

A Model for Analyzing Reciprocal Relations Between the Jewish and Arab Communities in Mandatory Palestine*

This essay presents an interactional model for analyzing the effects of the reciprocal influences between two collectivities on the processes of crystallization and the building of society and identity within them—the first being the Jewish settlers in the territory referred to as the Land of Israel, and the second being the local Arab population. The time period considered begins with the first wave of Jewish immigration in the 1880s and concludes with the social, political, and military collapse of the latter collectivity in 1947. This essay deals with the past, but is not a historical study because it does not investigate the development of events by discovering previously unknown facts, though it may make such discoveries. Rather, it is a case-study analysis of the meeting of two collectivities that developed a wide variety of interrelations, beginning with cooperation and exchange in several areas and ending in total conflict that resulted in the social and political

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destruction of one of them, but did not end the mutual relations between them that persist to this day. The axiom of this study is that a wide range of mutual relations led to certain processes—or prevented certain others—within each of the two collectivities, influencing the directions of their formations and crystallizations; and conversely, the particular characteristics of each of the two collectivities shaped the patterns of the mutual relations between them.

The emphasis on the interactions between the two collectivities should not lead to the error of determinism. It is possible to analyze and understand the phenomena and processes that took place within the two collectivities independently of each other without having to systematically analyze their mutual relations,¹ and it would be a mistake to see the complex of developments within the two collectivities as an exclusive result of the relations between them. Yet there is no doubt that analyzing the two societies from such a perspective will add significantly to understanding their developments. The study is also not a comparative examination of two case studies, though at first glance it may appear to be the case, as we have not made a primary assumption that the two are independent. On the contrary, we have assumed interdependence, and thus, this is a single case study, despite the use of comparative methods.

The Framework of Interaction

From the time of Jewish settlement to 1947, the two collectivities under discussion acted under a common political framework: in the beginning, Ottoman rule, and afterward, British rule, a situation that left its mark on their mutual interrelations, mainly by determining the limits of the basic rules of the game that developed between the two collectivities. The primary function of this ruling third side in the interaction was to regulate interaction, preventing rapid and drastic changes in the power relations between the two sides. This function was expressed in the political and military protection given to the Jewish community—protection that prevented its physical, political, and social destruction—and in defending the Arab collectivity from rapid changes in the balance of power between it and the Jewish side by limiting Jewish immigration and accumulation of territorial resources.²

The two sides were involved in continuous bargaining with the third side in at least three spheres: bargaining over changes in the basic rules of the game, mentioned above, such that the third side became a means for each

side to advance its ultimate goals; bargaining over the granting of recognition and legitimization to institutions and organizations that were to become the center—in the sense of Shils³ and Eisenstadt⁴—of each of the two collectivities, or over institutions and organizations that are the privilege of a sovereign society; and bargaining within the framework of the existing rules of the game over changing or maintaining power relations between the Jewish and Arab collectivities. The bargaining took place on the level of general policy, centering mostly on the issue of Jewish immigration quotas and licenses for the transfer of lands from Arab to Jewish ethno-national ownership, and on the level of competition over specific resources, such as jobs, public office, subsidies, and other government appropriations, that the third side was distributing or redistributing.

Patterns and Spheres of Interaction

Most of the encounters between any two such partners can be divided into two types: concrete interactions and model interactions. The concrete interactions were the systems of exchange and competition, cooperation, and conflict between the two sides in different spheres, on the levels of individuals fulfilling social roles, groups or social strata operating within each of the collectivities, and elites directing the policy of the entire collectivity. The model interaction, positive or negative, derives from each side's attitude toward the existence of the other side, regarding its image, its perception of the other's essence, and its activities. Thus, for different parts of the collectivity, the other side becomes a positive or negative reference group, either in its entirety or in differential spheres of action. As a result of its becoming a reference group, the other collectivity may or may not become a partial or complete model to be imitated or rejected. Complete or partial imitation of a perceived model is not to be interpreted as adoption of a positive attitude toward that model or a nonconfrontational attitude toward it.

When a group of immigrants moves into any territory already populated by a local population or a population that previously settled there with the aim of establishing a permanent collectivity,⁵ both sides must clarify for themselves, implicitly or explicitly, the answers to a series of questions on the relations between them. These answers are not necessarily final answers; they are partially, mostly, or totally liable to change. The answers that the partners give themselves may depend on the answers—and especially the behavior

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that follows from the answers—that the other partner gives himself. The basic relations between the two sides are a two-dimensional complex.

The first is their position in relation to each other in the different spheres of activity. In its pure form, this dimension can be mainly of three sorts. First, the immigrants can be absorbed within the local population in a manner independent of the concrete relations, such as ruler to subject. This is usually the case when a system of exchange in one or more areas exists, such as exchange in the economic and social realms. The existence of this situation does not imply that there are symmetrical, equal, or sympathetic relations between the participants. In our schema, presented below, such relations are marked with a +. Second, immigrants may move alongside the native population. This situation entails desire for segregation of the partners in one or more areas, such as housing, education, and friendship groups, and for preventing exchange in those areas. In the schema, this situation is marked with a o. Third, the immigrants can be opposed to the local native population in one or more areas, such as in competition for housing or jobs. This is a situation of competition and conflict, over either scarce material resources, such as territory, or symbolic contents. This situation is marked with a -.⁶

The second dimension that determines the nature of the basic relations between the two partners is the sphere of interaction. The decision to locate the position of the immigration in a certain sphere is not necessarily transitive to another sphere. In at least the first stage of contact, it appears that great importance is given mostly to four spheres: economy, politics, culture, and primary relations.

Theoretically, there are eighty-one different profiles of answers that each segment can give or attempt to attain in its relations with the other segment. At the same time, the profiles may be the result of the total interaction between the two social systems. The profiles can be presented schematically as follows.

At a given point in time, three profiles can be active simultaneously. The immigrant population can aim at profile (+,-,-,o), and in opposition to

Table 1.1

Economic	Cultural Religious	Political	Primary Relations
+	+	+	+
o	o	o	o

this, the local population at (o,-,o,-). If we see the local population and the immigrants as a single system, the result or output of the system may be (o,-,-,-). Moreover, there may be disagreement or conflict within each segment over the answers that should be given to the questions of its relations with the other segment. So empirically, eighty-one different profiles will not be found; there is not complete independence among the approaches a partner holds in the various spheres. The answers that each of the partners give and the systemic result depend on the characteristics of each of the partners and on particular and changing conditions—political, economic, and even physical—for each of the participants in the interaction.

The Interaction in the Economic Sphere

The concrete interaction in the economic sphere was characterized by an unfree⁷ flow of Jewish capital to different sectors of the Arab population in exchange for land assets,⁸ labor, and merchandise—mainly agricultural products—from the Arab population. These exchanges were neatly interwoven with two basic processes of transformation in the local Arab economy and society. First, Arab villages partially transitioned from autarchic subsistence economies at the village level to monetary economies raising cash crops, mainly citrus groves, but also any agricultural produce needed by the new urban population, Jewish and Arab. Complementing this process was the urbanization of Arab society, especially the crystallization of three distinct urban strata: the *a'yan*, urban notables who were sometimes great landowners; professionals, mainly lawyers, a few doctors, and the educated class, not always with the same background as the *a'yan*; and the *shabab*, or urban *lumpenproletariat*, which in the context of traditional Arab society was not bound by traditional obligations and thus was more open than the other strata to social mobilization (in the sense of Deutsch).⁹ The presence of Jewish capital did not cause these processes, but the movement of capital certainly accelerated them. Two kinds of struggle within Arab society can be distinguished within this sphere: whether to maintain economic exchange with the Jewish collectivity at all, and who should profit from the exchange—sheiks or *fellahin*, sheiks or *a'yan*, small landowners or great landowners, Muslims or Christians, and so on. Sometimes use was made of a conflict of the first sort to solve a problem of the second sort.

The significance of economic exchange with the Jews was relatively marginal for the total Arab collectivity, but for the Jewish society, the very

existence of the exchange was central, though it aroused internal conflict and controversy. The purchase of lands was a necessary condition to constructing the community. Jewish agriculture, and to a small degree, crafts, could not meet all of the needs of the collectivity until the later stages of development. The Jewish labor market was also insufficient to supply the required laborers. However, as is well known, there was bitter conflict within the Jewish sector over this issue, over both the determination of the nature and content of the collectivity and the power relations among its right-wing, urban and rural bourgeois, and social-nationalist components. Analysis of the spheres of concrete economic interaction (and spheres lacking interaction) between the two collectivities appears to prove that the economic sphere had very far-ranging influences because of the creation of the Jewish collectivity and the directions in which it developed. When the Arab political leadership tried to stop the economic interaction as part of the conflict waged against the Jewish collectivity, the Jewish collectivity had already reached a stage where it could withstand the segregation. Not only was the damage done to it marginal, but it made considerable profits from the cessation of interaction.¹⁰

In the sphere of model economic interaction, the attitudes of the two sides were very ambivalent. The economic models according to which they operated were a priori fundamentally different. Yet it was in this sphere that a reduction of general models to methods of operating and technological items could be made with relative ease. Economic models are more easily adopted in processes of acculturation than are norms, values, and ideologies.

In the beginning of the wave of immigration, the Jewish sector could relate to the economy and technology of the *fellah* as a positive reference model due to certain romantic and populist elements in the Zionist movement, but even this approval was selective. Afterward, mostly due to the influence of the second and third waves of immigration, this positive attitude was replaced by a negative one; in other words, the Arab economy and technology were perceived as a counter-model for imitation.¹¹

It is very difficult to determine whether the entire model of Jewish economic activity served the Arab system as a reference model or not, as it depends on how the model was perceived and defined. When the Jewish model was perceived as a modern economy, then it served, in its entirety, as a model for imitation—that is, not just selected items from it were chosen. However, when it was perceived as a fragment or agent of a political model—a communist or capitalist economy—or as fitted to the specific needs of

the Jewish collective, then the model was related to negatively. As a result of the Arabs' constant contact with the economics and technology of Jewish immigrants, there was a process of adopting innovations, mostly material. Joseph Klausner and Moussa Smilansky¹² claim that the standard of living and degree of advancement of the Arab villages was a direct function of their contacts with the Jews. The opposed view on this issue¹³ holds that the Jews generated artificial needs for the Arab population and created demand for consumer items that did not raise the standard of living, but instead inflated demand. Meanwhile, mainly during the early period of settlement, there was a parallel process of Jews learning technology from the Arabs, especially in agriculture, citrus growing, and construction. In the last area, there were even attempts to capture the so-called Oriental style of building. Finally, as pointed out above, in spite of attempts to stop the supply of Arab workers, particularly unskilled workers (in both communities, there was demand for more skilled workers than were available) by means of ideological claims of the need for exclusively Jewish labor, there was still a shared labor market for the two communities, though the market was not perfect. One of the interesting results of this situation was that, despite the egalitarian ideology that prevailed in the Jewish community, wide gaps between the incomes of skilled and unskilled workers were created throughout the entire period. During the 1930s, Palestine had one of the highest ratios of incomes of skilled to unskilled workers among developing countries: the earnings of a skilled laborer in Palestine were almost twice those of his unskilled counterpart. Even the Histadrut, the Jewish labor union, did not fight for equality of income, despite the ideological demands for it.¹⁴

Interaction in the Cultural Sphere

Some of the examples cited above from the economic sphere can also serve as examples of concrete interaction in the cultural sphere. Jewish adoption of Arab dress and behavior, mainly Bedouin, in the early period of settlement,¹⁵ and the adoption of technology, Western dress, and Western behavioral norms, which some of the Arab leadership blamed the Jews for spreading, were results of concrete interaction in the cultural sphere. Rafiq Jabor¹⁶ complains that "the Zionists greatly influenced life in Palestine . . . customs which the Arabs never knew before have penetrated the country. Vulgarity has spread through the country. The ways of dressing have changed. Before the Jews came we never saw young girls with décolletage, or wearing dresses

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which don't cover their bodies from head to toe." It appears that both sides' adoptions of technological items took place in a manner very reminiscent of the patterns of adoption of parts of the Spanish culture by the eastern Pueblo peoples, in that they "accept[ed] from the Spanish certain traits and trait complexes which remained peripheral to their major cultural interests and also to resist traits which would have altered the main orientations of their culture."¹⁷

The model interaction in the cultural sphere can be analyzed on three levels—first, as a meeting between two great traditions, the Muslim and the Jewish. This meeting took place only at the peripheries of the two traditions, and the Arabs gave it much more prominence than did the Jews, but it made a great impression. On this level, apparently, neither side deliberately attempted to exert influence on the other; that is, the Muslims did not try to convert Jews to Islam, and certainly, the Jews did not try to convert Muslims, which seems to have served the Arab leaderships' aim of mobilizing support from the Arab collectivity to characterize the conflict as a religious one.¹⁸ Second, the interaction was an encounter between fragments of a Western culture and a traditional society that was beginning to experience the disintegration of its traditional fabric, and which was in an even earlier stage of development and change. At this level, as on the third level, the Jewish collectivity saw itself not only as the passive representation of a model worthy of imitation, but at times, as engaged in a social and cultural mission, sometimes used to partially justify immigration in the first place. The conflict between the two collectivities was sometimes explained in terms of social and cultural gaps, and its conclusion perceived as the bridging of those gaps. Third, as the left wing from socialism to Marxism, parts of which were oriented towards active missionary activity, became more and more evident in the Jewish community, the diverse ideological and political factions within the Jewish community initiated attempts to transfer to the opposite side specific social and cultural models. More than once, the Arab side could not differentiate among the three levels, and tended to see the Jewish community as representing a unified and dangerous counter-model of Jews, Westerners, and communists, or of different variations of possible combinations, that threatened traditional society and culture, which was represented as healthy and pure. In the context of this study, the two sides agreed that on the level of a meeting between two great traditions, the immigration would take place alongside the local population, whereas on the other two levels, the attitude of the Jews was that immigration should take place into the local population.

The local native population usually took Jewish attitudes and actions as a threat, effectively placing its own tradition opposite the model of the immigrants. The ambivalence in the sphere of model cultural interaction, mostly on the part of the Arab community, was much greater in the cultural sphere than in the economic sphere. In general, the Jewish collectivity was perceived as representing Western culture, or one segment of it. Different strata of the educated populace, including graduates of European colleges, related to this culture and accepted the Jews, as well as the British administration, as its representatives. But it was impossible not to notice the conflicts of interest between the two collectivities, and that the Jews represented what they considered to be a more advanced culture only sharpened such awareness of these conflicts of interest.¹⁹

Of course, the Jews were not the only model of Western culture with which the Middle Eastern traditions came into contact that could be selectively imitated and incorporated into a syncretic culture. The colonial administrations and the cultures they represented served as models for imitation or rejection throughout the Middle East and in all other colonial or developing areas during that period. The model influence of the Jewish community in the cultural sphere should not be exaggerated, but rather seen as only a small and selective part of a wider European influence. It is even conceivable that because of the political conflict between the two communities, Western culture came to be considered a counter-model for sections of the local Arab population to a far greater degree than would have been the case otherwise. As Jewish culture was perceived as part of European culture, the entire package was rejected.

Interaction in the Political Sphere

The conflict between the two communities stood out in the political sphere more than in any other sphere, even when as an integral part of its tactics for conflict management, the Jewish side would deny the very existence of any confrontation, or would make light of its importance or magnitude. When the processes of Jewish immigration to Eretz Israel are considered from a political point of view, usually immigration is positioned opposite the local population, implicitly or explicitly. Clearly, the ultimate goals of both collectivities—the gaining of exclusive political control over all of the territory within the political boundaries of the British Mandate—were incompatible.²⁰ The immediate aim of Zionist policy was to accumulate political

power, by means of the accumulation of land and population resources,²¹ which would alter the political status quo. The immediate aim of the Arab community was at least to maintain the status quo, which was generally perceived as beneficial to them.

However, maintaining or disrupting the status quo to favor one side or the other amounted to more than the mere accumulation of territorial resources. The Arab and Jewish communities were also engaged in a nation-building race that revealed an asymmetry between the two sides. The central problem on the Jewish side was to accumulate the resources mentioned above, though there were also internal struggles over the nature of the collectivity's identity. On the Arab side, the main problems included creating both a specific identity for the collectivity and effective organizational tools that could cut across traditional structures and particular loyalties, as well as mobilize the periphery for coordinated social and political activity, whether to forward the conflict with the Jewish immigrants or to meet the needs of a political collectivity on its way to sovereignty, as was the situation in areas with Arab populations in the region. In short, on the Arab side, the problem was to crystallize a political center that could operate authoritatively even though it lacked sovereignty.²² From this point of view, the Jewish side possessed an a priori advantage, not only in that the particularistic loyalties within its midst did not prevent effective political action, but also in that its political center, which was undergoing the process of crystallization, had more to distribute than did the embryonic Arab center. This was due both to the capital that streamed in from the outside as well as to the fact that the Jews could fix the criteria of eligibility for immigration permits. In contrast, the Arab organizations that were the potential nucleus around which the center would crystallize had but small independent means, and the apparatus to mobilize the resources and their redistribution was even smaller. On the level of concrete interaction, that the two collectivities were in opposed positions should have hastened the crystallization of their collective identities and organizations, just as it would be expected to increase the internal solidarity of each partner.²³ Moshe Ma'oz claims, implicitly or explicitly, that "the Arab-Palestinian sense of identity . . . grew and expanded during the Mandate era, due to its conflict with and imitation of the national Jewish movement."²⁴ In the area of administration, especially the creation of voluntary organizations parallel to those of the Jews that would counter the lack of political sovereignty, the accepted thesis, voiced by Yehoshua Porath, is that "toward the end of World War I a drastic shift in the direction of

political activity became apparent, brought about by the challenge posed to the Palestinian-Arab public by Zionism. It was perceived as a severe danger and led to the *acceleration* [my emphasis] of a process which under normal circumstances would have developed more gradually.²⁵

However, in both areas, the positive influences of Arab contact with the Jewish side should not be overstated, and comparisons should also be made with other Arab collectivities that did not face the challenge that Zionism posed for the Palestinian Arabs. An alternative hypothesis can be advanced, claiming that at such an embryonic stage of the development of both the collective identity and the organizational apparatus for the political activity of a given collectivity, conflict with another group that can handle the challenge with relative ease may have a destructive effect on the entity's crystallization. This hypothesis is consistent with a more general hypothesis that external conflict increases internal solidarity if and when at least the following two necessary conditions are fulfilled at the outset: there is a high degree of a priori consensus within the collectivity²⁶ and the collectivity is more or less capable of handling the conflict. It appears that the Jewish side fulfilled both necessary conditions, but the Arab side was more problematic. Even so, the claims of MáoZ and Porath do not essentially contradict and the hypothesis put forward here. It is possible that the Jewish settler-immigrant society influenced the creation of the Palestinian Arab collectivity's identity, and at some point hastened the processes of building its institutions, but also harmed the collectivity's potential for final crystallization and the degree of effectiveness of their operations. A clear example of this can be found in the attempt, originating in a tactical move, to define the territory of Palestine as Southern Syria (Suriya al-Janubiya), which had far-reaching implications to inhibit and obscure the Arab-Palestinian collective identity. This attempt occurred after the local elite had been made aware that Syria and Iraq, and probably other areas, had been promised independent governments, whereas Palestine was not covered by this policy because of the British commitment to Zionism. To circumvent the problem, the first congress of the Muslim-Christian Association (al-Jam'iya al-Islamiya al-Masihiya),²⁷ which took place in February 1919 in Jerusalem, decided that "our-area, Southern Syria or Palestine, will not be cut off from the independent Syrian Arab government,"²⁸ even though the Third Palestinian Congress, which convened in Haifa in December 1920, had already discarded the idea of Southern Syria and demanded that the British "set up a native government which would be responsible to a representative council, to be chosen

from the Arab population which had lived in Palestine until the beginning of the war, as had been done in Iraq and Trans-Jordan.”²⁹ Echoes of the Southern Syrian identity still reverberate within the local Arab population. This identity and the identity of indigenous Palestinian were not mutually exclusive; however, the former seems to have slowed the process of crystallizing the collectivity’s identity and its social and physical borders.

An additional illustration of the hypothesis is found in the riots that broke out in 1928 over the issue of rights over the Western Wall. Porath analyzes how, with the help of Muslim religious symbols, the Arab community could overcome its internal divisions to such an extent that it could be mobilized to actively oppose the Jews (“since secular nationalist slogans still did not reach their hearts”).³⁰ The phenomenon of the center mobilizing the periphery for activities previously unknown to them with the aid of traditional symbols and organizations is well known, especially in developing countries. In this case, the use of Muslim religious symbols signifies a redefinition of the Arab collectivity. Christian elements, which had been a significant part of the collectivity, were excluded from it. The price of mobilizing the periphery for the struggle against the Jews was the fragmentation of the collectivity.

Excluding Christianity was a constant problem for the Arab leadership. The Christians, who were usually better educated and more progressive than the Muslims, were one of the most active elements in the national reawakening and the Arab-Palestinian national crystallization. However, when mobilization of the periphery was necessary, it was also necessary to use Muslim symbols. There was an attempt to transform the annual festivities of the Prophet Musa (Moses) from popular and religious to national. Some of the symbols were explicitly directed against Christianity as a religion.³¹

The most extreme illustration is the Arab revolt of 1936–39. On the surface, it may appear that the revolt was the most impressive demonstration that the Arabs in the country were conscious of their collective identity, as a large part of the periphery mobilized for armed conflict with the immigrant Jewish society and the British colonial government; by then, the British Mandate was perceived as acting in the interests of the Jewish society. Yet the revolt, as characterized by Tom Bodwen,³² “was in essence made up of an integral set of smaller wars resulting in main from lack of a single, binding, political objective. . . . It was a racial, religious, colonial, class, familial and peasant struggle intermingled.” In 1936, before the outbreak of the Arab rebellion, the Jewish economy bought 3,657,000 Palestin-

ian pounds of goods and services from the Arab sector, about 11 percent of the sum of the Jewish economy's gross domestic product of 33.5 million pounds. The Jewish economy sold 1,108,000 pounds in goods and services to the non-Jewish sector, which included the Mandatory Government, constituting about 3 percent of the total domestic product of Palestine. In the same period, the Jewish economy imported about another 26 percent of its resources from the outside, and exported 8.3 percent of its goods and services.³³ It seems that Arabs depended on the Jewish economy more than did the Jews on the Arab economy. Most of the flow of capital into the Arab economy came from the Jewish economy. In 1936, before the rebellion, the Jews bought between 33 and 40 percent of Arab agricultural produce,³⁴ agriculture being the main sector of the Arab economy. It is not surprising that in the wake of the rebellion, the Arab economy collapsed as the Jewish economy flourished.

Yet the main weakness of the revolt was not its many often-contradictory motives, but rather some of its far-reaching results: The central leadership lost control over what was happening at the beginning of the armed revolt, which had been preceded by a general strike.³⁵ As a result, instead of strengthening the center in terms of political authority, symbol creation, and order, the revolt weakened it. Most of the mobilization of the periphery to participate in the collectivity by means of revolt was based on particularistic loyalties, mainly kinship.³⁶

Although mobilization of the periphery based on particularistic loyalties is often a useful and functional tool—industrialization in Japan was carried out in this manner—when the particularistic loyalties are in competition, sometimes to the point of active conflict, it is a symptom of social disintegration. That control of the conflict was in the hands of an organization yet not fully developed in effect contributed to social disintegration, rather than to crystallization, integration, and strengthening of the collective consciousness. Today there is almost full agreement that the collapse of Palestinian Arab society in the period of the revolt was a prelude to its military, economic, social, and moral defeat in 1947. Arab societies that had not faced the Jewish challenge were more successful in stabilizing their collective identities, except in Lebanon, where problems of a different nature developed. Thus, the concrete conflictual interaction in the political sphere affected the Palestinian Arab community in an unforeseen way.

In contrast, the conflictual interaction contributed to a process of crystallization and strengthened the political center of the Jewish society, as

most of its elements were mobilized for participation in waging the conflict, and were subjected to its authority despite its lack of sovereignty.³⁷ The very existence of a conflictual situation strengthened the position of predominance in the system of one element of the political scene—the left—in return for its assuming an active role in the conflict. The escalation of the conflict hastened the processes of segregation, mainly in the economic sphere, forcing the Jewish settlement not only to be autarchic, but gradually to become a more fully autarchic society even before it attained full political sovereignty.

Two main questions about model interaction in the political sphere can be raised. First, to what degree did the patterns of political activity of each collectivity serve as a model for the other? Second, to what degree did the developing organizational apparatus of each side serve as an example for imitation or rejection by the opposing side? In theory, the framework of British colonial rule greatly restricted freedom of political action and dictated the rules of the game. In practice, however, the two sides had wide margins in which to work, both inside and outside the British framework. Thus, the crystallization of patterns of action and organization specific to each side—that is, appropriate to its social system, political culture, and particular goals—was possible.

On the Jewish side, every act that was part of the process of nation building, especially the purchase of land, the founding of settlements, and the very act of immigration, was not only a political act, but one directed against the Arab Palestinian community, which is how the Arab side perceived them, considering even the Purim carnival that used to be held in Tel Aviv as a demonstration of power. The Arab side potentially had direct control only over the transfer of lands from Arab to Jewish ownership, but due to the weakness of the political center and its inability to efficiently oversee members of the collectivity, even this was not fully exploited.

During this period, in all spheres other than that of land, the Arabs were forced either to use the British government to prevent or slow down the processes of Jewish nation building, or to resort to violent behavior, which was illegal and dealt with accordingly by the British. As a result of their contradictory aims and their diverse objectives, even if we forget momentarily their different political cultures, it was almost impossible for either side to be a model for the other in the sphere of patterns of political activity. Despite this, there were several areas in which Jewish political activities were at least a partial model, which some in the Arab community tried to

copy. The attempt to convert economic power into political power, mainly through establishing the Arab National Fund (Sanduk-al-Uma al-Arabiya), almost completely copied the Jewish National Fund's methods of operation. The Arab National Fund was set up in 1931 with the support of the Supreme Muslim Council, and reestablished at the initiative of the Istiqlal Party in 1943. However, its success was only symbolic, as by 1946 it had raised only 150 pounds sterling and transferred to the *waqf*, the Islamic religious endowments, only about 15,000 *dunums* of land. By the beginning of the 1930s, the leadership of both sides were considering the idea that the solution to the conflict lay in the use of force.³⁸ An organized Jewish defense in the form of a semi-underground militia that came to be called the Haganah had existed for some time, though it was neither very active nor very efficient,³⁹ and its existence, structure, and activities were well known to the Arab side. The Arab community did not copy the Haganah's modes of operation, but the desire to establish armed forces that would operate deliberately rather than sporadically and by chance and was certainly influenced by the Jewish paramilitary organization. Arab paramilitary organizations were characterized by their regional nature, among other things, even though their members were drawn "from a class which until then had taken no part in nationalist political activity—villagers who for various reasons had left their villages and moved to the cities . . . [these] organization(s) provided them with the framework they so badly needed and with Muslim identity symbols with which they were familiar."⁴⁰

From the Arab point of view, the most problematic issue in the area of model interaction was the Arab social and political system's copying, partial or complete, of the central tool of Jewish political action, the Jewish Agency, and its methods of operation. On one hand, the Jewish Agency, whose authority was defined in the fourth chapter of the Mandate, was seen as a very efficient tool and worthy of imitation, as the Arab Executive Council was engaged in a constant battle to be recognized as a representative body for the entire Arab community in Palestine.⁴¹ On the other hand, the Jewish Agency's structure and modes of operation did not fit the political and social structure of the Arab system. The Arab leadership rejected the British offer in 1923, repeated with minor changes in 1937, to establish an Arab agency with a status completely analogous to that of the Jewish Agency, because the Arabs interpreted the offer as granting to the Jewish minority a status equal to that of the Arab majority, and as Arab agreement to establishing a political body on the basis of parity with the Jews,

rather than fulfillment of the Arab demand for independent rule.⁴² Thus the model problem was not how to copy a specific institution, such as the Jewish Agency or the National Council, but how to crystallize an effective political center, similar to the Jewish center, which would act with authority even when lacking sovereignty or an institution of self-government like those of the neighboring Arab countries.

Two bodies, the Supreme Muslim Council and the Arab Executive, competed for the position of political center, and both had intrinsic difficulties in fulfilling the task. The Executive not only lacked resources, but also, except for a short period, had difficulty compromising with the various sectors of Arab Palestinian society. Even the Supreme Muslim Council, which competed with the Executive, was unable to crystallize organizational tools and create symbols that could generate collective consciousness and activities that would cut across the internal fragmentation of Arab Palestinian society. The Supreme Muslim Council had resources to distribute—the rights to use *waqf* lands, offices, and budgetary allocations—but Haj Amin al-Hussayni's goal, paraphrasing David Ben-Gurion's saying that his goal was to turn "a class into a nation," was to turn "a family into a nation." Desire to achieve this goal forced a difficult dilemma on him. On one hand, to become a national leader for whom national interests came before particularistic loyalties, he had to allocate resources to traditional enemies, something he did in fact try to do from time to time, as in the appointment of al-Hatib al-Tamini as Mufti of Hebron. On the other hand, allocating resources to elements outside of his immediate bases of support threatened his standing within his own camp.

Several resourceful Jewish political leaders tried to exploit the situation of two organizations vying for leadership by pouring capital into the treasuries of both the Muslim Council and the Executive. The method succeeded best in the Agriculturist Party (1924–27), which was founded by rural sheiks in opposition to the urban elite, and which had massive Jewish support. The most serious problem of the Supreme Muslim Council, and the reason for its inability to lead all the Arabs of Palestine, was the fact that in essence it was a religious organization, thus excluding the most active element of the Arab national movement, the Christians.⁴³

The most interesting attempt to introduce modern political activity into the Palestinian Arab community began in 1932 with the founding of the Istiqlal (Liberty) party. Istiqlal did not necessarily choose its leaders from the traditional leadership, but from among educated professionals who in

many cases had received Western educations. The party solicited members on the basis of personal membership, as opposed to the ascriptivism that prevailed in the rest of the Arab social and political organizations; the latter drew members from either the educated class or the urban proletariat, which had broken away from traditional and familial obligations. Istiqlal also adopted a pan-Arab ideology, raising anew the idea that Palestine was “a natural and integral part of Syria” immediately after it was founded.⁴⁴ At the same time, it considered Jerusalem to be its headquarters, and one of its aims was to “raise the economic, social and political standards of the Palestinian Arabs.”⁴⁵

The second and relatively late modern political crystallization was the League of National Liberation, the Jqzbat al-Tahrur al-Vatani, which was basically a communist-nationalist party, though it did not publicly declare itself as such.⁴⁶ It began as a group of Christian intellectuals, mainly from the north and most of whom had belonged to the Palestinian Communist Party (PCP). This party is a most interesting phenomenon in the study of the development of the Jewish and Arab political systems: In practice, it was the only political framework within which Jews and Arabs worked together regularly over a long period of time, mainly between 1927 and 1944.

Primary Relations

There were many potential points of meeting between Jews and Arabs: Arabs and Jews lived in mixed cities, though mostly not in mixed neighborhoods; Arab workers, sometimes with their families, lived within or on the outskirts of some of the settlements; and both were subject to the framework of British colonial rule. There were sporadic attempts at joint enterprises, stressing mutual interests, but these were not significant in scope or weight. It is difficult to measure their scope statistically, but it appears that primary relations existed between Jews and Arabs mostly on the levels of individuals and families. Patterns of continuous friendship were not uncommon, some of them withstanding the pressures of the escalating political conflict between the two communities. Despite this, the relations between the two communities were very similarly exclusionary to relations between two castes. The main expression of the situation was and remains the almost total absence of intermarriage between the two communities.

While the Jewish immigration was not usually demographically balanced and there was a shortage of women, the Arab sector could not

supply this demand, mainly because of the severe restrictions placed on girls and women in traditional Muslim society. In the few mixed marriages that did take place, it was several Jewish women who married Arab men.⁴⁷ But the barriers were not only in one direction: the Jewish society, even the nontraditional elements in it, fiercely denounced mixed marriage. This prevented the generation of an ethnic stratum of a new and mixed people, as has happened in Latin America. Using the concept of social distance, we can conclude that on the concrete plane, relations of friendship, mainly on the personal or familial level, were common enough; there was a tendency toward ecological separation in the sense that there were two completely different social systems in operation; and there was almost total separation in the sphere of intermarriage. Neither side offered a model to which the other could relate positively in the sphere of model interaction of primary relations, and the primordial differences between the two populations perpetuated the social distances between them, increased the xenophobic tendencies that already existed on both sides, and remained an additional dimension of the conflict that grew and became more explicit, in addition to the dimension of cultural gaps.

The Connections Between the Spheres of Interaction

Three types of interrelated basic questions arise from the model presented here. The first type concerns the nature of possible changes in the kind of interaction in each sphere. The second concerns the kinds of linkages between the spheres. The third is related to the output of the system as a whole, as different answers can be given to questions about the interactions in the various spheres by the two partners. The three types of questions can also be broken down into a number of smaller questions. It appears that there are two basic types of interaction in each of the economic, cultural, religious, political, and primary-relations spheres: intensification of one of the modes of interaction (that is +, -, or o) within a particular sphere and transition from one mode of interaction to another (e.g., from "minus" to "plus" in the cultural-religious sphere, interpreted as transition from *Kulturkampf* to cooperation to the point of mutual or one-sided assimilation and the creation of a syncretic culture). For the second type of change, the following questions can be raised. Are such changes possible? If so, in which spheres can they occur and in which are they impossible? Keeping the sphere constant, is the transition from "plus" to "minus" easier or more

frequent than the opposite transition? Is the transition from “zero” to “plus” or “minus”—and the other way around—more frequent than from “minus” to “plus”—or the other way around—directly?⁴⁸

The linkages between the spheres raise further questions. Does the form of interaction in a given sphere, or changes in it, cause changes in the interaction in another sphere? Is spillover possible from sphere to sphere that affects the kind of interaction, or has any influence whatsoever on its intensity? If so, from which spheres can there be spillover? Can one of the modes of interaction (+, -, and o) be much more predominant than one or both of the other modes? Can the very existence of conflictual interaction in a certain area lead to identical interaction in the other spheres? Are certain combinations of a specific sphere of interaction with a specific mode of interaction more influential than others? Conflict in the sphere of the economy determines whether there will also be conflict in the other spheres, but exchange in the sphere of the economy does not influence what mode of interaction exists in the remaining spheres—just as hostile relations in the political sphere do not necessarily lead to conflict in the economic sphere.

The problem of linkages among the different spheres of interaction can also be put differently; we can ask to what degree there exist tendencies within the system to balance the modes of interaction among the different spheres, either by maintaining the same mode of interaction in all of them or by canceling the differentiation between the institutionalized areas. The question assumes that to relate to a partner differently in the various spheres—for example, to have economic cooperation together with political conflict—is to maintain an unbalanced situation, and that the system will aim to balance it. If this tendency exists, then out of the eighty-one possible profiles, the system will trend toward only three: cooperation, segregation, or conflict in each of the spheres.

The hypothesis above was that each of the partners in the interaction—the native population and the immigrants—try to answer, implicitly or explicitly, the question of what its relations with the opposite side should be like, in each of the spheres and perhaps generally. It was also assumed that these answers are not final, that they may be influenced by the answers given by the opposing side and sometimes by the actions of a third side, and that the output of the entire system is not necessarily identical to that of one or even both of the partners in the interaction. Here, some additional questions can be raised. What determines each side’s answers to the problems

arising from the very existence of the other side? How are one side's answers influenced by the answers given by the other? Is it relevant to suggest a hypothesis of symmetric aspirations—that is, if one side unambiguously tends to give a certain answer in a specific area, does the opposing side, over time, give the same answer? How do the changing power relations between the sides fit in? Is the choice of a certain answer⁴⁹ in effect an attempt to improve the power relations or the bargaining position of one side at the expense of the other side, even if the choice is to cooperate? Does a dominant strategy exist, that is, what game theory defines “a course of action which leads to the most preferred outcome regardless of what else may happen or what others may do?”⁵⁰ In the case before us, is it worthwhile for one of the sides to choose a strategy of cooperation in the economic sphere regardless of the answer that the other side chooses?

Of course, answers given about concrete interaction must be distinguished from those about model interaction, and all of the above questions must be asked about the mutual influences of concrete and model interactions. On the basis of one case study, it is impossible to give valid general answers concerning relations between immigrants and local native populations; generalizing would require a comparative study of different patterns of junction and types of societies, which was not an immediate goal of the conceptual framework within which this analysis was carried out. Still, partial answers at least can be given about the case of meetings between Jews and Arabs in the area defined as Eretz Israel by the Jews and Filastin by the Arabs, when the interaction is examined over a period of time. The period of time is an additional variable assuming that for whatever reasons, changes are taking place, whether in the strategy adopted by each of the sides or in the outputs of the system.

As a starting point for the analysis, an arbitrary model designates the modal profile of interactions between Jews and Arabs. The mode refers to the total amount of time in which a particular interaction was maintained by one side or another in a given sphere.

Table 1.2 presents a schematic summary of our hypotheses about the strategies adopted by each of the sides. The presentation is limited in not expressing the strength and scope of the interaction, which accounted for some of the most striking changes that took place. However, this limitation does not lessen the utility of using this interactional model. If the schematic representation reflects the normal (modal) situation of interaction between the Jews and the local Arabs up to 1947, then several conclusions follow.

Table 1.2

	Economic	Cultural	Political	Primary relations
Jewish strategy				
Concrete interaction	+	o	o	o
Model interaction	-	-	o	o
Arab strategy				
Concrete interaction	-	-	-	o
Model interaction	+	-	o	o
Output of the system				
Concrete interaction	+	-	-	o

The differentiation between the spheres, in the choice of a strategy for concrete interaction, the choice of the opposing side as a model (+) or a counter-model (-), or the choice of a strategy of not relating to the other side (o), is valid mainly on the Jewish side and as the output of the system, but the differentiation tends to be cancelled when there the strategy of conflict in the political sphere intensifies, usually on Arab initiative, as occurred in the period 1936–39. In general, as part of its management of the conflict, the Jewish system tended to choose a strategy of segregation in the political sphere while trying to insist that there was no conflict because of the asymmetry of the power relations. However, when the conflict in the political sphere intensified from the Arab side, there was a tendency to move toward a strategy of conflict in other areas, or at least to deepen segregation, especially those of culture and primary relations. Moreover, Arab intensification of conflict forced the Jewish side to adopt a strategy of conflict in the political sphere that it had wanted to avoid, moving the general output of the system toward segregation or conflict on the level of concrete interaction. From this it can be concluded that the political sphere to some degree predominated over the others.

It may be that the combination of a strategy of intensive conflict in the political sphere predominates; thus, if a certain side adopts this strategy, then the output of the entire system, whatever the strategy of the other side, is either conflict or some blend of conflict and segregation. In general, the strategy of conflict or segregation in any sphere is apparently stronger than cooperative strategy in that it determines the output of the system in some sphere. Also, it appears that the tendency to spill over from sphere to sphere is greater under intensive conflict than under cooperation.

It seems that most of the Jewish success from the time of the beginning of the Zionist settlement until the mid-1930s was both in dictating partial cooperation to the system in the economic sphere, despite the emerging Arab center's pressure and choosing conflict, and in preventing spillover of tendencies toward conflict from the political sphere (and others) to the economic sphere. This success resulted mainly from the Arab center's inability to control its members efficiently, but also from the hope, based on premises drawn from the theory of materialism popular in the Jewish sector, that partial cooperation in the economic sphere would create vested interests in leading or powerful strata of the Arab community, preventing the intensification of conflict in the political sphere as long as demographic power relations did not favor the Jews and at least some of the processes of Jewish nation-building that depended on economic exchange with the Arab community. However, either these interests were not strong enough, or else the spillover from the economic to the political sphere did not take place. In the political sphere the dominant Jewish strategy was exclusion and segregation, despite the aggressive nature of the dominant strategy and the output of the entire system. For the Jews, it was worthwhile to present a cooperative strategy in the political sphere because it moderated the total output of the system.

In the concrete interaction in the cultural sphere, there were also a number of changes during the period. At the beginning of the settlement, there was a tendency to adopt selectively cultural items—such as behavior, language, and buildings—from the Arabs, resulting from Jewish willingness for partial model interaction. With the arrival of British rule, this tendency weakened to the point of indifference. The other side, however, was not indifferent, and it tended to exploit cultural and religious differences to mobilize the periphery for the conflict against the Jews.⁵¹ There was a tendency to obscure the differentiation between the political and cultural spheres, especially in the area of religion. What characterized the interaction on the level of primary relations was the shared tendency toward separation in sensitive areas, such as living quarters and marriage, not necessarily connected to political relations between the two communities. Cultural and primordial differences were an part of the social structures of the two communities, and had as much effect as the conflicting political interests. Although from time to time there were changes in the strategies of interaction—mainly, the Arab strategies during the period of intensification of political conflict—it seems that there were no rapid or drastic changes in the system's

output, and so not only is there justification for presenting a model profile for the partners' interaction, but the profile even maintains relative stability throughout the period studied.

Another dimension of the relations between the two partners is the model interaction, referring to the degree of explicit or implicit willingness to imitate patterns of behavior, fully or partially, or to reject them as diabolical examples. The patterns of behavior referred to here are chosen from the repertoire of the behaviors of the other partner to the interaction. In other words, model interaction measures the degree to which the partner served, in a given sphere, as a model (+) or a counter-model (-) for imitation, or the collectivity's indifference to the presence of the other side. Here the strategy of each collectivity is identical to that of the entire system because each collectivity has complete control, independent of the other side, over its imitation or rejection of a model. The schema clearly shows that there is differentiation between the spheres and no constant relation between the concrete and the model interaction in a given sphere, except for the sphere of primary relations.

On the other hand, there is considerable correlation in three of the four spheres between the ways in which the collectivities related to each other. In the political sphere and that of primary relations, each collectivity was indifferent to the model that the other presented. In the cultural sphere, there was usually a negative and hostile approach to the partner's model, or more accurately, to the model as the other side perceived it. But in the economic sphere, while the Jewish side tended to reject the example of an undeveloped economy that the Arab system presented, the Arab side tended usually to accept, sometimes partially or with the restrictions imposed by its structure, the Jewish example. When intensification of the conflictual interaction in the political sphere was registered, there was not necessarily rejection, or more intense rejection, of the Jewish model. In the political and economic spheres, the approach of "to beat the Jews their methods must be imitated" was likely to be followed. Here there are hints of influence, but perhaps in a direction opposite to that expected.

It is very difficult to decide what the image of the Jewish society in the country would have been had Israel Zangwill's famous saying about the return "of a people without a land to a land without a people" corresponded to the real situation. Similarly, it is difficult to know exactly what the socio-political character of the Arab society in the country would have been without the Jewish immigrants, and without the geopolitics that the Mandate's

framework dictated as a result of its ambiguous commitment to Zionism. Posing these hypothetical questions has no utility anyway. As a temporary conclusion, we can say that it is quite surprising how marginal the mutual influences between the two collectivities were, despite the vigorous interaction between them. The contacts and disputes were usually more catalytic for, though they sometimes slowed down, processes that occurred within each of the systems. However, for the Arab side, the appearance and growth of the Jewish system had a more extreme final result, and the Arabs' perception of Zionism as standing in a zero-sum position to their national aims became, to a large degree, a self-fulfilling prophecy.