the factors cited stem from the cultural-religious contexts and stereotypical perceptions that women do not have leadership skills. From the findings it can be concluded that there is an increase in awareness among members of the Druze community regarding the rising status of women in general, and particularly their integration into social and political life.

Keywords: Druze community, Inhibiting factors, Politics, Supporting factors.

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Contribution of this paper to the literature

The study adds unique knowledge to the literature as it is the first to be carried out among the Druze community in Israel and sheds light on the development of the status of women in Druze society as well as the change in the attitudes of men, especially the religious among them, towards the integration of Druze women in politics, as well as encouraging women more and more to take part in public action in general and local and national politics in particular.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, there have been major changes in the status of women in the entire democratic world, including in Israel, thanks to two main parameters: the entry of many women into the wage labor market and an impressive increase in their level of education. Throughout the democratic world, as the professional literature points out, these changes have led to an increase in the political activity of women, as well as in their achievements in the political field (Reynolds, 1999; Shapira, King, Friedberg, & Itzkovich, 2013).

In Israel too, the involvement of women in political activity has increased. More and more women are presenting their candidacies for the Knesset and local authority elections with each election cycle, and women's organizations have encouraged and promoted this trend (Akirav & Ben-Horin Naot, 2015). However, their success in election cycles has not increased, women are still not properly represented in the centers of power and influence, and their numbers in politics have not increased significantly. This situation places the representation of women in the Knesset of Israel at a low level compared to that of legislatures in other countries (Nagged, 2013).

Changes in the local political landscape are indeed taking place, but they are probably insufficient, as the results of the local elections show (Nagged, 2013). Previous to the last election, only 12% of those elected to municipal authorities in Israel were women; of 3,250 elected officials in the local councils only 376 were female; only 5 women out of 255 served as head of a municipal authority, and in the elections only three women were elected to head a local authority (Akirav & Ben-Horin Naot, 2015; Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

In Israeli society, a number of factors come together to cause the exclusion of women from politics: the reluctance of women in a very family-oriented society to engage in politics for fear that it would come at the expense of responsibility for the household and the upbringing of children, the centrality of the security issue overpowering issues of inequality, as well as the cultural norms that define the public space and especially the political one as an arena intended for men, where the figure of the successful woman seems to be contrary to the female stereotype (Akirav & Ben-Horin Naot, 2015).

Another variable that makes it difficult for women in Israeli society to serve in Israel's houses of representatives, is political culture, as reflected in society's conservatism and openness towards the inclusion of women in positions of influence (similar to conservative Catholic countries such as Ireland and Italy). The society's conservatism may also explain the under-representation of women in Israel's Knesset, at least with regard to two social groups, Arabs and ultra-Orthodox, who together make up more than a quarter of the population. The political parties representing the majority of those citizens belonging to these population groups do not tend to place women on the lists of their candidates. Thus, throughout the years of Israel as a State, we find a very limited number of women in the Knesset (Reynolds, 1999; Shapira et al., 2013). Ensuring the representation of women is a temporary mechanism, the purpose of which is to help overcome ritual, convention and norms, as well as gender perceptions that create actual discrimination. It is a temporary mechanism designed to correct past distortions, and to create an egalitarian political culture.

The paper aiming to state the supporting versus inhibiting factors that affect Druze women integrating in political life.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. The Druze in Israel

The Druze community in Israel is that country's smallest minority group. At the end of 2019, the Druze population in Israel numbered about 147,000 (temporary figure), which is about 1.6% of the total population of the State of Israel (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022). In 1957 the Israeli government recognized the Druze community as separate and independent, and in 1962 the government approved Druze religious courts. This recognition paved the way for the separation of the community from the other minorities in the country, while emphasizing its uniqueness (Dana, 1998).

The Druze are the least educated ethnic group in Israel, and there are only a few Druze economic entrepreneurs (Ben-Dor, 1995). Most Druze live in 22 villages in the north of the country: in the Carmel, Galilee and Golan Heights regions. Most of their villages are homogeneous, inhabited only by Druze, but some are incorporated with additional minorities (Falah, 2005) and the Druze lead independent and separate lives from the general Israeli system (Winryb, 1997).

Druze society in Israel is a conservative one where the way of life is based on religion. The social structure of Druze society is no different from that of Arab society. At the center of Druze society is the family - both nuclear and extended - (the "clan") and the community, with the Druze perceiving themselves as part of the collective. Although these feelings contribute to the individual and strengthen him, they also force him to submit to his commitment to family, to various family pressures, to over-involvement of his family in his actions and decisions, and to the demanding for conformity even in cases contrary to his personal aspirations (Barakat, 1993; Shamma & Katz, 2018).

In recent years, Druze society has changed as a result of the close ties of community members, especially men, with members of Jewish-Israeli society. As a result of these changes, Druze society is now defined as being in transition to modernity. Characterized on the one hand by life in small villages, a strong religious belief and a strong influence of religious tradition and family and community authority on the life of the individual, on the other hand, the Druze live in modern houses, are exposed to the modern Jewish way of life, and many are interested in higher education and professional careers (Abu Az-Al-Din, 1984; Seginer & Halabi-Kheir, 1998; Seginer, Shoyer, Hossessi, & Tannous, 2007). As a result, the self-perception of most Druze combines two key elements: 1) the understanding that they are an independent, autonomous entity and one that deserves personal rights; and 2) collective self-

perception manifested in feelings of belonging, strong commitment to family and community, and working to achieve family goals (Shamma & Katz, 2018; Winryb, 1997).

2.2. The Development of the Status of the Druze Woman

The Druze religion gave a woman many rights; women in Druze culture have enjoyed a very high spiritual status. The Druze believe that women are the center of human and world society. The traditional role of women was to take care of the household and the family but their exposure to higher education and the development of science and technology have brought about significant changes in the last decade in defining the role of women in Druze society (Abbas, 2010). The rise in level of education, standard of living, and the sector's consciousness and recognition by others have erased the isolationism that Druze society has practiced until now, and has also left its mark on the status of Druze woman (Dana, 1998).

The society finds itself dealing with two different trends, which to some extent contradict each other, the trend of preserving tradition, and the openness to the modern world (Abbas, 2010). It should be emphasized and said that according to religious values the Druze woman has great importance in her home and a respectable status in both her immediate family and in the extended society. The Druze woman cannot be considered 'oppressed' as perhaps she can in other Middle Eastern Arab societies. The religious code places the status of women as equal to that of men, the Druze religion forbids polygamy, and it is the only monotheistic religion that allows a woman to be a spiritual leader and to fulfill all religious roles (Abbas, 2010).

In the last two decades the departure of Druze women for higher education and work outside the village is a trend that has gained ground, and even been encouraged. At the same time, these trends are accompanied by concerns, doubts and the payment of a heavy religious price – a boycott that prevents the woman from being admitted to the religious camp. Every female who breaks the social circle by pursuing higher education, working outside the village and driving a private car, is aware of the fact that she will have to overcome obstacles and social and religious barriers, and perhaps pay a heavy price for these luxuries for the remainder of her life (Falah, 2005).

2.3. The Breakthrough of Druze Women in the Last Two Decades

The Portal Carmel Portal (2015) publishes accurate, substantiated data regarding the Druze community in Israel (not including the Druze villages in the politically-contested Golan Heights) on all levels. The data are exclusive to the Carmel portal and were collected from all relevant sources in Israel. According to the materials in the portal, until 1994 the Druze woman was a person for whom others decided what to do, what to study and where to be. In most cases, weddings were also the result of matchmaking efforts within the family.

In early 1996, the status of women began to strengthen in Druze rural society, especially in the Carmel villages. This was the beginning of the reform in the status of the Druze woman. The process began in the academic institutions, and was expressed quietly, in the change in the rustic-traditional attire. Slowly more women began to study in higher education, develop financial careers, and shape their independent personas. There is no doubt that the local authorities elected from 1989 onwards had a key role in empowering women, allowing women to take part in aspects of the local election campaign. They shaped and contributed to changing the way Druze women perceived themselves as well as how the rest of the population perceived them (Dana, 1998; Falah, 2005).

In recent years, most Druze women contribute to the family income by working outside the home, over 70% of young Druze women hold an academic degree, with the majority engaged in the teaching profession (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The years 2008 to 2014 represented a period when Druze women overcame many obstacles standing in their way and expanded into different professions. Since then, the Druze woman has integrated into every position in hospitals, factories, the legal system and even government directorates. They serve in the Ministry of Finance and represent Israel in the Foreign Ministry's political missions. They are successful in their work and are proud of their origins (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022; Halabi, 2009).

Statistics have also shown that Druze women from the villages in the north (Galilee and Golan regions) are more successful academically and economically than those who come from the Druze villages in Carmel, both in terms of their numbers and in terms of the key positions they occupy (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Today's Druze woman understands that self-development is her right. The next goal for Druze women is to occupy key positions in local politics, in the Supreme Religious Council and in the Druze Religious Court. Young Druze women today no longer wait for approval and permission from males; rather, they open the doors for themselves. Today the family, and especially the mothers of young girls, encourage their daughters to advance, learn and build a career for themselves, rather than spend their life in the confines of their husband's home (Abbas, 2010; Halabi, 2009).

A study comparing Jewish and Druze adolescents' degree of autonomy, parental involvement, and peer involvement in their decision-making (Shamma & Katz, 2018) found that: 1) In both sectors, no differences were found between boys and girls in the degree of autonomy and involvement of peers. This finding probably stems from the exposure to general Israeli society and the gradual transformation of Druze society into a more modern and individualistic one. 2) No differences were found between Jews and Druze in the degree of overall autonomy in decision-making and in the degree of overall involvement of their parents and friends in this process. The conclusions that emerged from these findings were that Druze society is becoming more similar to modern Israeli Jewish society in terms of autonomy and in terms of parental involvement in the decision-making process of adolescents, (Shamma & Asaqli, 2020; Shamma & Katz, 2018).

The current situation in Druze society indicates that this sector is beginning to break free of the shackles of male domination. A greater number of women seek higher education and integrate into the labor force. These developments are reflected in several trends in Druze society, the most prominent of which is the decline in the birth rate among Druze women.

2.4. Participation and Representation of Druze Women in Political Life

In recent decades there has been an increase in the participation of women in political life, and yet the number of women taking active part in politics has remained considerably lower compared to men and in relation to their number in the population (Shapira et al., 2013). Sometimes even a small number of women can raise gender issues

for discussion, In societies where more women are elected to public positions, there is a tendency towards gender equality women in politics tend to promote gender issues related to motherhood, equality in the workplace, etc. (Norris, 2004; Wängnerud & Sundell, 2012).

In a survey conducted by the Portal Carmel Portal (2015) Druze women were asked their opinion regarding the involvement of Druze women in politics. The women admitted they did not dare to engage in politics because they lived in a male-dominated society that did not tolerate prominence in females. In the women's view, the woman must build herself and her independence; she is the complementary half in society and deserves at least 50% percent in the decision-making.

Indeed, the Druze woman is a very dynamic figure when it comes to conducting home and social life, but as for involvement in politics her voice is hardly heard. This is obviously the reason that no Druze woman can be found running for election as mayor Knesset membership; internal restraints preclude women from raising this issue even in their minds. Undoubtedly it is difficult to change the Druze tradition and values where men control the society politically.

That said, there are a few women who have managed to freely express their political views and find support. In the last local elections (2018), two women were elected as local council members: one is Noha Jabar from Kfar Maghar, who was elected head of the Communist-leaning *Hadash* candidate list in that town, and the other is Samira Azzam from the Druze city of Isfiya, representing a new, independent party named 'New Isfiya, whose entire candidate list is composed of women. A positive trend can be seen compared to previous periods when there was no female representation in the Druze communities. In addition, in the last election, a young Druze woman named Jadir Marich joined Hosen *L'Yisrael* a socially-liberal, politically center party, and was placed in the 25th slot of the final candidate list when the party eventually united with the Blue & White party for the 21st Knesset elections. The list received 35 seats in the election (of a total 120 seats in the Knesset) and Marich was seated in the 21st Knesset as the first Druze woman to serve as a Knesset member (Koenig & Shapira, 2018).

3. Research Method and Procedure

3.1. Participants

The current study involved 200 participants aged 25-65, of whom 111 were males (55.5%) and 89 females (44.5%). Participants were randomly sampled from all residents of the Druze villages in the Galilee and Carmel.

3.2. Research Tool

For the purpose of measuring the variables in the present study, two questionnaires were compiled since the study utilized the Mixed-Method Research, combining the two approaches: qualitative and quantitative.

1. A quantitative questionnaire containing 11 items. The items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with the participant being asked to rate their degree of agreement with each statement from 1 (do not agree at all) to 5 (strongly agree). Did you build the questionnaire or take it from previous studies? This must be noted and the process of writing the items emphasized.

2. A qualitative questionnaire containing two open-ended questions.

3. In addition, the study used a short socio-demographic questionnaire, which addressed the independent variables in the study. Participants were asked to indicate their age, gender, and education Table 1.

4. For uniformity in the directionality of the scale for certain items, a reversal of scales was performed. Among the scale items we found Cronbach's alpha reliability adequate (0.62-0.98), while Cronbach's alpha reliability of the instrument was .944.

Table 1. Study participants demographics (Gender, education level, age).

Variable	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	333	55.5%
	Female	267	44.5%
Education	Academic	336	56.0%
	Non-academic	264	44.0%
Age	25-40	309	51.3%
	41+	291	48.7%

Table 1 presents the participants demographic distribution, Gender male 55.5% female 44.5%, Education level 56%are academic and 45% are non, and the age 51.3% (25-40) , 48.7% (41+).

3.3. Research Process

The questionnaires were distributed to participants in the Druze villages in the Galilee and Carmel regions. Participants were randomly selected with the intent of including all levels of education, age and gender.

4. Findings

Means and standard deviations related to the evaluation of the sample were calculated for all areas of research, for the purpose of examining the degree of potential integration of Druze woman in politics. High scores resulted for statements such as: 'The family is a significant supportive factor in the woman's life', 'There is belief in the ability of women to make decisions', there is belief in the ability of women to lead politically and socially', and 'There is a belief in women and their right to apply for senior positions, especially in the political sphere'. People also reported a willingness to support a woman's candidacy to lead politically. On the other hand, there are statements that received a low rating as being a hindrance for women immersing themselves in the political arena: education and raising children, gender-based discrimination, lack of belief in a woman's power to strive for a political career, and the difficulties that women will encounter in the political sphere.

Also, the mean results of certain items showed a medium level, such as Item1 (The family has an influence on a woman's decision to run as a candidate in most cases.) with a mean of (4.23),we can attribute that to the close

relationship within the Druze family and the respect between the singles, Item 11 (The difficulties that women face in getting involved in politics are more than that faced by men) with a mean of (1.79), here we can say that women a carrying-up duties more complicated than men and they are multi-tasking.

Table 2. Means & standard deviation.

No.	Item	Mean	S.D.	Level
1	The family has an influence on a woman's decision to run as a candidate in most cases.	4.23	1.033	High
2	Women have the ability to make decisions in difficult situations.	4.16	1.044	High
3	Women are capable of political and social leadership	4.12	1.028	High
4	The right to elect or to be elected is granted to all citizens, regardless of gender	4.11	1.215	High
5	Women have proven their worth in many areas such as politics	4.00	1.096	High
6	I have no objection to support women in the elections as a candidate for membership or the presidency of the local authority	3.88	1.294	High
7	I support Druze women competing for political and leadership positions	3.77	1.382	High
8	Raising children is an obstacle to women's participation in local elections	2.42	2.42	Moderate
9	The policy of marginalization in the political representation of women in general and for Druze women in particular is Maqsood	2.30	2.30	Low
10	Women who run for elections face negative discrimination by society in many areas of power	2.09	2.09	Low
11	The difficulties that women face in getting involved in politics are more than that faced by men	1.79	1.79	Low
Total		3.39	3.35	Moderate

Table 3. Means, standard deviation, t-test regarding to gender.

Item	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig.
Women are capable of political and social leadership	M	111	3.96	1.087	1.98	0.020
	F	89	4.30	0.922		
I have no objection to support women in the elections as a candidate for membership or the presidency of the local authority	M	111	3.74	1.305	1.98	0.085
	F	89	4.06	1.265		
Women have proven their worth in many areas such as politics	M	111	3.79	1.199	1.98	0.003
	F	89	4.25	0.895		
The right to elect or to be elected is granted to all citizens, regardless of gender	M	111	4.08	1.200	1.98	0.708
	F	89	4.15	1.239		
The difficulties that women face in getting involved in politics are more than that faced by men	M	111	1.66	0.879	1.98	0.042
	F	89	1.94	1.101		
Raising children is an obstacle to women's participation in local elections	M	111	2.17	1.119	1.98	0.001
	F	89	2.73	1.223		
Women who run for elections face negative discrimination by society in many areas of power	M	111	1.85	0.844	1.98	0.000
	F	89	2.38	1.061		
The family has an influence on a woman's decision to run as a candidate in most cases	M	111	4.18	0.886	1.98	0.355
	F	89	4.29	0.801		
The policy of marginalization in the political representation of women in general and for Druze women in particular is Maqsood	M	111	2.15	1.080	1.98	0.039
	F	89	2.47	1.078		
Women have the ability to make decisions in difficult situations	M	111	3.93	1.118	1.98	0.000
	F	89	4.45	0.866		
I support Druze women competing for political and leadership positions	M	111	3.69	1.438	1.98	0.416
	F	89	3.85	1.310		
Total	M	111	3.20	0.526	1.98	0.000
	F	89	3.53	0.554		

Tables 2 & 3 present Another question that emerged from the findings is whether there are statistically significant differences concerning the integration of Druze women in politics according to the replies of women vs men, according to respondents' level of education and according to their age. Thus, the averages and standard deviations were calculated alongside the t test for the responses, according to the male/female gender of the study participants.

Throughout almost all the statements, save for a number of items indicated by an asterisk (*) in the table women expressed more faith than did men in the Druze female's ability to integrate into politics. The difference in means, however, was not significant, so that no significant differences were found that could be attributed to gender. It seems that there is agreement between both sexes that women have the right to run in elections and to be involved in political life, both at the national level and at the local/community level.

Table 4. Means, standard deviation, t-test regarding to academic non-academic.

Item		N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig.
Women are capable of political and social leadership	A	112	4.21	0.924	1.546	0.124
	N	88	3.99	1.140		
I have no objection to support women in the elections as a candidate for membership or the presidency of the local authority	A	112	3.98	1.259	1.261	0.209
	N	88	3.75	1.333		
Women have proven their worth in many areas such as politics	A	112	4.06	1.042	0.983	0.327
	N	88	3.91	1.161		
The right to elect or to be elected is granted to all citizens, regardless of gender	A	112	4.27	1.115	2.091	0.038
	N	88	3.91	1.310		
	A	112	1.79	0.934	0.011	0.991

Item		N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig.
The difficulties that women face in getting involved in politics are more than that faced by men	N	88	1.78	1.066		
Raising children is an obstacle to women's participation in local elections	A	112	2.44	1.137	0.233	0.816
	N	88	2.40	1.273		
Women who run for elections face negative discrimination by society in many areas of power	A	112	2.22	0.908	2.271	0.024
	N	88	1.91	1.046		
The family has an influence on a woman's decision to run as a candidate in most cases	A	112	4.29	0.788	1.047	0.296
	N	88	4.16	0.921		
The policy of marginalization in the political representation of women in general and for Druze women in particular is Maqsood	A	112	2.53	1.057	3.493	0.001
	N	88	2.00	1.061		
Women have the ability to make decisions in difficult situations	A	112	4.21	0.960	0.692	0.490
	N	88	4.10	1.145		
I support Druze women competing for political and leadership positions	A	112	3.95	1.251	2.113	0.036
	N	88	3.53	1.508		
Total	A	112	3.45	0.521	2.881	0.004
	N	88	3.22	0.590		

Table 4 presents: Another background variable examined was the academic/non-academic education of the study participants. no significant differences were found that can be attributed to education, save for the items indicated with an asterisk (*). These can be attributed to the responses of academics whose increase in awareness of the importance of women vying for political positions stems from themselves having exited the village and 'rubbed shoulders' with other societies, especially the modern Israeli Jewish society.

Table 5. Means, standard deviation, t-test regarding to age.

Item	Age	N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig.
Women are capable of political and social leadership	25-40	102	4.16	1.041	0.509	0.611
	+41	97	4.08	1.017		
I have no objection to support women in the elections as a candidate for membership or the presidency of the local authority	25-40	102	3.96	1.258	0.852	0.395
	+41	97	3.80	1.336		
Women have proven their worth in many areas such as politics	25-40	102	4.08	1.059	1.035	0.302
	+41	97	3.92	1.133		
The right to elect or to be elected is granted to all citizens, regardless of gender	25-40	102	4.16	1.167	0.549	0.583
	+41	97	4.06	1.273		
The difficulties that women face in getting involved in politics are more than that faced by men	25-40	102	1.84	1.060	0.861	0.390
	+41	97	1.72	0.921		
Raising children is an obstacle to women's participation in local elections	25-40	102	2.40	1.229	0.243	0.809
	+41	97	2.44	1.172		
Women who run for elections face negative discrimination by society in many areas of power	25-40	102	2.05	1.066	0.534	0.594
	+41	97	2.12	0.893		
The family has an influence on a woman's decision to run as a candidate in most cases	25-40	102	4.23	0.911	-0.096	0.924
	+41	97	4.24	0.788		
The policy of marginalization in the political representation of women in general and for Druze women in particular is Maqsood	25-40	102	2.23	1.052	0.941	0.348
	+41	97	2.37	1.130		
Women have the ability to make decisions in difficult situations	25-40	102	4.21	0.988	0.622	0.535
	+41	97	4.11	1.108		
I support Druze women competing for political and leadership positions	25-40	102	3.93	1.359	1.707	0.089
	+41	97	3.60	1.397		
Total	25-40	102	3.39	0.539	0.866	0.388
	+41	97	3.32	0.588		

Table 5 presents the variable age of 25-40 vs 40 and above, was also a parameter we examined. As can be seen from no significant differences were found that can be attributed to the age variable, the authors attribute that to the high awareness of the Druze society in all the ages.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The present study examined the attitudes of the Druze community towards the Druze woman's potential entry and integration into politics. For this purpose, two questionnaires were compiled, one quantitative with 11 items, and the other qualitative with two open-ended questions. Most of the research focused on examining the factors that promote and hinder the integration of Druze women in both local and national politics. Similar studies have been done in different societies both in Israel and in other countries, though this is the first to focus on Druze society. The current study involved 200 participants aged 25-65, of whom 111 were male (55.5%) and 89 female (44.5%). Participants were randomly sampled from all Druze villages in the Galilee and Carmel. The discussion section will present the findings of the current study. For each finding, its suitability for the findings of previous studies detailed in the introduction will be examined, and possible explanations will be offered for these findings, which do not correspond to the findings of the literature. Finally, the conclusions of the current study, its implications at the theoretical and applied level, the limitations of the research and suggestions for further research will be presented.

1. Promoting factors: The respondents indicated nine components that help and contribute to the advancement of a woman's candidacy for both local and national political positions.

A) The woman's personality and skills, her ability to lead: About 35% of the respondents stated that the woman's personality, skills and ability to lead enable her to integrate into political life. Women's leadership style can explain their involvement in social arenas as a springboard to political arenas (Padró i Miquel & Snyder, 2004; Saalfeld, 1997). Also, personal aspiration has an important role in the field of political leadership; this can be attributed to the

process of modernization openness that Druze society is undergoing. The social and economic expression of this process can be seen in the proportion of women entering the labor market and integrating into institutions of higher learning.

Over 60% of all Druze students in academia are female, who as a result of exposure and involvement with the other social sectors, import new ideas and initiatives into Druze society, which until recently was considered traditional and closed. One of the study participants wrote that "a woman's stubbornness to promote and break through society's boundaries, brings her to successes and even upgrades her both socially and economically, and for that she deserves support and reinforcement."

B) Family support: About 30% of all respondents indicated that family support is important for advancing the status of women and their integration into politics. Previous studies have found that participation in the local political arena is possible for women who have family support, who work full-time without family commitments and who have adult children and work full-time or do not work at all (Akirav & Ben-Horin Naot, 2015; Barron, Crawley, & Wood, 1991; Randall, 1987). There is a gap in the perception of this issue between religious and non-religious people. The former expressed opposition to the woman's integration into politics and stated that they were not willing to support a woman who is politically active. Within this category, too, there was a difference between women and men, with some religious women expressing support for a woman's political candidacy, perceiving them as a force that defends women's interests and status within society. Support for women in politics can mean the equal distribution of household and family tasks between women and men. Cultural changes have led many men to increase their partnership in household tasks, including child care, thus giving women time and space for political activity (Akirav & Ben-Horin Naot, 2015). Some of our respondents commented that "it is not a shame to be a partner in the home in everything that happens. It is good for a woman who goes out to work to help with the household economy, and it is a personal example for children to see a partnership between the two parents."

C) Social status and family affiliation: About 50% of respondents commented in the open-ended questions, that social status and family affiliation have a major impact on a woman's ability to run for political office. A larger and more established family increases her likelihood for success, but there are some exceptional cases of women from non-wealthy families who have managed to succeed in politics such as Noha Jabar from Kfar Maghar.

D) Increased awareness of the importance of women's status: This factor was particularly prominent among women and young respondents who emphasized the importance of women's integration into social life, including politics. The role of the woman does not begin and end in the household and the small family circle, but rather she has the ability and right to go beyond these circles and express her abilities and skills to lead and to make cultural changes. The deepening of the partnership between the man and woman at home prepares the ground for the woman to exercise her right to integrate into political life and strengthen her status, even at the expense of the opposite gender, who was not late in giving her demands a place and legitimacy.

E. The woman as promoter of the status of women: This factor stood out among most women who viewed the entry of women into politics as contributing to and advancing the status of women both within Druze society and in Israeli society in general.

2. Inhibiting factors: The concept that multiculturalism is undesirable and does not promote women. As with any dilemma between preserving tradition and promoting women's rights, in patriarchal societies there is a sort of built-in discrimination against women, where the preservation of morality hinders their advancement (Okin, 1999). The process of weakening women means that they are poorer in resources - economically, politically and culturally. This situation makes it difficult for them to gain power, establish leadership and create a gender agenda; it affects their ability to mobilize female and feminist leadership. Even if one continues to fight for institutional resources and their place in the institutional and hierarchical structure, it is mandatory to find other sources of power. The main source of empowerment for women is where they are "naturally".

There are many factors that hinder the integration of women in the political sphere, and this is true in particular for Druze women. These factors set up barriers that are the direct reason for women's weak participation in national or local politics.

A) Society and even the woman herself perceive her as a second-class citizen, including in her rights. This situation is the result of a male-dominated society which controls the worldview over family and society. A man has the right to make decisions, take control of the woman and suppress her desires, even restrict the woman's activities. Thus, society educates generations to view the female as weak and unable to deal with difficult issues, such as politics.

B) Culture and society have determined that a woman's workplace is inside the home, and that she is expected to take responsibility and perform the tasks assigned to her in the most complete way. Hence, a woman's entry into politics will make it difficult for her to perform the same tasks, and will even be a source of unnecessary trouble and rivalry for her and her family.

C) There is little awareness and belief about the importance of women being in senior positions in politics and in positions of decision making. Political parties do not tend to offer women senior positions. This factor was conspicuous in the responses of non-academic study participants who seem to devalue women's abilities and skills, and for whom the stereotypical thinking that the woman is weak and unable to lead, is perpetuated.

D) Economic issues limit a woman's entry into the political sphere, as a political campaign typically demands financial resources. A similar situation exists in the entry of women into the business world.

E) The education process given to every female by her family from childhood is that her role is to eventually marry, have children and work in the household. She is told throughout childhood that a woman should be dependent on a man, and that her existence depends solely on the support of the male head of her household. She is, traditionally, not given the space that allows her to develop and highlight her abilities and skills.

F) The media plays a significant part in suppressing women's joining politics, as the media has a crucial role in introducing new politicians to the public. Men's success stories in politics are presented to the public through the media, and this exposure ramps up support for them. Reading of a woman's success story in the media is rare. It is important to note that this is due to the paucity of opportunities women have to be exposed to areas like politics and other social life.

G) Religion: Quite a few respondents noted that a woman is sacred and should not come into contact with men who are not close relatives. Also, she is strictly forbidden to be outside the house for full days and nights.

In summary, there has been an increase in the level of awareness among members of the Druze community regarding the integration of women in both local and national politics, although there are still opponents especially in the older population of our survey (age 45-61), who emphasize the role of women beginning and ending with concern for the family. We found a chain of factors that promote and others that inhibit, but certainly the percentage of supporters of female integration was greater and the trend will probably only increase over time.

The challenge facing the family in general, and particularly the woman is a unique one that requires time and the reorganization of the entire family. The woman's entry into the labor market has transformed the family as there are now two breadwinners per family and quality of life has risen. It is important to encourage the woman's meeting other challenges including politics. This system of change not only applies to Israeli Jewish culture or Western culture but also permeates to Arab and Druze culture. The question now after the transition to post-modernization is How will life be conducted within the Druze family and how will the women's involvement in politics impact Druze society? What are the other areas that the Druze woman aspires to enter? These are open-ended questions that future studies will answer.

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