

Between Primordial and Civil Definitions of the Collective Identity

*Eretz Israel or the State of Israel?**

I

In 1974, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt investigated the nature of the Israeli collective identity with special regard to the extent of its Jewishness.¹ This issue gave rise to questions concerning Israel's links to Diaspora Jewish communities and its status in the Middle East in particular and the world in general. This article analyzes collective identity, separating it into its component factors, seeking its roots, and examining its main trends, indicating therein one of

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the central problems of Zionism. Our primary a priori assumption is that the various elements that constitute the Zionist movement, both ideological and social, render it impossible to avoid constant tensions within the Zionist collective identity. The prominence, intensity, and forms of the social and political expressions of these tensions have undergone constant change, especially because of the influence of three factors: the variable composition of the collectivity, the differing political strengths of its respective component groups, and changes in patterns of relations with the surrounding Arab environment.

The main ideological sources of the Zionist movement, which were partial sources of social recruitment as well, were fourfold: the Jewish religion, a variety of socialist ideals, secular nationalism, and finally, classic liberalism, which included certain elements of a capitalistic spirit. There is thus horizontal differentiation in the elements of the Jewish national movement. Vertical differentiation, the dilemma of every national movement, may be presented as a continuum of various degrees of particularism and universalism, essentially cutting across all four horizontal components. Within the religious component, it is easier to discern the predominance of particularism, whereas universalistic orientations flourished to some extent in the other components, depending upon the period considered. This is hardly surprising, as nationalism, including Jewish nationalism, is often defined as the attempt of a particularistic group, the nation, to integrate itself into the community of nations on an egalitarian basis.²

We therefore reformulate the sources of tension within the collective identity as, first, the tensions between universalistic and particularistic orientations within each of the four basic social components of the Zionist movement, and second, the tensions among the four components themselves. The tensions stem both from a desire to determine the characteristics of the collectivity, perhaps even exclusively, as well as from aspirations to determine the rules of the overall social game that would maximize control over economic resources—or the positions that determine their allocation—and political predominance. We begin by analyzing the contributions of each of these components to the Jewish national movement and its collective identity.

Religion

A 1939 Royal Institute of International Affairs report determined that “special historical circumstances caused the Jewish people to assume, at

an exceptionally early date, some of the characteristics which have since been associated most closely with the modern concept of a 'nation' and that these characteristics were preserved over the generations through an attachment to religion."³ Most theoreticians of nationalism consider it to be a modern phenomenon, rooted in the French Revolution and accompanied by processes of secularization and modernization, but one need not consider religion and nationalism to be rivals.⁴ We often find partial or total overlap between religion and national ideologies, nationalization of religion—as in the Anglican Church—or the imparting of a religious air to national movements.⁵ Nevertheless, though the Zionist movement embodied nationalist elements, it initially met with fierce opposition from many Orthodox Jews,⁶ and even tended to define itself as a revolution against the traditional communal life of Diaspora Jews.⁷ Most of the formulators and leaders of the Zionist ideology and movement overtly or covertly considered Jewish religious beliefs and the Jewish religious establishment not only a mighty political enemy, but also a factor complementary to anti-Semitism in determining the intolerable situation of the Jews in exile.⁸

In any event, the Jewish religion, knowingly and willingly or not, contributed several elements to the Zionist movement that were needed for its formulation and growth. First, it located the target country, Zion. No other objective or attempt for super-territorial definition of Jewish nationality⁹ had the mobilizing power of the Holy Land or the land of Zion and Jerusalem. Second, religious symbolism supplied the first key symbols of the Zionist movement, albeit selectively, skipping over the exile-like layers of Jewish religious creativity. Third, the religion supplied the common denominator of the Zionist collectivity in two dimensions, among various orientations and views (e.g., socialists versus liberals) and among people from various countries and cultures (first between Eastern and Western European cultures, and later between those from developed and developing countries), enabling the bridging of primordial gaps. Fourth, the social boundaries of the collectivity were determined by the Jewish religion. Fifth, the greater the prominence and severity of the Arab-Jewish conflict, the more the Jewish religion assumed a role within the Jewish collectivity as the primary mechanism for legitimizing the very existence of the collectivity as a political entity in the Middle East. It appears that religion was the principal solution to the problem of linking nation to land.¹⁰

Socialism

The various forms of socialism likewise extended beyond the concrete content and traditionally accepted roles of an ideological and even fundamental movement. First, the socialist component, as a social trend, contributed most of Zionism's human resources—from Eastern Europe—during the decisive, perhaps formative period between the second and fourth waves of immigration (1904–1929). The ideological components that the school contributed were no less significant. Second, the formation of a “new Jew” was demanded through fundamental change in the strata of the Jewish people, or at least those who realized the Zionist ideal. The concrete model for such a Jew was the *halutz*, or pioneer.¹¹ Third, the socialist component contributed the concept of immediate mobilization of masses of Jews, together with the imposition of individual responsibility, or “realization,” upon each one of them, but without such mobilization being contingent on political factors outside the control of the Zionist movement or the individual. There were no preconditions to realizing the immediate goal of realization. All that was required was a decision by an individual or a small group of comrades. Fourth, the adherents to the ideological trends contributed the system of building the Jewish nation, that is, of gathering political, social, economic, and territorial strength, long the hallmark of the Zionist method.¹² The efficacy of this system was proved primarily within a situation of nation-building, in a conflict-ridden context and without the unambiguous backing of a colonial power; during that time, colonialism was already on the wane and subsequently disappeared. Fifth, it is obvious that socialists added to the Zionist movement their own classical demands for social justice, egalitarianism, and a large measure of communalism, expressed primarily in the special social creations of the political movement, such as the kibbutz, the cooperative *moshav*, and the workers' society known as the Histadrut, a unique institution combining a trade union with cultural, economic, medical, defense, and other services for members and the collectivity—the class—at large.

Secular Nationalism

The secular nationalist component contributed the main conceptual system within which Zionism could operate, both among the Jewish people and within the framework of the international rules of the game formulated af-

ter the French Revolution. The Jewish religion undoubtedly included many nationalist components, yet it considered all attempts to translate national motivation into contemporary political concepts to be false messianism and a contravention of divine will.¹³ Socialism alone did not necessarily lead to national conclusions. Rather, the solution to the Jewish problem was considered a by-product of the better world for which it strived.¹⁴ Only the combination of the Jewish religion, socialism, and secular nationalism could provide the impetus for the Zionist movement, as well as the institutional skeleton for the Jewish political entity and its primary symbols.

Liberalism

The contribution of the liberal component to the Zionist movement and the formation of the Israeli collectivity is summed up in two important and interconnected contributions: introducing universalistic and humanistic dimensions to the components of the Zionist collectivity and influencing the determination of the international orientation and cultural model that the collectivity would adopt. The liberal component has always been a counterweight against the strong particularistic leanings of the nationalistic and religious elements, and its adjunction to socialism impelled those on the left wing within the collectivity, who predominated for about fifty years, toward moderate social democracy. The process was by no means free of struggles and problems, especially in the 1930s and the early 1950s, but it prevented reversion to Marxist radicalism and excessive identification with, and control by, the Soviet Union. The combination of liberal and secular national elements created a familiar version of nationalism, resembling that of Giuseppe Mazzini of Italy, Lajos Kossuth of Hungary, or Jan Masaryk of Czechoslovakia, who sought to link their respective nations to the broader collectivity of the international community without descending to romantic levels or extreme nationalism. Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism, undoubtedly adhered to this approach, which enabled modern Jews who had already undergone emancipation and secularized in previous generations to identify themselves, at least in part, with the Zionist movement. This identification led to their economic and political support for the movement. Taken to something of an extreme, the approach gave rise to the spiritual Zionism of Asher Ginsberg, known by his pen name of Ahad Haam.

The social weakness of the approach in Zionism perhaps stemmed from its compromising nature, and even more from the fact that it was primarily

the lot of Western European and later American Zionists, who were not an important part of the Zionist collective in Palestine. Zionism was perceived more as a rescue movement for persecuted Eastern Jews than as an imperative requiring immediate personal fulfillment. The Ezrahi¹⁵ sector in Palestine, at least up to the mid-1930s, was not characteristically representative of this approach. Afterward, as German and Central European Jews arrived in Palestine fleeing the rise of Nazism, this orientation, too, was institutionalized, albeit marginally so, within the collectivity.

The liberal approach counterbalanced extremism not so much because it introduced an element of universalism, but because it emphasized individualism against the strong collective demands and emphases of the three other components. Only an individualist orientation, anchored in the ideas of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Smith, and Mill, could form a collectivity comprising citizens for whom the collectivity exists, rather than people who exist for the collectivity. The basis of this conception is that the system, according to the definition provided by Robert Bellah,¹⁶ “can result from the actions of citizens motivated by self-interest alone when those actions are organized through the proper mechanisms.” Despite the political and social weakness of the groups that were supposed to represent the universalistic and individualistic ideologies within the system, such approaches were indeed appended to other components. We may assume that this is because of two factors. First, the system could not ignore Western Jews who integrated into the social, political, and cultural fabric of their native countries and whom the system required for its own legitimization. Or, as an Israeli publicist recently stated in a debate on the social-cultural portrait of the country, “We belong to a culture which was created by Heine, Freud and Einstein,”¹⁷ a list to which Marx’s name may undoubtedly be added. Second, when the collectivity is quantitatively small in number—and much more demographically vulnerable in light of the Arab-Jewish conflict—one could not forego the individual entirely; a fortiori, the concept of individual sacrifice upon the altar of grand collective ideals could not be developed to its logical conclusion. Rather, under such conditions, collectivism—national, socialist, and religious—must coexist with liberal individualism.

II

The delicate balance among the components of the Zionist and Israeli collective identity was upset or shifted due to a number of different but inter-

connected processes: the change in demographic makeup of the collectivity during the 1950s; the consequent changing role of religion, that is, an alteration in the place of the religious strata within the population, and religious symbols among national symbols; shifting patterns in the Israeli-Arab conflict, control of the core territory of Zion after 1967, and the desire to hold this territory, with all of the resulting problems;¹⁸ and finally, because of the preceding processes, the 1977 Israeli elections, which brought to power a political stream different from that which had shaped the collectivity's character continuously from the formative period up to that year.

We have already noted the importance of the religious component to the Zionist ideology and movement, and its status as a necessary though not sufficient condition for Zionism's very creation and existence. However, the religious components per se did not secure a central place for religion, especially not for the religious population and political parties, on the collectivity's political and social map, during either the British Mandate or the 1950s and early 1960s in the sovereign state of Israel. During that period, Orthodoxy had situated itself, but was considered by the system as remaining on the borderline or even outside the Zionist collectivity.¹⁹ Religious nationalism was included within the boundaries of the collectivity, but it was relatively peripheral in both political power and symbolic location. The system could use the symbols borrowed from religion with only a minimal need for legitimization from religious groups. Even if religious participation contributed somewhat to the character of the collectivity, it was very difficult for the religious sector to convert this contribution to centrality within the system. Religious Zionism was engaged primarily in gathering resources to maintain its strength within the system and prevent capitulation to the modern, secular society on one side and the Orthodox, non-Zionist subculture on the other.

The national religious sector therefore focused on preserving its existence and continuity, primarily through maintaining separate educational systems and endogamous patterns and ensuring minimum conditions for observant persons to participate in the Zionist collectivity and protect their religious identity (e.g., through observing Sabbath and Kashrut at public institutions and preserving the religious essence of marital laws). The religious legislation also led to a complex system of political and social exchange between the system and the religious sector known as the *status quo*.²⁰

From the early 1960s on, the location of the national religious stratum within the system changed, with the group constantly moving toward the

center of society. Orthodox non-Zionist groups also moved subsequently in the same way. Religious men attributed the cessation of desertion from these strata, whether toward the modern secular society or toward the ultra-Orthodox world, in part to the success of religious education and the religious youth movement. One of the key instruments attracting the religious sectors to the center was the increasing salience of the collective participation of religious youth in distinguished army units, which combined Jewish scholastic pursuits with military service. The decisive period, however, resulted from both religious and nonreligious Israelis meeting in the territories of Judea and Samaria taken in the 1967 war and the holy places situated there. Because of the disputes that arose both within the system and in international spheres regarding the right and feasibility of Israel's holding these territories, parts of the religious sector—especially the youth among them—were motivated to be active in the public debate, and later to settle in these territories, in a way creating facts that they assumed would put an end to opposition to Israel's holding the territories by forming a settlement network in the occupied territories. The dispute over the territories constituted both the reason and the means for the outright breaking of the previous rules of the game, in which the national and religious public, as a political power, forswore intervention in administering foreign policy.

Through the extra-parliamentary movement, Gush Emunim, which was created in the wake of the 1967 and 1973 wars, religious youth became a social and political vanguard that not only participated in determining collective objectives, but to a great extent attempted to determine them exclusively according to its own criteria, which conflicted with those of the majority of the political center itself.²¹

III

The centripetal movement of certain religious strata and even their centrality in the parts of society in which Edward Shills declares that social symbols are determined and interpreted and key decisions are taken was only an individual instance of a broader process—one that might be called a shift toward Judaism, as opposed to Israelism, in the collective identity.²² The first sign of this turning point occurred as early as 1957, when Jewish “heritage studies” were included in the secular national curriculum.

Although we cannot determine the practical significance of this decision, it is nonetheless a fact that when the collective identity of Jewish youth

in Israel was investigated at two points in time—1965 and 1974—there was a most significant tendency toward Jewish rather than Israeli identity. Israeli identity among Ashkenazi youth dropped from 50 to 41 percent and among Mizrahi youth from 30 to 24 percent. Among the Mizrahi youth who defined themselves as traditional (see below), Israeli identification dropped from 35 to 18 percent and Jewish identity rose from 30 to 44 percent. Among the group defining itself as nonreligious, Jewish identity rose from 4 to 14 percent among Ashkenazi youth and from 5 to 21 percent among their Mizrahi counterparts.²³ The increase in self-definition as Jewish and the drop in Israeli identification was consistent in all groups, even those who defined themselves as religious and had already indicated a high incidence of Jewish self-identity in 1965, when the original survey was conducted. An anthropologist who studied Jewish immigration from the United States to Israel found that such immigrants undergo a process of traditionalization, including adoption of a more Jewish collective identity.²⁴ From this, one could derive a more generalized hypothesis concerning the probability of traditionalization processes of other immigrant groups during their transition into Israeli society (or Eretz Israel) and absorption therein, as either a quality of the immigrants or a characteristic of the system, or both.²⁵

Moreover, it is very easy to prove that most residents are not nonreligious, even if they do not define themselves as religious. The religious population of Israel is customarily estimated at 15 percent; however, a series of findings by various researchers leads to a far more complex picture. In 1962, members of the Jewish population in Israel were asked if they maintained religious traditions. Fifteen percent responded that they observe all precepts scrupulously, 15 percent said they did so “to a great extent,” and 46 percent (!) considered themselves to be partly traditional. Only 24 percent defined themselves as “completely freethinking.”²⁶ In a 1979 study, other scholars distinguished between the dimensions of faith and religious observance; the Jewish religion stresses the second dimension because faith generally cannot be measured, evaluated, or controlled and is therefore considered less relevant.²⁷ Nevertheless, the findings on the status of faith indicate several additional features of the population: 36 percent of the population believed in the coming of the Messiah, 47 percent believed that there is something above nature that guides the history of the Jewish people, 56 percent believe that God gave the Torah to Moses at Mount Sinai, 57 percent believe that the Jews are the Chosen People, and 64 percent believe in God. An investigation of the degree of religious observance indicates that a much greater proportion of the

Israeli Jewish population observes religious precepts than is officially declared. Without exaggerating the meaning of these findings, we may conclude that the cumulative data indicate that Israeli society is far more religious or traditional than its public and self-image would seem to imply.

Another interesting macrosociological indicator corroborates the theory that Israel is a collectivity with religious tendencies. Secular circles in the country talk of religious coercion: there is no public transportation on the Sabbath and holidays in most parts of Israel; the religious code, imposed by official national sanction, bars people in many groups from marrying the partners of their choice; and other laws are considered to severely limit individual freedom, a lofty value in Western culture. However, all attempts to organize effective political pressure groups to oppose the laws have failed miserably, recruiting not even the small segments of the population that define themselves as secular.

The phenomenon of religious tendencies becomes even more prominent against the background of the success of religious groups in articulating their political demands, gathering strength within both Zionist and non-Zionist political parties, and integrating with the political-party map of Israel. These groups achieved virtually consistent and impressive success in determining the internal character of the state and acquiring political and economic strength for their constituencies. The structural reason for this success, rooted in Israel's political fragmentation and in the religious parties' role in tipping the electoral balance, only partially explains the phenomenon called "theo-politics"—namely, "attempts to attain theological ends by means of political activity."²⁸ However, it is easy to see that, in the past, in cases in which a large party had other alternatives, either from an ideological point of view (Mapam) or with respect to convenience in terms of political cost (Liberals), the party nonetheless opted for coalition with the religious groups.

Another proposed explanation for what could be called the religionization of the collectivity and the complex relations between religion and state or society is that it was accomplished through what Bellah has termed "civil religion,"²⁹ a system of syncretic values that draws its symbolism from both the traditional religious and the secular-national value systems, and which comes to accord overall significance to a social order and components thereof: "It places the collectivity at the center of its meaning system and transfers the ultimate authority from God to society. Even still, God appears as an actor in the cosmic order." However, even those who attempt to

explain the Israeli system of values in terms of civil religion admit that “Judaism and Jewishness were central components of all the civil religions [in Israel]. Jewishness is both the cause and the effect of Israel’s civil religion.”³⁰ If so, it is far more effective to consider the system and its components as exposed to a differential measure of traditional Jewish religiousness, in all its varied forms and expressions, coexisting with other, essentially secular ideologies and values. At different times and in different sectors of the system, they may complement one another, conflict, or coexist side by side.

IV

When Israel achieved independence, its population consisted predominantly of immigrants from Eastern Europe with small minorities from Central and Western Europe, Asia, and Africa. This population was primarily nonmodern and not entirely secular, even if it defined itself as such. A major portion of it had just begun to undergo processes of change. Despite this, most of its constituents maintained a modern, Western-oriented frame of reference. From 1949 on, mass immigration from Asian and African countries altered the demographic parameters of Israel’s population. Nevertheless, the social, political, and cultural predominance of the European-born immigrants, which effectively persists to this day, preserved the relative significance of all of the components in the collective identity. Change occurred in the Israeli collective identity only when Eastern immigrants accumulated political power and increasingly translated it into practical terms during the penetration into the core areas of the country (i.e., Judea and Samaria), but an open struggle erupted over the very character of this identity.

In their countries of origin, Asian and African immigrants had already been exposed to processes of modernization and change. Immigrants from Yemen, who began arriving in Palestine as early as 1882—simultaneous with but virtually unrelated to the first *aliya*—became the prototype of purely religious immigration, free of all modern “isms.”³¹ This immigration in particular indicates that the Jewish religion alone, free of all political considerations and alien constraints, possesses most of the key elements of Zionism,³² albeit without the demand or ability to establish and maintain a modern state.

Barring acceptance of the modern elements of socialism, communism, and liberalism, the approach closest in content to the Jewish religion is that of modern nationalism. Judaism is predisposed toward nationalism and

includes several important elements of it, thus contrasting somewhat with Christianity and Islam. The first Zionist-movement branch, in which the right-wing Revisionists led by Zeev Jabotinsky won an absolute and consistent majority as early as 1928, was that of Tunis. This occurred in the wake of the publication of a series of articles by Jabotinsky in the local paper *Le Reveil Juif*. As Abitbol relates, “The sharpness of thought, the nationalistic phraseology, the frequent references to Mediterranean ‘blood’ and Spanish *hidalguia* which were characteristic of Jabotinsky’s articles, and his warm letters to his sympathizers, captured the hearts of the Tunisian Zionists.”³³

We may characterize the trend as ostensibly a semantic change in the definition of the collectivity from the State of Israel—the official name since the declaration of independence in 1948—to Eretz Israel, the Land of Israel. This change was not accomplished in a formal manner, as the official title of the collectivity remained the State of Israel. However, from the time of the 1977 change in government, Israeli leaders began to utilize the concept of Eretz Israel for two principal reasons: first, to demarcate the new physical boundaries of the collectivity—a return, that is, to the borders of Mandatory Palestine, which included Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip—and second, to define, though not always in a manifest, conscious manner, the collectivity’s identity as Eretz Israel, indicating a desire to change the image of Israeli society from one with a basic character rooted in civility to a moral community based on primordial symbols and ties, as described by Shills and Geertz,³⁴ in which several rules of the game are altered. These rules are evident in the Jewish religious codex, the *halacha*. The State of Israel is a modern concept with no religious connotation or status whatsoever, at least for certain sectors of the population. But a collective identity defined as Eretz Israel entails an entire system of religious precepts that dictate specific behavioral patterns and attitudes.

Transforming the two alternative definitions of the collectivity into ideal types (see Table 4.1), in the sense used by Max Weber, we may discern the main differences between them. In the State of Israel—hereinafter referred to as Israel—social boundaries are determined by citizenship. Israel was indeed established to be a Jewish nation-state, the fundamental objective of the Zionist movement. Yet there is room for non-Jewish minorities with equal rights and obligations. In Eretz Israel, in which the basic definition of membership in the collectivity is kinship rather than citizenship, “sojourners” or “strangers within our midst” (*gerim*) are conceivable, but their status cannot be equivalent to that of the Jews. This definition of membership

implies that Judaism is a necessary and sufficient condition for belonging to the Eretz Israel collectivity, whereas membership in Israel is a mixture of ascriptivity, as in all countries, conditioned by a balance of obligations and privileges of the citizen toward the state and vice versa.

In Israel, the placement of an individual or social group is a function primarily of the importance of the social functions fulfilled by the person or group in building and developing the nation, as well as of the rarity of the person's or group's abilities. In Eretz Israel, this matter is approached ambivalently. On one hand, considering the Shilsian center-periphery continuum, the collectivity may be defined as a society without a periphery.³⁵ All are Jews and all are in the center; the periphery relates to non-Jews, who are considered an out-group. On the other hand, the more Jewish a group is considered to be—and in this context, Jewishness implies religiousness, traditionalism, or a combination of the two—the more central is its placement. As traditionalism partially overlaps with ethnic origins, it appears that Eretz Israel compensates the ethnic groups, who are more marginally situated in Israel, with a greater feeling of centrality and partnership in the collectivity, contrasting with or ignoring the traditionally elite strata.

The situation also affects the quality of relations between the individual and the collectivity. In Eretz Israel, there is an increased demand for the individual's unqualified, or at least verbally unqualified, affinity for the collectivity. The political center identifies itself with the entire collectivity and its welfare, developing a paternalistic approach and lowering the threshold of tolerance of opinions and behavior patterns defined as deviant. There is a tendency to institutionalize more direct relations between the political center and the people, weakening the secondary groups and discrediting other mediating systems, such as the mass media.

In the original model of Israel, there was an outstanding attempt to synthesize the various components of the Zionist movement in drawing up the formal rules of the game—that is, in designing the constitution or legal system.³⁶ As a Jewish state, Israel enacted the marital laws of the Jewish sector of the population, as under the Mandate, based on religious decisions determined in accordance with *halacha*. In other areas, the parliament enacted civil legislation, generally guided by modern Western rationalistic and universalistic norms but accounting for the spirit and decisions of Jewish law wherever possible. Eretz Israel seeks to subject all aspects of life to *halacha*, thus posing a formidable challenge to its proponents, who are not faced within the framework of the civil State of Israel, in which *halacha*

Table 4.1

Definition component	State of Israel	Eretz Israel
Physical boundaries	1949 ceasefire lines, plus East Jerusalem and other territory obtained through negotiations. All Israeli citizens.	Divinely promised borders (alternatively: the boundaries of Mandatory Palestine).
Social boundaries	All Israeli citizens.	All Jews in Israel and throughout the world.
Conditions of membership	Dependent upon the balance of citizens' rights and obligations toward the state.	Judaism as a necessary and sufficient condition for membership.
Quality of relations between individual and collectivity	Dependent upon reciprocal relations between the individual and the collectivity. The individual is recruited for ad hoc collective missions (such as military service) and the collectivity assumes concern for his welfare.	Relations resembling unconditional kinship. Blurring of differences between society and the individual, with diffuse mobilization of members of the collectivity.
Quality of relations among members of the collectivity	Reciprocal relations among citizens enjoying equal rights and responsibilities.	Tendency toward relations on the basis of primordial ties. Unconditional but not necessarily egalitarian bonds, emphasizing common destiny.
Determination of place within the system	Determined according to functional importance to the collective and contribution to building the nation (primarily mediated by number of years in the country, education, and ethnic origin). Modern parliamentary laws based upon the Napoleonic Code and guided by contemporary Western criteria.	The extent of Jewishness, whether in traditional religious or patriotic terms or a combination of the two.

Table 4.1 (continued)

Definition component	State of Israel	Eretz Israel
Law	Modern parliamentary laws based upon the Napoleonic Code and guided by contemporary Western criteria.	<i>Halacha</i> , with minimal adaptation to contemporary technological conditions.
Perceptions of relations with the outside world	Cooperation or conflict in accordance with the respective interests of either side and controlled by weak international norms.	Within the accepted frame of reference demanded in relations between Jews and non-Jews (likewise rooted in <i>halacha</i> to some extent). Ethnocentricity and particularism as essential guidelines for determining the rules of the game.

is only quasi-legal: how to base an essentially modern state on a code of laws formulated within a millenia-old social, political, economic, and technological context. The problem is further complicated by the general Orthodox consensus—in contrast to the Reform Jewish trend that developed in the United States—that far-reaching changes cannot be instituted in the codex, which is totalistic in nature and pertains to all aspects of life.³⁷

*Comparing the Two Ideal Definitions of the Collectivity:
State of Israel Versus Eretz Israel*

Relations among members of the Israel collectivity are reciprocal, with citizens enjoying equal rights and obligations. In Eretz Israel, relations resemble kinship and tend to be primordial. Ties are unconditional, albeit not necessarily egalitarian. Potential tensions resulting from differential allocation of social resources, which continue to partially overlap with ethnic origins, are likely to lose their significance with emphasis on common Jewish destiny and identity, even if Jewishness is interpreted differently in each segment of society. The argument is not that Judaism is predominantly a tribal brotherhood, contrasting with the modern Protestant “otherhood,” as presented by Cuddihy.³⁸ Like other great traditions, Judaism includes numerous universalistic and civilian components alongside its particularistic and tribal elements. This dualistic spirit presents a problem as to which orientation predominates in response to a given situation. At present, there appears to be a rise in the tendency toward tribalizing and demodernizing the system, supported by selected components and symbols of tribal Judaism that reject the Western *zweckrationalitat*, or purposive rationality. This is precisely the result of a fusion between religion and politics that aimed to recruit internal political support for the government from the more traditional and nationalistic strata, and legitimize control over the territories of Judea and Samaria, taken in the 1967 war.

Finally, the two ideal types maintain different conceptions of relations with the outside world. In the Israeli model, the collectivity is active within a global system, in which relations among the various actors are characterized by varying degrees of cooperation and conflict according to a particular issue, and motivated and subject to change according to respective interests and governed by weak international norms. The Eretz Israel *Weltanschauung* is entirely different: The world is divided into “we” and “they,” or Jews versus everyone else. This conception transfers the traditional, natural

Diaspora view of relations between Jews and non-Jews to the situation of a sovereign Jewish state. Such Judeocentricity also includes partially rejecting the Western world, a factor further reinforced by the Holocaust, which constitutes a central motif in the system of collective symbols. It is claimed that because the Jews were the central victims of the Holocaust, the “others”—primarily the Western world—who were active or passive partners therein have no right to dictate any rules of the game perceived as contrary to Jewish interests. Nevertheless, the collective is still considered to be more closely aligned to the modern Western world, albeit in a limited and conditional manner, than to any other broad frame of reference.

V

Just as the State of Israel is geographically located within Eretz Israel, so too is the latter socially and politically situated within the former. The two concepts are not always necessarily in a zero-sum situation, as emphasized by Geertz:

Primordial and civil sentiments are not ranged in direct and implicitly evolutionary opposition to one another in the manner of so many of the theoretical dichotomies of classical sociology. . . . Their marked tendency to interfere with one another stems not from any irrevocable antipathy between them but rather from dislocations arising from the differing patterns of change intrinsic to each of them.³⁹

Tensions among the various components of the identity of the Zionist collectivity were thus always built into the movement itself. It was agreed in principle that certain decisions regarding the ultimate content and image of the collectivity would be postponed for the future, whereas mighty differential struggles would be waged over the remaining issues. Until 1977, despite major demographic changes, there were no significant fluctuations in the relative values of these components within the collective identity. In this respect, we note wide gaps between the orientations formulated and represented by elites with relatively universalistic and civil conceptions of the collectivity and those of considerable sections of the periphery, which tended to be more particularistic and Jewish. The new decision-making political elite thus converged somewhat with the periphery, but diverged from other centrist components in Israeli society.

The differences among the various centrist components underscore tensions in the collective identity to a greater extent than do the gaps between the center and the periphery, which are more empirically acceptable and statistically widespread. Cleavages within the political elite that spill over to the periphery may intensify tensions among various elements and create situations of greater societal fluidity than are generally induced by center-versus-periphery differences. While the Israeli collectivity has not yet institutionalized a polycentric society, several of the characteristics and results of such societies may already be discerned. It is therefore hardly surprising that some of the groups that brought the new political elite to power, and which identify with its Eretz Israel orientations, continue to feel that they are in the opposition, owing to the prominent divergences between the political center and the other elites and within the political center itself. On the other hand, the increasing shift toward Eretz Israel intensified feelings of belonging among the non-Zionist groups, such as Agudat Israel or the recently crystallized Torah Observant Sephardim party, as the increase in the extent of Jewishness rendered the system more familiar. As indicated earlier, Eretz Israel is a *halachic*-religious entity, whereas the State of Israel is not.⁴⁰ This situation impelled the non-Jewish components of the system even further toward the periphery and further intensified the conflict between the Jewish system and Arab residents of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.

The shift toward a more Eretz Israel-type definition of relations between the collectivity and the Diaspora is similarly ambivalent. Intensifying particularistic factors within the system, which entails a more power-oriented policy toward the surrounding Arab environment, may deter certain sectors of world Jewish intelligentsia, known for their universalistic approach, from supporting the collectivity and immigrating to Israel. In contrast, as Avruch has shown, other sectors may well be attracted to a more family-like and Jewish collectivity and its primordial symbols.⁴¹ From this point of view, the increasing tendency toward the Eretz Israel type is likely to influence differential selection of immigration to and possibly emigration from the collectivity. Such migration, in turn, may further reinforce tendencies toward more primordial definitions of collective identity.

VI

Tensions among the various components of the collectivity, resulting from differing sources of collective identity and motivation for immigration, will

apparently persist, as it is difficult to conceive of an unequivocal choice between the two types. Nevertheless, the relative weight of the collective identity's different components may change due to three factors: internal processes, such as the continued accumulation and practical application of political power by the offspring of Eastern immigrants, increases in overall educational levels, and accelerated ethnic intermarriage rates; economic and external developments, that is, control of the occupied territories, which depends not upon Israel alone, but rather a complex of external factors, developments in the world economy, and the energy crisis, among other issues; and the scope and nature of immigration to and emigration from Israel. Such changes have already taken place several times in the past.

The tensions among the components of the collective identity are expressed in the system's ever-present political, social, cultural, and even economic struggles, such as the struggle over the choice of an economic model to be adopted by the system and consequent allocation of resources. The tensions are translated concretely into Israeli society's familiar foci of conflict: religious and non-religious, hawks and doves regarding the occupied territories, Askenazim and Sephardim, Jews and Arabs, the haves and have-nots, and so on. However, the confrontation between the Israel and Eretz Israel approaches is no longer a part of this series. Rather, it has become a sort of meta-game, determining the rules according to which concrete struggles are to be waged; the nature of collectivity relations with the Jewish world, the world at large, and among themselves; and the location and significance of the collectivity within the cosmic order. Is Israel a nation like all other nations—toward which some sectors of Zionism strived? Or are Israelis the Chosen People, and if so, what is the operative significance of such an identity—ethnocentricity or universality? The struggle between these two spirits—the spirit of Israel and the spirit of Eretz Israel—has in no way been resolved; the pendulum continues to swing between them. Apparently, as one spirit becomes more salient, it stimulates a reaction in the other.⁴²