

# **The Kibbutz for Organizational Behavior**

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*“Of the successful communes that are not cemented by loyalty to a ruling God, the Israeli kibbutz is perhaps the most influential and long-lived.”* (Tiger and Shepher, 1975, preface).

As much as any twentieth-century organizational form, the kibbutz has captured the imagination and attention of the public and the research community. Countless books, papers and theses in fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, political science, and education have focused on the kibbutz. Volunteering on a kibbutz has been a rite of passage for tens of thousands of young people, Jews and Gentiles, from around the globe. The political, military, and economic history of Israel has, at least until recently, given a starring role to the kibbutz. Even today, when a common perception is that the kibbutz has been marginalized, the organizational form still receives significant coverage from the world’s major newspapers (see, for example, the front-page article in the New York Times, April 18, 1998).

Given all of the analysis of this organizational form, the question we address in this paper is natural: What can be learned from the kibbutz about organizations and behavior within them? Yet, most kibbutz researchers have not only failed to answer this question, but have acted as though it were illegitimate. These researchers, who were often also kibbutz members, have emphasized the idiosyncrasy of kibbutz experience instead of the possibility of generalizing from the kibbutz to other organizational forms. They have characterized the kibbutz as a unique social artifact to be analyzed on its own terms, rather than as a type of organization. In contrast, we take the position that there can be real gains to organization science by thinking about kibbutzim (plural) as ‘normal’, at least in the sense of demonstrating the operation of some structures,

processes and practices, which in different degrees and combinations, are relevant to other organizations.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time we try to generalize from the kibbutz to other organizations, we give full recognition to the ways that kibbutzim are different from other organizations. Indeed, it is these differences that account for the public and scholarly interest in kibbutzim, and which create the unusual conditions that make kibbutz experience so valuable as a laboratory for organization science. The fundamental differences between kibbutzim and many other organizations, particularly the American organizations that are the focus of so much organizational research, flow from the utopian-socialist ideology of the kibbutzim. Utopianism fascinates the Western world as a response to the fundamental tension of modernity, that between merit and equality (Ben-Rafael, 1997). Reference to utopia is fed by the common criticism that Western society sacrifices too much equality in the interest of progress. The kibbutz may be the finest example for those who claim a better balance can be struck between equality and progress. Against what is perceived as the natural tendency of communes and collectives towards oligarchy, kibbutzim have maintained a very-high level of direct democracy for decades. The case for the kibbutz is also strong on the criteria of progress. The feasible comparisons show that kibbutzim are more productive than the organizational forms they compete with. The record of kibbutzim for both innovation and adaptation to technological change is good. The evidence for human development is similarly impressive, with kibbutz members being over-represented in parliament and the elite units of the army, and (in some research) scoring better than the non-kibbutz population of Israel in tests of intellectual ability.

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<sup>1</sup> Etzioni (1980: 45) motivates his classic study of the kibbutz with a similar point, that despite some unique characteristics, analysis of the kibbutz is of generic interest. Rosner (1980a: 286)

For scholars of organization, society's general interest in utopianism should be magnified, because that ideology gives the most prominent role to organizations. In capitalism the primary mechanism of control is the market and in scientific socialism it is the state, but in utopianism, organizations serve this role. New utopians such as Jones, (1982) echo the old anarchist model of an institutional structure absent a central government, with cooperative organizations as the bedrock of social order. The kibbutz illustrates this fundamental role of organization: the kibbutz life, from cradle to grave, is the organized life. The influence of kibbutzim on their members has traditionally been "total" in that the scope of the organization encompasses all aspects of life. The extensiveness of organizational influence on the kibbutz represents part of the unique contribution of kibbutz experience to organizational behavior. We are aware of no other context where there has been so much systematic experimentation with the extension of organization into areas of life traditionally governed by other institutions. Cooking and eating, leisure, child-rearing, and even power relations between the sexes have at times been within the scope of these organizations. The scope of organizational influence on the kibbutz shows organizational behavior applied to new tasks, and provides an unusual manipulation of some of the things that affect commitment and identification to the organization. It also provides a fresh look at, for example, work groups. A work group on the kibbutz may consist of members who have known each other all their lives, and who have extensive opportunities for interaction outside of work.

Ideology also conditioned the relationships between kibbutzim and their environment. Throughout their history, kibbutzim have operated in a mixed economy, which contained powerful organizational forms representing capitalist and utopian ideologies. As a result, there

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describes a general failure, even in Israel, to learn from the kibbutz, and gives a fuller account of

were competing ideological influences on the participants and potential participants of kibbutzim, and kibbutzim therefore made significant efforts at individual socialization. Their efforts in this regard are informative of the potential of organizations to affect individual ideology. Similarly, ideology was salient in kibbutzim interorganizational relations, with organizations representing rival ideologies often operating to discourage or change kibbutzim, while organizations sympathetic to utopianism operated to help them. These processes had implication for the internal operations of kibbutzim, but also for the dynamics of ideological belief and practice in the wider society. Kibbutz research therefore provides a rare opportunity to see the role of formal organizations in the rise and fall of ideologies.

In sum, the public and researchers have found kibbutzim interesting because of their utopian ideology, which has three implications that make kibbutzim fertile ground for discovering certain things about organizations. First, the ideology recommends a set of practices designed to achieve participant equality. These practices demonstrate the organizational effect of extreme levels of features, like job rotation and equal pay, that exist to some extent in many other organizations. Second, the ideology makes organization the preeminent mechanism of social control, extending the scope of organization to new domains and creating organizations that approach completeness in their influence on their members. Third, the ideology was in conflict with others in the relevant environment, creating the variance necessary to identify the role of ideology in organization-environment relationships.

The rest of this paper describes research on the kibbutz and draws conclusions about what that research says about organizations broadly. Reflecting our assertion that there are gains from treating the kibbutz as a 'normal' organization, we structure our review of kibbutz research using

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the assumptions that cause kibbutz experience to be categorized as unique and idiosyncratic.

an open systems model of the type that will be familiar to all organizational researchers. We begin inside the organization, addressing first the research on kibbutz structure, and then research on kibbutz work. Then we consider the community maintenance issues of kibbutz organization. Finally we move outside the organization to consider kibbutz-environment relationships and then we consider the interdependence of the internal organization and the environment by analyzing the kibbutz experience of organizational change. Before tackling the organizational research on kibbutzim, however, we briefly describe the organizational form and its history.

### **Kibbutz Description and History**

The first kibbutz, Degania on the shores of Lake Galilee, was established in 1910 by immigrants from Germany, Poland, Galitzia and Russia. It was among a number of organizational forms that contended to address the challenges faced by Jewish immigrants to Palestine, namely the needs to develop the capacity to perform manual work, to find work, and to make some meaningful claim on the land. Degania was unique among the alternative organizational forms because it combined these characteristics: communal production and consumption, a system of communal child-care, and permanence in population and in location on land owned by the Jewish National Fund. Its emergence as an archetype for settlement is attributable to practical and ideological factors. Degania was an initial economic success, turning a small profit in its earliest years, in contrast with the typical experience of Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine. It did so while reflecting basic ideological tenets of the “conquest of labor”, which had come to be shared by much of the Jewish population of Palestine. The first component of the conquest of labor was the “Religion of Work” philosophy promoted by A.D. Gordon, which held that physical labor

was a form of art and that moral elevation through work required the full attention of a worker who was free from hierarchical supervision. The second component was the belief that only by working the land themselves could Jews develop a moral claim on the land of Palestine. These tenets constrained the Jew to be “neither the exploited nor the exploiter” (Gordon, 1938: 63).

After Degania took root, the population of kibbutzim grew in fits and starts, often as a function of immigration, war, and other major events in Palestine. Figure 1 displays the number of kibbutzim, and the total population of the kibbutz movement over time. The figure indicates that the growth of the kibbutz movement is disjointed, with growth much steeper before 1950 than after. We have argued that this pattern of growth reflects the role of kibbutzim for the generation of public order. Before 1948, kibbutzim played key roles in the absorption of immigrants and the defense of the Jewish population of Palestine. After 1950, the new Israeli State assumed these roles, undermining part of the motivation for the existence and growth of the kibbutz movement (Simons and Ingram, 1999). Still, it is notable that there is growth in both number and population of kibbutzim in the fifty years of the Israeli state. In the context of recent discourse that the kibbutz movement is declining it is important to recognize that even in the last fifteen years, the number and population of kibbutzim have been stable. The figure may, however, mask a decline in the *relative* significance of the kibbutz to Israeli society and economy. At the founding of the State in May 1948, kibbutzim accounted for about eight percent of the Jewish population of Israel; in 1997 they accounted for only two percent (Near, 1997, Appendix 2).

### **Figure 1 about here**

A set of organizing practices, derived from ideology, delineate the boundaries of the kibbutz as an organizational form. Kibbutzim differ from other cooperative enterprises in Israel

by their permanence of place and population, and from other rural settlements by their degree of communalism. All kibbutzim are permanent settlements, existing on land leased from the Jewish National Fund. Traditionally they all had common ownership and democratic management of financial affairs, communal consumption and child care, and a centralized labor allocation system, which emphasized job-rotation and the reliance on member (as opposed to hired) labor. Over time some of these practices have been relaxed. Starting in the 1950's many kibbutzim began to rely increasingly on hired labor, and the practice is now seldom questioned. In the 1970's there was a rapid move away from communal child-care to conventional family units on the kibbutz. As the economic activities of kibbutzim have diversified, particularly over the last three decades, there has been a transition from job-rotation to specialization of labor. Currently, some kibbutzim are altering their communality by giving families budgets to spend at their discretion on items such as food, clothing and entertainment.

With the exception of the most current changes in communality, which are still unfolding, the moves away from the traditional kibbutz can be seen as an evolution in the legitimated idea of what a kibbutz is, rather than fundamental disagreements which create different classes of kibbutzim. On other important ideological issues there were persistent splits among kibbutzim, and positions on these issues formed the basis for the grouping of kibbutzim into a number of political federations. The major questions had to do with the optimal size of a kibbutz, the appropriate economic activities, how tradeoffs between Zionism and socialism should be made, and to a lesser extent, what role Judaism should have on the kibbutz. Based on their positions on these questions, kibbutzim organized into four major federations which are described in Table 1.

**Table 1 about here**

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

*“Kibbutz rationality as far as the management of its economy is concerned, applies only within the framework set by other, higher values.”* Etzioni (1980: 74)

We take two general lessons of organizational structure from research on the kibbutz. The first is that ideology creates a blueprint for organizing, such that ideological principles manifest themselves in organizational structures. The kibbutz serves to illustrate this general claim because its ideology is different from that of the capitalist organizations whose structures are most often studied. This difference highlights the ideological underpinnings of kibbutz structure, and provides the necessary variance to consider the more general effect of ideology on structure. The second lesson is on the necessity and interdependence of what Etzioni (1980) called the instrumental and expressive components of organization. Again, it is kibbutz ideology that facilitates studying this idea, but here it is not the uncommonness of kibbutz ideology, but a particular feature, its emphasis on expressive organizational components, that creates opportunities for scholarship. The interdependence of instrumental and expressive components of an organization affects the available options for organizational control, and thereby performance.

### **Ideology as an Influence on Structure**

Our definition of ideology is not atypical, but now is the time to make it explicit. Ideology is “...a set of beliefs about the social world and how it operates, containing statements about the rightness of certain social arrangements and what actions would be undertaken in the light of those statements (Wilson, 1973: 91-92).” Ideology then, is both a cognitive map of sets of expectations and a scale of values in which standards and imperatives are proclaimed. It serves

both as a clue to understanding and as a guide to action, developing in the minds of its adherents an image of the process by which desired changes can best be achieved

The definition of ideology suggests that actors will pursue the ends their ideology values using means derived from their ideology. In this way, ideologies provide a set of first-order principles for organizational design. Ideologies held by the designers of organizations are the primary source of the goals those designers have for their organizations. Ideologies also suggest which organizational configurations will be effective in attaining these goals. So, before other influences and considerations, ideology provides a blueprint for organization. We developed and illustrated this argument with reference to the kibbutz practice of reliance only on the labor of members (Simons and Ingram, 1997). Self-labor may be economically efficient in industries, such as transportation, where the supervision of hired labor is difficult (Russell, 1985). However, theoretical analysis (Izraeli and Groll, 1981), and empirical analysis at the level of the kibbutz population (Barkai, 1977) and the individual kibbutz (Ingram and Simons, 1999) all indicate that this practice was inefficient on the kibbutz. Self-labor on the kibbutz cannot be justified in objective efficiency terms, and indeed, this was never an argument for the practice. Rather, the practice was justified as a mechanism for achieving kibbutz members' ideological goals of self-actualization through work and avoiding the exploitation of others.

Etzioni (1980), in the classic study of kibbutz organizational structure, also identifies ideology as a fundamental influence on structure: "The very extensive commitment of the kibbutz to an elaborate set of values is a source of many organizational activities (60)." He begins by analyzing the effect of the ideological value of equality of consumption to create the need for centralized organizational activity, and standardization. In a market society, individuals manage their own consumption, and money acts as the control. In the traditional kibbutz,

members had almost no money, with the kibbutz fulfilling their needs for consumption. This necessitates a set of centralized organizational activities, to coordinate supply and demand of consumables, and manage their physical distribution. Kibbutzim also introduced the bureaucratic device of standardization to simplify the allocation of consumer goods, for example a rule that every male member will receive two work shirts each year. In evidence of the dynamic relationship between ideology and structure, Etzioni observed during his multi-year research a relaxation of kibbutzim's ideological commitment to equality of consumption and a corresponding simplification of the elements of organizational structure that managed consumption and distribution.

A variant on the claim that ideology provides a blueprint for organization is that rather than always leading action, ideology sometimes follows it, arising as a justification for previous behaviors (Perrow, 1986). The experience of kibbutzim is again suggestive in this regard. For example, hired labor has gradually increased and is now used by most kibbutzim, often extensively. Still, even though hired labor has been common for decades, kibbutz ideology has not shifted sufficiently that the practice is legitimate in the same way it is for capitalist organizations. Kibbutzim may express their ideological unease with the practices they adopt by modifying them to be less ideologically offensive. For hired labor, this typically means making concessions to employees with a goal of moderating what is seen as the exploitive nature of the employment relationship. Etzioni (1980) describes a kibbutz that needed hired labor to harvest an overproduction of peanuts, and divided all of the resultant profits among the employees, paying them two-and-a-half times the market rate for their labor. Our own interviews on a kibbutz which is viewed as being on the frontier of the trend to capitalist organizing principles revealed that even there, workers were paid more than the market rate, and given generous

benefits.<sup>2</sup> The self-conscious employment of labor supports Saltman's (1983: 126) claim that on the kibbutz, "the pragmatic needs of the time have been constantly measured against the yardstick of ideological positions, and the latter have tended to adapt to the requirements of the former without radically changing its basic premise."

### **Instrumental and Expressive Components of Organization**

Etzioni's (1980) analysis of kibbutz structure was based on a functional model he adapted from Parsons. Like Parsons, Etzioni identifies four functions that successful social systems must perform. The functions are performed by two categories of organizational sub-systems, the instrumental and the expressive. The instrumental category consists of the adaptive sub-system, which consists of activities such as production that relate the organization to its environment, and the managerial sub-system, consisting of activities that allocate scarce resources for the attainment of goals. The expressive category consists of the integrative sub-system, which induces members to see each other as one social system, and the normative sub-system, which regulates the behavior of members. Etzioni (49) provides this scintillating account of the interdependence of the systems:

The four sub-systems are complementary to each other in the sense that action in each of them creates problems to be solved by the others. Adaptive activities create means which must be related to goals in order to acquire meaning. This "meaning" is created and reinforced by the normative sub-system. The supply of means by adaptive activities is insufficient for meeting the demands of various goals internalized and institutionalized by the socializing activities of the normative sub-system. This creates the type of problems solved by the managerial sub-system, e.g., allocation. But every distribution of means and rewards creates frustrations as well as satisfactions. These tensions are disruptive to the social system and pose the type of problems handled by the integrative sub-system.

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<sup>2</sup> The justification on this kibbutz for generosity to hired labor is indicative of the ideological conflict present even in kibbutzim that have moved quickly to adopt capitalist organizing principles in the interest of efficiency. Our informant explained the overpayment of hired laborers by saying "we're fucked up. We have these crazy socialist ideas."

Etzioni's model is the basis of two compelling substantive arguments. The first relates organizational structure to a temporally driven cycle. Etzioni proposes that the 'differentiation of elites', by which he means the tendency of office-holders (organizational leaders) to limit their organizational participation to either instrumental or expressive functions, increases as organizations age. The causal logic behind this claim will resonate with anyone who has ever participated in or observed an organization from conception to maturity—as this evolution proceeds, the organization becomes more of a complete system in the sense of performing all of the necessary functions itself. As the achievement of the functions becomes an everyday expectation of the organization, a process of institutionalization occurs such that they become embedded in specific social roles and institutions. Kibbutzim, like high-tech startups, begin as charismatic movements, where participants do what it takes, across functions, to perpetuate and develop the organization. Eventually, if the organization is to survive, the systems that achieve its critical functions must congeal and become business as usual. Etzioni's evidence for this argument is interesting, although limited. He compares two kibbutzim, one young and one old, in terms of the likelihood that their officers who hold more than one-office span the boundary between the instrumental and expressive functions. In the older kibbutz, this almost never happens—a member of the Economic Committee may also be a member of the Security Committee, but is unlikely to sit on the Educational-Pedagogy Committee. In the young kibbutz, multiple-office holders span functional boundaries more often than not.

The second substantive argument that emerges from the expressive emphasis of the kibbutz concerns the creation of social control, and its role in organizational performance. Neer and Ingram (1998) propose a new institutional model of economic performance that puts the social control of work-groups in a primary position. In their model, economic performance is

obtained if institutional structures are implemented that align the incentives faced by individuals with the demands of the environment. Organizations structure individual incentives with formal rules and informal norms. Formal organizational rules, such as a piece-rate or bonus system of pay, form the incentive environment faced by work groups, but it is the norms of work groups that exert the most immediate influence over individuals.

On the kibbutz, the emphasis on expressive functions, the activities that allow the individual member to perceive of herself “only as a portion of the entire community, and not as a self-sustaining entity” (Arian, 1968: 104), form the basis of powerful social control through norms. This is demonstrated in Warhurst’s (1996) ethnography, aptly titled “high society in a workers’ society.” Warhurst describes a high-performing work group in a kibbutz plastic factory. The group represents an instance not explicitly foreseen by Nee and Ingram, in that there are no formal organizational rules to mediate between them and the market. The pace of work for the group was dictated “straight from the market,” with members claiming that they “could feel” the pressures of the market. The group’s experience indicates the problems that arise when the buffer of formal organizational rules is removed, as their informal decision-making processes were often overwhelmed. But Warhurst’s point is to show the strength of social control for directing individual efforts to collective purposes. Formal control was completely absent, as indicated by the production manager of the kibbutz factory that was the group’s home: “It’s not my job to impose discipline on the line. If I’m working with other members there’s no difference between us... Discipline should come from the members themselves—self discipline (6).” That the group members received social rewards for their performance was clearly evident as in the statements of group members that “you feel as if you’re shining when you work in this place (10)”, and “loads of people on the kibbutz know how to appreciate this [group] (11).” And the

work group did not merely apply the social rewards and punishments that presented themselves from the close interaction of kibbutz life, but rather created their own sub-community, where the social bonds, and the capacity for social control, were even greater. The members would spend after-work hours in each other's homes, and would hold parties and barbecues, attended by group members and their families, that served to create a highly interdependent and cohesive group. The power of these social ties for motivating performance is clear in the statement of a member that "the reason I get up every morning is because of the people that I work with (13)."

Moving beyond the kibbutz observed by Warhurst, Barkai (1987: 252) saw social control as part of the foundation of the high performance of kibbutzim. Social control operates on kibbutzim such that "absence from work, even for a legitimate reason, engenders feelings of discomfort and a sense of guilt; an individual who shirks his work responsibilities is severely criticized (Talmon-Garber, 1972: 168)." Work reputation on the kibbutz has been found to affect social esteem, prestige and the level of personal influence within the community (Macarov, 1975). Jobs that contribute most highly to the income of kibbutzim have been found to have the highest status (Vallier, 1983; Rosner, 1966; Ben-Rafael, 1988).

Finally, the grip of social control, and the resultant improvements to member motivation, can be linked to the processes of differentiation of the expressive and instrumental components identified by Etzioni (1980). The interdependence of functions in the young kibbutz, created by cross-office holding, and more generally, by the full participation of all members in the achievement of all functions, promotes social control. After all, social control of the type documented by Warhurst is really exchange between the expressive and instrumental domains, and is only possible if its subjects span those domains. In an older kibbutz, where individuals are more specialized in their functional contributions, social control is necessarily weakened. In

response, “formal devices of control are developed to support, and to some degree to replace the informal mechanisms. The development of an organizational structure with a clear division of tasks and authority, as well as a center of decisions...” arises as a functional substitute for informal control (Etzioni, 1980: 164). Others see more potential for intense social control to persist into organizational maturity (Warhurst, 1998), but Etzioni’s account has face-validity among some current kibbutz members. When we asked if shirkers on an older kibbutz received social punishments, we were told “it used to work that way in the old days, but not now.”

## **WORK**

*“Work will heal us. In the center of all our hopes we must place work; our entire structure must be founded on labor.”* (Gordon, 1938: 56).

In kibbutzim ideological tenets determined the manner in which work was structured and managed. From socialism the ideas of equality and self-governance by the workers were most influential in shaping the way work was planned and performed. The motivation of members in the absence of differential material rewards was based on the acceptance of work as an end in its own right. Social status was associated with work - devoted workers received the community’s respect and admiration. Job rotation and democratic decision-making processes in the workplace were pivotal in maintaining equality among members.

According to Rosner (1998), the organization of work in the kibbutz raises three key questions, each of which presents a dilemma between ideology and efficiency. In the absence of monetary remuneration, and given that the kibbutz members’ needs are provided for regardless of work performance, what motivates them to work hard? Second, since a market mechanism can not be relied upon to determine supply and demand of labor, and since coercion is not an option either, what is the mechanism that ensures both an efficient (for the kibbutz) and a

satisfying (for the member) allocation of the available work force? And lastly, given the democratic nature of the organization of work in the kibbutz, can it be managed efficiently ensuring economic and professional performance?

## **Motivation**

One form of incentives typical of capitalist organizations, differential financial rewards, are not acceptable on the kibbutz.<sup>3</sup> Another motivational tool employed in capitalist organizations, hierarchical authority to enforce a variety of sanctions, is similarly taboo. Reflecting principles of equality among members and self-management, managers cannot discipline workers who are kibbutz members (Warhurst, 1996b). Thus, maintenance of high levels of human effort must be obtained by means other than those employed in the familiar organizations of Western capitalism. What, then, motivates kibbutz members' decision whether and how much effort to exert on the job or alternatively, free-ride on the effort invested by others?

The complete severance of the connection between job performance and income, between work and organizational rewards and penalties seems, according to some analysts, to remove all motivation for individual performance, and thereby doom the kibbutz to a speedy failure (Helman, 1994; Putterman, 1983). The evidence shows the contrary. A number of studies indicate that kibbutzim achieve high levels of profit per worker and high labor productivity when compared with the private sector in Israel (Kanovsky, 1966; Tannenbaum, Kavcic, Rosner, Vianello and Wieser, 1977; Barkai, 1977, Don, 1988; Near, 1997). Barkai's (1977) analysis of fifteen years of audited annual financial reports supported the conclusion that "the 6.2 percent

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<sup>3</sup> Today, a heated debate on the issue of incentives and motivation is taking place within the kibbutzim, with frequent proposals to modify the equal non-monetary rewards that characterized the kibbutz for almost 90 years.

annual average gain given by the varying-weights index for the kibbutz production sector is significantly higher than that for the economy as a whole (4.6%) (136).” In 1977 the average productivity per kibbutz worker was 14 percent higher than in the Israeli industry as a whole (Near, 1997: 241). Additional studies, mostly by economists interested in the “incentive conundrum” find higher productivity of kibbutz workers relative to workers in the economy at large (Sadan, 1976; Barkai, 1978; 1987; Don, 1988).

Research on the relationship between workers’ motivation and performance was conducted in kibbutz industry and agriculture, and investigated various theoretical issues similar to those studied in “conventional” organizations. Leviatan and Eden (1980) report on a survey of more than 600 workers and managers in kibbutz plants (27) and agricultural branches (33). They test an elaborate theoretical model that includes seven major groups of variables, which follow one another in a causal flow towards the final outcome – organizational effectiveness. Of particular interest here are the individual attitudinal variables, which were based on both self-reporting and managers’ evaluations. These variables captured attitudes that reflect participants’ internalization of organizational goals, indicated for example by “expressions of motivations to achieve the objectives of the organization.” These attitudes were found to affect organizational effectiveness, measured by the rate of capital return and income per workday.

The general conclusion from the series of studies reported in Work and Organization in Kibbutz Industry emphasized the matching between organizational features and participant attitudes: “the more effective plants are those in which the organizational patterns and the expectations of kibbutz members are more congruent (Rosner and Palgi, 1980: 29).” For example, plants were more effective when they displayed a level of participative decision

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making that matched participants' expectation. So, the emergent position is consistent with influential arguments on the necessity of congruence of organizational components for effectiveness (Nadler and Tushman, 1997). However, the kibbutz research contributes to those familiar ideas by expanding the known set of effective organizational configurations, making concrete the open-system concept of equifinality. The kibbutz experience also shows that there is no inherent contradiction between organizing according to an ideology of no financial incentives and organizational performance

Support for the congruence concept is found at the micro level in studies that examine the relationship between workers' values, their attitudes and work outcomes (Eden, 1975; Ronen, 1978). Ronen's (1978: 85) thesis is that "the main components of an individual's motivational set and job attitude depend largely on the system of social values with which he approaches the work environment, and the organizational reward system." Values are aggregated in two categories, one consisting of material wealth, prestige and power (labeled 'aggrandizement') and the second consisting of equalitarian, humanitarian, aesthetic, and intellectual values (labeled 'self-realization'). He hypothesizes that kibbutz workers and private sector workers will exhibit different values, different sources of job satisfaction (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) and a difference in the contribution of the contrasting values to overall job satisfaction and workers' evaluation of the reward system. Of the 500 questionnaires sent to kibbutz and private industrial organizations, those returned usable included 135 from kibbutz workers and 187 from employees of private firms. Measures included the Human Value Index, the Job Description Index (JDI), and the Brayfield-Rothe questionnaire for overall job satisfaction. Kibbutz workers scored significantly higher on self-realization values than the private sector workers, who in turn scored significantly higher on aggrandizement values. Both results held when samples were sub-

divided by job level, seniority, age, education and birthplace, providing even stronger support to the hypothesis. Similarly, kibbutz workers demonstrated significantly higher satisfaction with the intrinsic aspects of their job and the private sector workers demonstrated significantly higher satisfaction with the extrinsic aspects of their job, again strengthened by controlling for demographic and job characteristics. The two groups also differed on the importance attributed to the different job facets in forming overall job satisfaction. Kibbutz workers placed higher importance on intrinsic job facets while private sector workers placed higher importance on extrinsic job facets.

Ronen's (1978) conclusions from this study are that basic personal values of the individual affect their reaction to the work environment, and that overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with intrinsic or extrinsic aspects of the job are evaluated partially by the values the individuals hold. These conclusions are supported by another study in a kibbutz setting, which showed that the effect of an incentive on motivation is more positive when the incentive is of a type (e.g. intrinsic or extrinsic) that is commensurate with a worker's expectations (Eden, 1975). Combined, these studies help to explain the effectiveness of the kibbutz worker in the face of the kibbutz ideological framework by demonstrating the efficacy of a match between the intrinsic rewards offered by the kibbutz, and the values of kibbutz workers.

While kibbutz members demonstrate a greater emphasis on intrinsic rewards than do other workers, there is evidence that the basic inputs to job satisfaction are similar for kibbutz members and others. Ronen (1977) administered the JDI to kibbutz and non-kibbutz workers in organizations that were matched on industry, size, industrialization level and organizational structure. The order of importance of the different job satisfaction facets was determined by correlating each facet with two overall job satisfaction indices for each group. The results for the

two groups were almost identical: satisfaction with the work itself followed by satisfaction with supervision, promotion and co-workers for kibbutz workers; for the non- kibbutz workers the only difference was that satisfaction with promotion preceded supervision. Features of the similarity of the inputs to job satisfaction, particularly the unimportance of pay for all subjects, indicate an opportunity to apply features of the kibbutz motivational model to other organizations.

Another contribution to understanding of kibbutz motivation using mainstream models comes from Macarov (1972, 1975). He applied Herzberg's two-factor model and found evidence of motivators and hygiene factors among kibbutz workers. Macarov (1972) surveyed 219 kibbutz members from both service (e.g., education, child-care, food preparation) and production (agriculture and industry) branches. After eliminating those factors that were mentioned by less than ten percent of the respondents, four which resulted in more satisfaction than dissatisfaction were the work itself, achievement, interpersonal relations and responsibility. One factor resulting in more dissatisfaction than satisfaction was that of working conditions. Interpersonal relations that in Herzberg's model belong to the hygiene factor were for the kibbutz workers a motivator. This reflects the centrality of social rewards in the kibbutz working environment. Macarov's (1972: 492) provocative conclusion is that "salary itself may often be overrated as a work motivator."

The question of what motivates kibbutz members to work as hard and efficiently as they do, without material rewards, still begs an answer. The statement, "I don't think that our economic intuition is our secret charm; it's our social spirit which preserved us (Lieblich, 1981: 193)," provides a hint to the answer. This position is expanded towards a more full explanation when Barkai (1987:252) argues "the work norm and work discipline, informal social control over

quality of performance, and a mechanism of self-selection can explain the high degree of motivation pushing kibbutz members to the frontier of feasible performance.” Selection of members involves self-selection of individuals believing that material benefits are of minor importance. Over time this builds a population with a bias toward non-pecuniary stimuli and work discipline. As Eden (1975: 357) concluded, “workers self-select themselves into jobs that offer incentives which they are motivated to seek.” This tendency is reinforced by socialization of kibbutz-born members and the voluntary aspect of the community that allows anyone who can not adjust or tolerate the formal and informal rules of the kibbutz to leave. Commitment to the work norm and the discipline to put in ‘an honest day’s work’ are instated in kibbutz members in the socialization process. Lastly, informal social control serves as an efficient and powerful mechanism, relying on individuals’ need for respect and approval from the community. The mechanism of social control is demonstrated in a comparative study of managerial practices in five countries (US, Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia and Israel). Kibbutz workers favored the high opinion of co-workers more frequently than any other optional reward (e.g., high opinion of superior, praise from superior) for good work. It was also the highest favored item in comparison to other countries (Tannenbaum et al., 1977). Combined, the processes of selection, socialization, and social control yield a community of individuals strongly bonded by common values that are maintained by social rewards and sanctions.

The replication of this interrelated set of processes is vulnerable in at least two points. One involves kibbutz-born individuals who, unlike their parents, did not choose to live on a kibbutz. Self-selection does not apply to them and although continuous socialization is supposed to overcome this, they are nonetheless likely to “be more passively committed to the kibbutz ideal than those who deliberately chose this way of life by abandoning the non-kibbutz

environment” (Barkai, 1987: 253). Of course, voluntary membership in the kibbutz applies to kibbutz-born persons as it does to their parents, and indeed many do leave, implying self-selection by those who stay. However, the founding generation both chose to establish or join a kibbutz and had the option to leave. Organizational growth of kibbutzim represents a second threat, as informal social control is more efficient in small communities. No one knows exactly at what size the strength of informal social control is no longer enough to maintain its influence over community members. Early on it was believed that a hundred members was the upper limit in which social control could be effective, but most kibbutzim have passed that mark while informal social control remained effective. Still, size remains an issue because it is clear that mechanisms of social control can not function without close personal contact in a tightly knit community.

Rosner (1998) presents a chronological answer to the motivation question. He argues that at different times in the kibbutz history, different processes or mechanisms of motivation were in operation. At first, during the pioneering period, the sole motivation was commitment to kibbutz values and identification with the community. Later, in the 1950s and 1960s the focus turned to the social cohesion of the work groups and the resulting social control. In the 1970s and 1980s, Rosner argues, opportunities for self-realization through work becomes the chief sources of motivation. Of course, it is possible and reasonable that all along all of these motivators coexisted and it was only the specific perspective of observers or researchers at any given time that caused them to focus on one or the other.

Two additional points pertaining to the motivation of kibbutz workers are necessary. A crucial explanatory factor for motivation of kibbutz members as (industrial) workers is their high level of education (Tanenbaum et al, 1977; Don, 1988). Barkai (1977: 97) presents data showing

that kibbutz men and women have higher median years of schooling than the Jewish population of Israel (2.5 and 3.5 years more respectively). The difference is somewhat smaller but remains when the comparison is between the kibbutz and other rural settlements. Since the increase in the economic value of education is more than the increase in the number of school years, Barkai concluded that the average economic potential of kibbutz men was about twice that of men in the economy as a whole. For women it was more than 3.5 times as much as that of women in the economy as a whole. Human capital theory attributes real returns to education for individuals in the workplace, in kibbutzim we see that the education level of the labor force is related to superior performance of the organization.

The second point is that kibbutz members are the owners, the managers and the employees of their economic enterprises. In that sense they can be compared to self-employed individuals whose motivations are different from those of employees. Kibbutz members have a vested interest in the success of their organization. Both more immediate and long range satisfaction of the community's and its members' needs is dependent on each member's performance. So in a way, material incentives are not completely absent from the relationship between motivation and performance. For example, it was only after the improvement in kibbutzim's economic situation that members could enjoy benefits such as travelling abroad, enlarging their living quarters and generally raising the standard of living. Of course, there is a free-rider problem associated with this collective material incentive. In the face of a free-rider problem, material gain for the collective will normally be insufficient to evoke effort from individuals. Other motivators are necessary, which demonstrates that we cannot be satisfied with one mechanism for motivation or control of a complex social system like the kibbutz. A myriad of interdependent processes account for its functioning and sustain it.

## **Job placement, management philosophy and job rotation**

The ideological premise of equality dictates that the community ensure an egalitarian redistribution of the common resources. ‘From each according to her ability, to each according to her needs’ specifies both the expected contributions from members and the allocative principle of resources. Derived from these is the multifunctional role structure in which each member is expected to perform various types of roles that are within her abilities. That applies both to the content of work (e.g., milking cows, working in the field, caring for children, doing the accounting) as well as to the responsibilities involved (e.g., a managerial vs. a non-managerial function). Thus, practices involving kibbutz members’ allocation to roles and the management of work are directed and constrained by equality considerations.

Staffing of jobs is based on the premise that the “kibbutz manpower is at the disposal of the community. Although individual desires are taken into account in job selection and choice of occupation, the allocation of members’ time – between work, training and study, and leisure – is ultimately determined by the community (Barkai, 1977: 7).” Another important ideological premise is total intra-kibbutz (and inter-kibbutz) mutual guarantee. In the work sphere, that translates to providing employment for every kibbutz member. The obligation to find employment for every member created the necessity to place members without highly required skills, and those who are physically or mentally handicapped. Reflecting this, some researchers (e.g., Don, 1988) attribute kibbutz industrialization partly to the aging of the first generation<sup>4</sup>,

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<sup>4</sup> From the Resolutions of the 41<sup>st</sup> Council of the Kibbutz Ha’ Artzi: Industry in the Kibbutz (February, 1976 Kibbutz Gan-Shmuel): “Employing the elderly in industry; The council calls for the establishment of a staff of experts to study the problems of the employment of the elderly in industry and to classify the various industrial occupations that can fulfill the occupational needs and potential abilities of elderly male and female members.” (Leviatan and Rosner, 1980:182).

which made them unable to perform the physically demanding agricultural work. Since work is a central value in the kibbutz, and because these members rejected the idea of complete “retirement” (Talmon-Garber, 1972; Leviatan, 1980a), a workplace with easier, more comfortable working conditions was needed. From a managerial perspective, guaranteed employment presents a problem. Market mechanisms or purely rational considerations do not govern allocation of members to work, thus managers are sometime pressured to “accept” workers who are not suitable. The outcome of such placement may be a negative balance between the member’s contribution and the shadow wage charged to their employing group (Helman, 1994).

The philosophy towards management is derived primarily from the premise of equality which dictates a coordination and integration role rather than an authoritative one, as well as the rotation of managerial jobs (e.g., secretariat, branch manager) among members (Tannenbaum et al., 1977; Leviatan, 1978; Rosner, 1980b; 1998). The following statement provides a clear illustration: “To call a man a manger is a kind of blasphemy. Indeed the Hebrew term for manager is avoided in the [kibbutz]. Instead a softer, more culturally accepted term, coordinator, has been adopted.” (Diamond, 1957: 84). Rotation reinforces the egalitarian structure and ensures that no one person or group acquires disproportional power and influence. More specifically the norm of managerial rotation addresses four distinct issues: First, preventing the monopolization of rewards by high-ranking officers and keeping a certain social equality among the members. Second, preserving the principle of the integration of mental and manual work. Third, because the kibbutz is a total organization and its members interact in and out of the workplace, permanency in office may hinder relationships among members as whole individuals

rather than office-or role-holders. Lastly, equality also means a fair distribution of the managerial burden among more individuals (Leviatan, 1978). Rotation was to take place regardless of the individual's performance or the performance of the branch she manages. After serving in a managerial position the member goes back to the "rank and file" for at least a year before they are assigned to a new managerial role, be it in the social or work sphere (Leviatan, 1980b). Although the rules for rotation were not uniform (e.g., the length of a managerial term), the federations had formal regulations and the practice was common to all kibbutzim. The most common duration in a managerial role is between three and five years (Leviatan, 1978).

A number of studies that examined kibbutz members' attitudes toward managerial rotation found a relatively high and enduring support for the practice, although there are some differences by federation (e.g., Rosner, Shur, Chizik and Avnat, 1989). These findings are complemented by apparent mixed attitudes towards managerial posts (primarily plant managers). On one hand there was an objection on ideological grounds and a wish to preserve equality and prevent the creation of a ruling strata; on the other it was recognized as an important role. Expectations were that office-holders are supposed to coordinate others' work and not control it, and that they balance being "equal" and being "more". In practice these expectations were manifested by including the managers in night shifts, cleaning, and other "low level" jobs (Palgi, 1998). More recently, Einat (1997) examined rotation practices (duration in post, external-hired managers vs. kibbutz managers) and outcomes in 169 kibbutz plants. He found that until 1994 rotation was an existing norm and that the average term of a CEO varied between 3 and 4.6 years. In the past five years however, managerial rotation is being replaced by professional management (Getz, 1994).

The explanation for the relative persistence of managerial rotation given the rapid industrialization and sophistication of kibbutz production is twofold. The normative and value system that gave rise to the practice remained strong, thus creating powerful social expectations that it continue. Additionally, office-holders are usually happy to be replaced. A study that focused on the relation of reward distribution to role attractiveness was based on data from the poultry branch in 26 kibbutzim that employed 26 managers and 104 workers (Yuchtman, 1972). Measured rewards included intrinsic job satisfaction, power, and socio-emotional rewards. Two distinct aspects of role attractiveness were ‘comparison level’ (the subjective gap between actual and expected outcome) and ‘comparison level for alternative’ (the subjective gap between actual and the expected outcome from the best available alternative job). So, a person’s preference to stay or leave a job is based on her evaluation of the satisfaction derived from her role and the potential of her alternatives. The results show that the managers’ position is associated with more positive outcomes on intrinsic job satisfaction and power rewards. Workers and managers enjoyed similar levels of socio-emotional rewards. A much higher percentage of managers expressed an interest in leaving the branch (42) than workers (16) even though managers’ own evaluation of the rewards were overall high. Yuchtman’s (1972: 592) explanation, based on equity theory, is that the managers want out of the job because of a negative balance of rewards that they experience. “This group [of managers] consists mainly of professionals who are aware of their higher input levels and expect, accordingly, adequate outcomes from their office. The lower degree of role attractiveness for them may be attributed, therefore, to the apparent disproportion of outcomes versus inputs.” We do not have enough information to determine whether the community consciously contributes to the negative balance of rewards. There is anecdotal information one can hear in almost every kibbutz, about the negative inter-personal

relations that managers are prone to have because of their role. In a total social system such as the kibbutz such an outcome carries a heavy weight.

Given that the managerial-rotation practice persisted for so long, it is of interest to understand its effects on the community, work organization and the individual. Studies have identified positive organizational effects of management rotation in the form of informed, motivated workers (Leviatan, 1978) and positive individual effects for current and past office-holders in the form of a number of measures of psychological well being (Leviatan, 1980b).

Some research on the kibbutz is a response to the claim that managerial rotation inhibits organizational effectiveness by wasting experience. Accumulated knowledge and experience in solving problems allow a manager to function effectively and utilize learning based on past mistakes, so an organization that loses an experienced manager due to rotation could suffer negative consequences. Don (1988) showed that management rotation on the kibbutz had resulted in frequent changes in management style as well as loss of managerial experience and know-how.

Evidence contradicting this argument comes from Einat (1997), who finds that there is no effect of CEO rotation (or succession) on performance in kibbutz industrial plants. The mechanisms behind this result are made more clear by Ingram and Simons' (1999) finding that, in learning curve analysis, kibbutzim exhibited no decay over time of the positive effects of experience. Decay of experience benefits is usually attributed to organizational forgetting, so kibbutzim appear to have better 'memories' than other organizations. Likely, this is because former-managers stay within the organization after leaving their roles, and overall turnover (exits from the organization) is low. These results appear to repudiate the claim that managerial rotation necessarily implies the loss of knowledge and experience.

In the kibbutz rotation is sometimes internal, i.e., a former top officer is rotated out of office but remains in the same branch at a lower level role. If this transition can be made without causing frustration and negative behavior on the part of the “demoted” manager the quality of work as a whole should be improved through the development and circulation of ex-managers. The outcome of internal rotation is a more experienced and higher quality workforce composed of many workers with previous managerial experience. Less overseeing, guiding and training are likely to be required by managers of such workforce. Additionally, practicing internal rotation increases feeling of equality among workers, which in turn raises their participation in contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. Lastly, the probability that workers will advance is higher when internal rotation is practiced, thus satisfying the need for achievement which, is expected to result in a higher level of satisfaction (Leviatan, 1978).

These ideas were explored in a study by Leviatan (1978), conducted in kibbutz industrial plants (27) and agricultural branches (33). Six-hundred questionnaires were analyzed, interviews were conducted with managers and economic performance data were collected. Thirteen variables were included in the study, such as: length of time in office, economic effectiveness, success of manager in office, communication effectiveness, proportion of past and present office holders, and motivation. Consistent with the practice of rotation, the mean time in office was only 3.3 years, but there was substantial variance in this measure, with ten percent of managers serving for eight or more years. The findings showed a weak curvilinear relationship between a manager’s length of time in office and the economic performance of the organization. This is a rejection of the assertion that accumulated experience of the manager has positive monotonic effect on organizational performance undermining claims of the preeminence of managerial experience. That tenure ultimately comes to harm performance supports the idea that veteran

managers can become entrenched in the known ways for doing things in a manner that makes adaptation to changing conditions slow and difficult.

The study also found that organizations with higher proportions of present and ex-office-holders were more effective in their economic performance and managers in these organizations were able to devote less time to training and overseeing. Higher levels of motivation and commitment were found in organizations with higher proportions of present and ex-office-holders. The author's conservative conclusion regarding the general effect of manager's tenure on organizational performance is "that managerial turnover does not cause any harm to the organization (Leviatan, 1978: 1015)." As to the larger question of the effects of internal rotation on organizational performance, the conclusion is stronger. It is supported by other findings showing that in organizations where "strong legitimization for periodic managerial turnover existed and where the membership participated in picking a replacement for the manager, the relationships between the new management and the workers were less conflict-ridden and more harmonious (1015)." Thus, evidence from the kibbutz compliments arguments that turnover can have some positive effects for organizations (Staw, 1980; Mowday, Porter, Steers, 1982), and goes beyond those arguments to show that, at least in the kibbutz context, the positives outweigh the negatives.

While managerial rotation may have desirable or neutral outcomes at the organizational level, it seems logical that the individual manager will pay a psychological price as a result of rotation out of office. In a complimentary study to the one described above, Leviatan (1980b) presents the theoretical implications of managerial rotation on managers, and then tests them in the kibbutz context. The theorized effects appearing in the literature on demotion are all negative, entailing deterioration in well being, lowered self-esteem and resentment. Demotion is

taken as a sign of failure and it involves loss of face, loss of prestige, loss of material rewards, and fear of never being able to advance again. Trying to resolve these negative outcomes of demotion, Leviatan explains the utility of establishing the rotation principle as norm. Once rotation becomes a norm demotion is not an indication of failure. Change is expected and can be planned for. Further, an organization in which hierarchical differentiation and the rewards related to it are small, will also mitigate some of the negative effects of demotion. In such circumstance the demoted manager may even enjoy continuing high esteem by fellow workers and his well being may be more positive as compared to another worker at the same rank because of “residuals” from her past experience. Kibbutzim combine a norm of rotation with limited differential rewards to managers.

To empirically test this idea, Leviatan (1980b) compares the well being of three groups of workers: current office holders, past office holders-current rank and file, never held office-current rank and file. The empirical setting is identical to the one described above (see Leviatan, 1978). A number of measures of self-esteem, depression, resentment, physical symptoms and alienation were used. Descriptive statistics show that rotation occurs in all the studied organizations though in different degrees. The findings show that current office holders exhibit higher scores on well-being measures than the others, confirming other results showing a positive relation between one’s position in the organizational hierarchy and her well being. The more interesting hypothesis examines the well being of ex-office-holders, finding that in organizations where the rotation norm is accepted they will show equal or better scores of well being as their peers. In all ten measures of well being ex-office holders scored more positively than their peers, and in five the difference is significant. So, under the norm of rotation not only

does the well being of “demoted” managers not adversely affected, but they report of better well being than their rank peers.

Sociologists are very interested in the ability of a social system to persist without the emergence of social differentiation. As presented at the beginning of this section, a primary ideological reason for managerial rotation is to prevent the creation of a powerful managerial elite in the kibbutz. Has it been successful in achieving this goal? The answer according to some researchers is that although the practice itself persisted (longer than other ideologically derived practices such as communal children’s’ quarters), it failed in accomplishing its ultimate goal (Rosenfeld, 1983; Ben-Rafael, 1988; Shapira, 1988; 1990). One claim is that with the advancement of technology, professionalization of the kibbutz economic enterprise led to a concentration of power in the hands of a few. The unwanted outcome is the appearance of a powerful elite group in control of the major decisions and functions. One cause of this is horizontal rotation, where kibbutzim employ the principle of rotation but rotate managers to parallel managerial posts rather than sending them back to the rank-and-file. A justification that is often mentioned for this phenomenon is a complementary need of the manager’s skill and experience by the kibbutz and the manager’s preference for a managerial position (Helman, 1994: 28). Helman blames these “permanent professional managers” for the economic crisis of the kibbutz because they created a source of inertia, failing to adjust to the dynamic developments and changes that took place around them.

Shapira (1988; 1990) offers the seemingly contradictory claim that managerial rotation breeds conservative managerial thought. In a case study conducted in a large (1000 members), industrialized and veteran kibbutz, he finds evidence for managerial conservatism. The process he identifies is complex. An elite composed of a few founding members established its position

in the kibbutz, these people possessed power and influence both inside and outside the kibbutz. As time passed, their status was jeopardized because it was based less on actual contribution to the community and more on political control. At the same time they attempted to prevent any new ideas from materializing and individuals with those ideas from advancing and succeeding. The situation was aggravated by automatic rotation that did not allow new managers to establish themselves in their role and to gain enough experience, influence and power to implement their ideas over the established elite's active objections. A few radicals who exhibited leadership potential and had innovative ideas for change were neutralized and were never able to reach real leadership positions within the kibbutz. The most radical withdrew from activity or left the kibbutz altogether. Shapira gives detailed accounts of the history of each member of the elite and a few accounts of "young Turks" trying to change things in the kibbutz. Shapira does not think that rotation should be eliminated, rather he suggests that it should be pragmatically practiced. Successful managers should be allowed to continue in their roles longer than the time prescribed by automatic rotation. They should be subject to a periodic vote by the community and as their number of terms rises, a larger majority will be needed to approve an additional term.

## **Teams**

Working in teams coincides well with the egalitarian premise, and the associated workplace democracy, of the kibbutz. In other organizations, teams are common because they are believed to perform better than employees working alone. However, research findings indicate that teams do not always outperform individuals, and that the relative success of teams depends on factors such as the task, the nature of incentives, and the relationships between members. One of the arguments applied to understand circumstances where teams perform poorly is 'social loafing',

which describes the idea that individuals exert less effort when their efforts are combined than when their efforts are individual. Some specific conditions have been argued to eliminate social loafing: the group consisting of close friends; group members thinking that others will not take advantage of them; a culture that supports contribution to the group; clear performance goals; and ease of monitoring individual output (Erez and Somech, 1996).

Internal relations of friendship and trust within the group, as well as the culture, or ideology of contribution to the group are both especially relevant to the kibbutz context. We should expect that with the extensive and comprehensive relations among kibbutz members, trust and friendship would characterize work-group relations. Further, their common goals based on a shared ideology of collectivist principles should create a work environment that is conducive to a group rather than an individual focus. The outcome should be expressed in a better performance as compared to other non-kibbutz teams.

A study that looked at the effect of collectivist versus individualist values on group performance supports the claim that collectivist values contribute to performance (Erez and Somech, 1996). It utilized an experimental design and compared managers from cities and kibbutzim. Collectivist values differ from individualist values in the way people perceive themselves vis-a-vis the group. People in collectivist cultures (or organizations) put the group's interest ahead of their own, they place a higher valence on belonging to their group and their self-definition is extended beyond the individual to include a particular group of others. Thus social loafing is much lower or does not occur in a work group with collectivist values.

The effect that collectivist versus individualistic values will have on performance loss from social loafing was a central question of the study. Kibbutz (N=63) and urban (N=59) midlevel managers who had known each other for at least six months and matched on gender,

age and education participated in the study. At the outset the participants filled out the Twenty-Statement Test, a known measure of collectivist and individualist values. The results showed a distinct difference between urban and kibbutz managers, the former scoring higher on individualist values and lower on collectivist values than the latter. Results support the hypothesis that performance loss will be less when tasks are performed by groups with collectivistic values versus individualistic values. Results also indicated interactions between collectivistic values and two other influences on group performance, communication and incentives. Generally, intragroup communication increases awareness of the presence of others as potential evaluators (social facilitation), resulting in increased group performance. In the case of the kibbutz managers that was not the case. Erez and Somech's (1996) explanation is that kibbutz members are used-to the presence of others and thus are less sensitive to the change from no-communication to intragroup communication, also they took the opportunity to discuss issues unrelated to the task such that they were not fully focused on performing. And while group incentives typically lead to social-loading, the performance of the kibbutz managers was highest when they faced a group goal with incentives for goal attainment. It is likely "that group incentives increase the valence of contribution to group goals, which is highly valued by the interdependent self (Erez and Somech, 1996: 1533; the authors use 'interdependent self' to describe an individual for whom collectivist values are more important than individualist values,)."

Broadening the argument that team performance depends on values, the effectiveness of managerial practices can be seen as dependent on norms and values that are prevalent in organizations and the broader society. When there is congruence between the norms and practices, performance should be better than when they are incongruent. Erez (1986) tested the

effect of using participative and nonparticipative goal-setting strategies in three settings, a kibbutz, a trade union and a private sector organization. These organizations span a continuum from highly participative to nonparticipative. The results showed that the greatest effectiveness was achieved when there was equivalency between the type of organization and the type of strategy used. So for example, in the private sector organization the most effective was the nonparticipative strategy. At a societal-culture level, Erez and Early (1987) compared the effect of nonparticipative and participative goal-setting strategies on three groups of students (American, Israeli-urban, and Israeli-kibbutz) that differed in collectivism. Participative goal-setting led to greater goal acceptance for all three groups, but performance toward the goal depended on the combination of culture and strategy. Israelis performed better in the participative than in the non-participative conditions, while the Americans did not.

Group solidarity, cohesiveness and homogeneity are interrelated and influence work groups' effectiveness. If groups become highly heterogeneous and group solidarity and cohesiveness break down, group performance on certain tasks likely to be adversely affected.<sup>5</sup> One of the most prominent features of kibbutz work groups is the distribution of their members in terms of ownership status: kibbutz members and hired employees (Rosner and Tannenbaum, 1987a). The difference between these two categories is substantial. Kibbutz members are the owners of their industrial and agricultural enterprises, they share values, more often than not they have a common background, and they have close relationship with one another as a result of the comprehensiveness of life in the kibbutz. A number of studies examined the effect of employing hired workers, particularly on performance (e.g., Abramovich, 1997). Unfortunately most

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<sup>5</sup> See Williams and O'Reilly (1998) for a comprehensive discussion of the relationship between group heterogeneity and performance. Homogeneity and solidarity are most important for tasks

studies were conducted at the plant level so we only have an indirect test of the presumed negative effects of heterogeneity on work groups. Among these undesirable consequences are the weakening of the group's cohesiveness thus impeding its performance, or generating higher alienation levels (Rosner and Tannenbaum, 1987a), or reduced democratic practices (Rosner and Palgi, 1980). Leviatan (1980c) cites a number of studies that found that plants without hired workers performed better than plants with hired workers. In his own study he compared ten plants selected as five matched pairs, matched on the basis of technology and federation but differentiated on whether they employed hired workers. Significantly more conflicts between workers and supervisors occurred in plants with hired workers, various outcomes such as motivation and commitment to the plant's goals were lower in the plants with hired workers. In a similar argument to the one made by Erez (1986), Leviatan concludes that "an organization can function well and its members feel well only if congruence exists between the organization's structure and way of conduct on one hand, and its members' values and expectations, on the other hand (73)." Another cost of heterogeneity is demonstrated by Ophir, Ingram and Argote (1998) who argue that membership heterogeneity will reduce organizational learning by inhibiting communication and helping behavior. Their learning-curve study of kibbutz agriculture supports this claim.

### **Decision making**

Participative, democratic decision making is replicated in the kibbutz at all levels, starting from the highest governing body, the general assembly, through the economic and service organizations, to the various subsystems. It is derived from the combination of communal

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which require group cohesion and individual sacrifice (e.g., Stouffer, 1949). For tasks requiring

ownership and equality tenets. The ultimate decision making power resides with the total membership, i.e., the general assembly that meets on a regular basis (Tannenbaum et al, 1977). Also important to note is that the general assembly as the governing body makes decisions about all aspects of work and plant management. Lastly, a general trend from direct participatory democracy toward a more representative decision making by elected committees has occurred in all kibbutzim (Vallier, 1983; Rosner and Cohen, 1983; Ben-Rafael, 1997). Here we will focus on decision making at the kibbutz workplace, primarily the industrial plants. The case of the evolution of decision making processes and structures in industry are particularly interesting because they allow the contrast between the technological imperative and the ideological imperative (Rosner and Tannenbaum, 1987b).

A participative system is one where “all members determine in some degree the decisions of the organization.” (Tannenbaum et al, 1977: 50). Formal participation involves the existence of explicit rules regarding decision-making structures through which all members contribute to the decisions. Formal participation can be done directly, with all organizational members participating in the process or indirectly through representatives. Also, decision domains determine where a participative mode is used, and where other decision making modes are practiced (e.g., hierarchical). Participation can also be informal when managers and supervisors are receptive to the ideas and suggestions of subordinates, and sensitive to their needs (Tannenbaum et al, 1977). The kibbutz workplace combines all of the above variants.

Another typology contrasts between political and motivational approaches to participation. The political approach is based on representative participation of workers in decision making. Motivational participation is based on workers’ direct partaking in decision-

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creativity, however, homogeneity may harm group performance (Williams and O’Reilly, 1998).

making, and particularly decisions pertaining to their work. In the kibbutz workplace an effort was made to combine both by creating formal structures for direct (general assembly of the plant workers) and indirect (representatives in committees) participation. These structures are augmented by group coordinators allowing informal participation of workers in decisions (Rosner, 1998).

Tannenbaum et al (1977) found the kibbutz to be the most participative work environment in a five-country comparison that included the US, Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia and Israel. In a measurement of the discrepancy between 'ideal' and 'actual' participation the American and the kibbutz plants had the smallest gap although they had low and high participation levels respectively. In other words, in those two samples, managerial practices and workers' expectations were congruent. Managerial style and manager-employee relations were the most participative in the kibbutz plants. Don (1988) also found that relationship and communication between office holders and rank and file members is direct and informal in kibbutz plants indicating that informal participation was practiced.

Studies examined the outcomes of participative decision making in kibbutz plants by comparing participation forms (e.g., formal/informal) and their effect on outcomes (e.g., Rosner and Palgi, 1980; Rosner and Tannenbaum, 1987b). In both these examples, like in many other studies, the authors examine the dialectic relationship between "the logic of industrialization" and kibbutz ideology or between technological imperative and the ideological imperative. Once again focusing attention to the evidently inherent tension between technology, efficiency and rationality on one hand, and values and ideology on the other. Data from fifty-three plants of the Artzi federation were collected, including structural features (size, automation level, etc.) and ideological conformity measures. One of the indicators of ideological conformity was internal

democracy, which was measured by the influence of the workers' assembly in four areas, participation in the workers' assembly' and degree of managerial rotation. The findings showed that older and larger plants had less internal democracy. There was no other evidence that an emphasis on functions involved in industrialization, such as an increase in the ratio of professionals, has an adverse effect on internal democracy (Rosner and Palgi, 1980).

An investigation into the relation between internal democracy and organizational effectiveness found mixed results. Formal participation in the workers' assembly had a negative effect on economic performance but a positive effect on organizational climate (trust in management and communication frequency). Informal participation at the group level had a positive relation to the kibbutz workers' motivation and commitment (Rosner, 1980c; Leviatan and Eden, 1980). These results, combined with those of other studies, lead to the conclusion that the primary effect of participation in the workers' assembly is on the organization, while the primary effect of participation in work groups is on the participating individuals (Rosner, 1998: 37). The decision-making structures in the kibbutz plant are different from those in the kibbutz as a whole in that they combine a democratic and a hierarchical structure. The assembly is the authority and selects the management that must carry out its decisions. When those decisions are acted on, in daily work, most of the assembly participants are subordinates of the management they elected. This ambiguous state of affairs may explain the mixed findings and provide another insight into the complexity involved in combining managerial practices and organizational structures that emanate from different value systems.

## **COMMUNITY MAINTENANCE**

*"The kibbutz...is excellent; it is men who are not worthy."* Diamond (1957: 98).

*“Ideology is not an infectious phenomenon that one gets by sheer exposure to it.”* (Leviatan, Quarter and Oliver, 1998: xiii).

A discussion of the community maintenance of the kibbutz, the processes that equate outputs and inputs to allow the organization to survive, must begin with the record. Of the 300 kibbutzim founded before 1984, only 38 have failed (Parag, 1999). And despite the casual claims by some that the population is now failing en masse as kibbutzim change into other organizational forms, Israel’s Registrar of Cooperatives says only five to seven percent of kibbutzim have “failed through change”, even by the strict definition of kibbutz that he applies. This robustness is remarkable among organizations—compare it, for example, to that of Israeli workers’ cooperatives, which shared kibbutzim’s ideology and economic environment, yet experienced a failure rate of ninety- percent (Ingram and Simons, 2000). Of course, kibbutz robustness must be partly attributed to the fact that they are residential communities as well as organizations, giving them the status of “facts on the ground” which cannot easily be dismantled. Yet, their survival rate seems high even for rural villages, particularly in an environment as hostile as twentieth-century Palestine/Israel. Further, it must be remembered that a kibbutz failure does not require that a community be dismantled. Kibbutzim can change into other organizational forms by relaxing their policies of cooperation and communalism, which has happened occasionally in the past, and is happening somewhat more frequently now.

The key to community maintenance of the kibbutz was satisfying its members. Here, we consider the socialization processes that molded member expectations; the changing view of gender equality which fundamentally determines who gets what on the kibbutz; and the approach to consumption which directly satisfied member needs.

## **Socialization**

Socialization is particularly necessary on the kibbutz, because of the differences between kibbutz ideology and that of the wider community from which it draws members, and with which it interacts. A capitalist organization in a capitalist society can rely on the forces of ideological hegemony--public schools, the media, art, etc.—to produce participants with the required values (Miliband, 1969). For the kibbutz, this was never a possibility. So, kibbutzim were forced to rely even more on their own mechanisms of socialization than most organizations. Kibbutzim's socialization mechanisms differ from those of capitalist economic organizations in that they operate on potential members from birth, but even in capitalist societies, there is no shortage of organizations that socialize children (schools, churches, clubs, etc.). The design and outcomes of kibbutz socialization mechanisms are informative for such organizations. For example, parallels can be drawn between the structure and product of the kibbutz education system and English public schools (Kahane, 1975). The kibbutz experience with socialization is also useful for understanding the processes by which the assumptions of an economic system come to be taken for granted.

A core element of the kibbutz socialization process is the education and child-rearing system. Until the 1970s, kibbutz children lived not with their parents, but in “children's houses” with a cohort of age-mates, and a dedicated care-giver, called a metapelet. Despite the presence of the metapelet, the children operated with significant self-governance in what is referred to as a “children's society”, essentially a microcosm of the kibbutz with committees and a “general assembly” operated by the children themselves. As for education, “rather than emphasizing conventional academic achievement and the encouragement of mobility aspirations among the learners, kibbutz education was to be focused on fostering such values as cooperation,

responsibility, devotion to work...and the need for selfless dedication to the goals of the collective (Devereux et al., 1974: 270).” Education and socialization of the child was also seen as the responsibility of all kibbutz members, and the child’s peer group.

Devereux et al. (1974) document some of the outcomes of this system in a survey of 287 sixth-grade children from Tel Aviv and 314 from kibbutzim with children’s houses. The children rated teachers, parents, peers, and for the kibbutz children, the metepelet, in terms of a number of forms of support and discipline. The differences between city and kibbutz children indicate that the kibbutz child-rearing system was achieving its espoused goals. First, kibbutz teachers appeared to have more significant influence over the children than city teachers. They provided more support, discipline, and encouragement of children’s independence. There was a corresponding difference in the role of parents, with kibbutz parents providing less discipline, and more instrumental companionship (e.g., help with homework) than their counterparts in the city. Combined, these differences reflect the traditional de-emphasis on the family, and the emphasis on the organization and its functionaries (the teacher) for socialization on the kibbutz. There were also telling differences in peer socialization. Peers on the kibbutz were more likely to exercise a number of forms of discipline, indicating the roots in childhood socialization of the social control that we have argued to be a key determinant of performance on the kibbutz. Kibbutz children were more likely to threaten social isolation, the withdrawal of affection, and physical punishment as mechanisms of disciplining their peers.

Shapira and Madsen (1974) present evidence that is particularly informative of the effect of this socialization system to create the behavioral capacities and tendencies that appear to be at the heart of the economic system of the kibbutz (Erez, 1996). In a series of experiments, they compared the behavior of 9-11 year olds from 17 kibbutzim with that of children from the city of

Haifa in a game which required cooperation for success. Kibbutz children were more likely to cooperate than their counterparts from the city, and achieved three times as many successful outcomes. Post-trial interviews indicated that the city children's cooperative intentions were frustrated by a lack of organization and trust. They "often said that they would have [cooperated] but that the other children would not have reciprocated (142)." In contrast, kibbutz children appeared to organize spontaneously, often utilizing an emergent, informal leader. In other experiments, kibbutz children appeared more ready to rally around their own group when it came into conflict with others.

The human capital produced by the education and socialization system of the kibbutz is one of the organizational form's most impressive outputs. One-third of kibbutz youth volunteer to spend a year on public service (Avrahami and Dar, 1993). An average of 15% of parliament seats have been held by kibbutzim members and at times, they constituted a third of cabinet ministers (while about 4% of the population; Katz and Golomb, 1983). Three of Israel's ten prime ministers have been at some point in their lives kibbutz members, or were raised on a kibbutz. Kibbutz members have a reputation for heroism and over-representation in the elite units of the Israeli Defense Forces. In recent years, two successive army Chiefs of Staff were kibbutz "products". Kibbutz youngsters comprise more than 25% of voluntary combat units and in many of the airforce squadrons, kibbutz members comprise more than 60% of combat pilots (Katz and Golomb, 1983). Kibbutz casualty rates during the 6-day and Yom Kippur wars were four-times their proportion of the population (Near, 1997: 229).

Kahane (1975) attempted to explain the high commitment to universalistic values (with the willingness to act on those values), adaptive capacity and achievement orientation of the products of the kibbutz system of child-rearing and education by analyzing its specific features.

He attributed value commitment to the non-hierarchical relations of the children's society, which forced its members to engage in a pattern of mutual adjustment, fostering commitment to the norm of reciprocity. The structural equality of the children was reinforced by the status structure that emerged from participation in a multi-dimensional pattern of activity which allowed children to exhibit capabilities other than the usually emphasized intellectual ones, such as artistic skills or athletic abilities. This pattern of activity enabled a multi-dimensional (informal) scale of evaluation, which produced quasi-equality of status. The adaptive capacity of individuals raised on the kibbutz, by which Kahane means flexibility and entrepreneurship, resulted partly from the early insertion of kibbutz youth into the roles of decision-makers that had to solve practical problems within the constraints of a strong ideology. Adaptive capacity also comes from the socialization system which puts parents, teachers, metaplot, and other adults in differentiated, yet overlapping roles. This causes regular conflict between the socializers, encouraging the socialized to develop flexibility to maneuver between constraints and conflicting demands. Finally, achievement orientation was produced by a sense of *noblesse oblige* which emerged from the elite consciousness of the kibbutz; by a norm of dissatisfaction and corresponding aspiration to perfection that derived from the image of the kibbutz as an example to the world; and by the extreme competitiveness of an education system which keeps children in constant contact.

Commitment to the kibbutz is another key output of the socialization system. Rosner et al. (1990) and Leviatan (1998) describe the results of studies, in 1969, 1971 and 1976, on member attachment to and retention by the kibbutz. Attachment was found to result from social and work satisfaction, which derive from political centrality and professional level of the work. Three times more important than satisfaction for predicting attachment, however, was adherence

to utopian ideology. This adherence was found to result from the ideological emphasis in the members' education. At the same time that socialization may generate attachment, there is also an important effect of selection, as founders of a kibbutz have higher attachment than the "second-generation", those born and raised on the kibbutz.

Attachment is behaviorally meaningful as it is negatively related to the likelihood of leaving the kibbutz, which was actually lower than for other rural settlements in Israel (or abroad). Twenty-percent of members who expressed a low attachment to the kibbutz in 1969 had left by mid-1971; only four-point-six percent of those with high attachment left over the same period. Women were more likely to leave than men. Controlling for age and skills, members who had been more active on the kibbutz (e.g., held important offices) were more likely to stay, while those who placed more value on standard-of-living were more likely to leave. The relevance of socialization for retention was strongly indicated by the complete failure of permanent characteristics of the kibbutz, such as age, location, and ethnic origin of founders, to predict retention rates.

### **Gender Equality**

For contemporary organizations, one of the most interesting features of the kibbutz experiment is its attempt to achieve the goal of full equality between the sexes in terms of the amount and type of work, and influence in the organization. As women's participation in the labor force is continuously growing, and as employers realize that the household and family domain does affect organizations and the labor market, the subject of gender equality in both spheres becomes crucial. Does the division of labor to "female-type" and "male-type" jobs and occupations in the household determine the division of labor in organizations and the labor market or vice versa? If the kibbutz is successful in eliminating the "traditional" division of labor in one domain will this

outcome spillover and affect the other? Various explanations for the origin of the observed division of labor have been offered: early socialization of girls and boys, differential skills, tendencies, and attributes of women and men, rational calculations based on who generates more income, or discrimination by employers. The comprehensiveness of kibbutz living and the fact that it is a system devoid of material rewards make it a remarkable setting for examining the effectiveness of education and attempts for equal allocation of women and men to jobs, in creating gender equality.

The fullness of the effort to promote gender equality is apparent in Spiro's (1958) account of life in the preschool children's houses of one kibbutz in 1951. Boys and girls played, slept, ate, showered and sat on their training toilets together. They shared the same toys, and played the same, sexually integrated and undifferentiated games. They were inculcated with the same values concerning agriculture and labor, working together in the "children's farm." Their responsibilities in the children's houses were undifferentiated and non-segregated. Except for differences in dress and in personal names, Spiro observed no promotion of sexual differences by the staff of the children's houses, whether by instruction or social reinforcement. Parents, in their two-hour daily visits to their children, presented a similarly gender-neutral example, displaying one parental role rather than differentiated "paternal" and "maternal" roles.

What resulted from the grand effort? The most complete picture of the lives of kibbutz women raised in the environment Spiro (1958) describes comes from Tiger and Shepher (1975). Their findings are from analyses of the censi of two kibbutz federations in the early 1970s, and from a number of case studies and surveys. Their conclusions (pp. 262-263) are devastating for the ideal of gender equality on the kibbutz. Only in the earliest history of the kibbutz movement did most women work in production. By 1975 the sexual division of labor had reached eighty

percent of maximum, with women concentrated in education and consumption services (laundry and food preparation) and men in production. Women are less active participants in the General Assembly, over-represented in committees dealing with social, educational and cultural problems and seriously under-represented in committees dealing with economy, work, general policy and security. Years of education are roughly equal between men and women, but women receive more non-university higher-education leading to jobs such as teaching and nursing, while men receive more university higher-education leading to jobs such as agriculture, engineering and management. From the ninth grade on, women consistently fall below men in scholarly achievement, and this discrepancy is greater on the kibbutz than in comparable societies. Against original ideology, the family has become the basic unit of kibbutz social structure, as indicated by the move to children sleeping in their parents' apartments, higher and growing (in the 1960s and 1970s) rates of birth and marriage, and decreasing rates of divorce. Women were the main instigators of familization. For example, they opposed collective housing of children more than men. Women also express lower attachment to the kibbutz, and are more likely to leave (Rosner, Ben-David, Avnat, Cohen and Leviatan, 1990; Leviatan, 1998).

Why did the kibbutz fail so miserably to achieve the goal of gender equality? There are two classes of explanations. The first, "cultural" or "external" class is based on the view that sex-role differentiation is a cultural artifact too robust for the kibbutzim to abolish. Spiro (1979) details some promising cultural explanations. First is that "although the male pioneers were intellectually committed to female liberation, it might be argued that they were not sufficiently emancipated from their European sexist attitudes to provide the male support necessary for the feminist revolution to succeed (65-66)." In support of this explanation Spiro cites kibbutz males' unwillingness to share traditionally defined "women's work" and their occasional expressions of

sexist attitudes. Second is that women may have led familization as a mechanism to achieve status that was denied them due to their participation in service occupations, or because those occupations were often monotonous or difficult. While conceding that cultural influences probably had some influence in the "counterrevolution" to re-establish traditional sex-roles, Spiro concludes that "it is doubtful...that they were the primary determinants." He does so because return to tradition was not the only possible response to persisting sexism, because women worked in services rather than production not due to social restrictions, but rather self-selection, and because men who worked in the services did not similarly support familization.

The second, "sociobiological" or "internal" class of explanations is based on the view that sex-role differentiation is an institutional consequence of basic human motives and sentiments. The concession to this approach of Spiro (1978:106), a cultural anthropologist, is notable: "I set out to observe the influence of culture on human nature...and found...I was observing the influence of human nature on culture." The most forceful statement of the sociobiological explanation comes from Shepher and Tiger (1981), who apply sociobiology's foundational causal factor, parental investment, to suggest the inevitability of gender-inequality on the kibbutz and in organizations broadly. Simply summarized, the dictates of mammalian biology are that females, as the limiting resource on reproduction, have a greater stake in, and therefore make a greater investment to bring to maturity, each child. The extra-effort required to make this investment causes females to favor work that does not take them far from the child. This is the basis of the sexual division of labor on the kibbutz, with women gravitating to the centrally located services, and particularly those directed at children. Indeed, even in the early days when women did participate in kibbutz agriculture, they favored vegetable gardens, orchards and poultry, which were close in proximity to the children's houses, rather than the far-

flung fields (Blumberg, 1983). The theory of inclusive fitness suggests that allomothering, as occurred in the children's houses, is only sustainable under extreme situations, in which all energy is needed to provide the basic needs of life. So, when the kibbutz developed beyond its initial stage of intense poverty, pressure against the children's houses, particularly from women, also developed. The resistance to allomothering was apparent with the first two children born on the very first kibbutz. The mother of the first suggested to the mother of the second that they share childcare duties to allow each to do some other work, but the second mother preferred to care only for her child (Baratz, 1954). Finally, sociobiologists interpret kibbutz women's support for stable marriage as an effort to extract greater parental investment from the fathers of their children.

It is probably unnecessary to say that the sociobiological explanation of gender-inequality on the kibbutz sparked a heated debate. Culturalists have responded by refining their arguments and improving their evidence. Hertz and Baker (1983), for example, conclude from their fieldwork on one kibbutz that women are forced, often against their will, into differentiated jobs by an opportunity structure that develops from job-practice placements in high school. Young women are initially placed in child-care, young men in production, and later placements depend on the first through experience. Large-scale surveys of kibbutz women reveal, however, that rather than begrudging the gender-differentiation of kibbutz work, they overwhelmingly accept it as proper and legitimate (Rosner, 1966). Other evidence against the opportunity structure argument is that women who work in a "men's job" for their first job, and therefore have the production experience that creates opportunity, are still likely to make the transition to services with subsequent jobs (Tiger and Shepher, 1975).

Evidence for another cultural argument comes from Leviatan's (1985) finding that the accuracy of children's perceptions of the sex-composition of kibbutz jobs improves between the ages of three and ten. This is argued to show that socialization to gender roles takes place despite efforts to avoid it. However, that evidence was accumulated in the 1980s, and Spiro's original account of gender-neutral socialization comes from 1951. Even if kibbutz children now learn gender roles through observation, there was a generation that observed undifferentiated gender roles, but implemented differentiated ones.

Another approach has been to recast the implications of gender differentiation and familization. Rosner and Palgi (1982), while recognizing the objective facts of job specialization and familization, assert that the kibbutz has not recreated the roles of "breadwinner" and "housewife", allowing women more freedom to work outside the home. They also claim that women's jobs on the kibbutz do not entail lower status or other rewards. The first of these arguments may have been true before children moved into their parents' apartments, but now kibbutz women seem to be as burdened or as free as other working women. Kibbutz mothers' "outside" working hours were even cut by 12.5% to 37.5% in recognition of the increased effort they would have to expend to care for their children in a family home. There was no corresponding reduction for kibbutz fathers. The second argument is questionable against the evidence. Ben Rafael (1988) asked 140 respondents from seven kibbutzim to rank ten "branches" (the kibbutz term for a job location-type, e.g., factory or kitchen) in terms of status. Production branches dominated service branches in status. He also evaluated the status of 217 members of 15 kibbutzim, with a coding, verified by kibbutz "judges" that was based on job-type and public activity. Men were found to be far more common in the highest of the four status-categories, making up seventy-five percent of the category. Men were also far more likely

than women to be identified as a “notable person” by respondents, although they were also more likely to be identified as “isolated persons.” In a survey of 50 Artzi kibbutzim in the late 1950s, 35% of women thought that increasing the participation of men in consumer services was a route to make the work more satisfying (Viteles, 1967). Studies on various kibbutz samples indicate that work is less central for kibbutz women as opposed to men, although the differences appear to be smaller on the kibbutz than in other societies (Leviatan, 1985). A study of 569 adolescents indicated that kibbutz females had lower self-esteem than kibbutz-males, and than urban adolescents of either gender (Orr and Dinur, 1995).

### **Consumption**

Production and consumption are basic processes in any society. In the kibbutz the two come together in Marx’s aphorism “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,” in which there is no stated conditional linkage between the two. The kibbutz federations have altered Marx’s clause in some informative ways and have reinterpreted it over the years. In its 1958 conference, the Artzi federation restated the principle: “...Only if the member gives to the kibbutz to his fullest capacity can the ability of the kibbutz to care for the member is guaranteed.” (cited in Saltman, 1983: 131). More than one federation has added a qualification, stating that “to each according to his needs” as long as it is “within the means of the community” (Barkai, 1977: 11). Underlying these changes is a salient characteristic of the kibbutz’s existence and evolution, that of pragmatism.

Two principles guided consumption in the kibbutz, one is that the kibbutz provides for each member’s needs and the other is the value of asceticism (Diamond, 1957; Talmon-Garber, 1972). So in effect, consumption in the kibbutz, at least as stated, allows for individual differences in needs and tastes. After some experiments the system that emerged in the early

kibbutzim included a combination of three consumption systems: the free-goods, the rationing and the points system (Barkai, 1977). Each was applied to a different set of goods. The free-goods system was to satisfy equality, individual tastes, and (communal) scarcity. So, goods included in this system were free at the individual level but within a budgetary constraint. An example is the communal eating in the dining-hall, where food was free and individuals could choose (from what was available) what they want to eat and how much of it. Medical-care, education and utilities such as electricity have all traditionally been free-goods. Direct rationing was practiced as a means to transfer the community budget constraints to the individual level, so for each member a set quantity (and later monetary equivalence) of clothes, cigarettes, and footwear was allocated. For some durable consumer goods the rationing system is not applicable. An obvious example is housing, since houses can not be strictly equal--even if their size would be the same, housing quality varies by time of construction and location. The solution for consuming relatively expensive, durable goods, based on the principle of potential equality was the point system. Seniority in the kibbutz and age were the major criteria for assigning points, representing the individual's contribution to production. An individual's point endowment was then used for determining what she is entitled to and when (Barkai, 1977).

Much research has examined asceticism associated with religion, however, secular asceticism has not been studied. Asceticism, whether Protestant or kibbutz, implied a rejection of self-indulgence and accumulation of material goods for the purpose of raising the standard of living. Instead it emphasized a very modest life style, cutting down on consumption expenditure and reinvesting in production. Based on a long and insightful analysis of asceticism as a dynamic part of kibbutz ideology, Talmon-Garber (1972) argued the following. The extreme compliance of the early kibbutzim with socialist ideas of equality and cooperation was the main incentive for

asceticism, consumption was not to serve as a main source of motivation, and instead extreme normative control was required. “The pattern for regulating and balancing needs was laid down by the community. Most needs were met in kind in such quantity, rate, quality, and manner as was determined by the community, so that the individual had little scope for exchange and manipulation. Consumption practically ceased to be a legitimate personal outlet (Talmon-Garber, 1972: 207).” Asceticism is also rooted in the individual’s value system, allowing total devotion to ideals (Rosenfeld, 1957). As a differentiating symbol, a life of destitution served as “a badge of distinction for the select group of those who were actively involved in the realization of the goal.” Thus, kibbutzim life style did not only corresponded to their ideology, it signaled an elite status and served as a tangible evidence of the community’s moral strength and influence.

Consumption related values and the resulting structures changed dramatically over time with the constant rise in kibbutzim’s income levels (Rosenfeld, 1957; Talmon-Garber, 1972; Barkai, 1977; Rayman, 1981a; Saltman, 1983; Ben-Rafael, 1997; Gluck, 1998). The details of the various changes<sup>6</sup> are less interesting than the explanations for the changes. Talmon-Garber (1972) sees the change in ascetic values as a mirror of other changes in the kibbutz. She claims that internal inconsistencies in the original ideology created weak points where the erosion started. For example, the kibbutz asceticism was primarily goal-oriented thus combining materialism and idealism, a fusion that is bound to create strain. Achieving national independence, one of the foremost goals of kibbutzim, legitimized a gradual relaxation of the

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<sup>6</sup> For example, from an inclusive budget that allocates the monetary worth of a strictly defined line of products directly to members while supplementing it with another group of products supplied by the kibbutz, to a comprehensive budget allocates the maximum directly to the member’s personal budget.

ascetic ideal: Now it was time for satisfaction of individual needs. Kibbutz members' attitudes reflect the on-going change, showing a move away from ideologically-based asceticism. The outcome of the change from ascetic ideal to a greater emphasis on consumption is that "the rigid pattern of curbing expenditures breaks down, giving rise to ever growing demands. The growing desire for immediate satisfaction makes it more difficult for members to adjust to restrictions and delays in the supply of acknowledged needs. The sense of inequality becomes acute; kibbutz institutions are subjected to pressure and can no longer perform their function properly (Talmon-Garber, 1972: 208)."

### **KIBBUTZ-ENVIRONMENT RELATIONS**

*"...[t]he kibbutz is a cultural island in its physical separation, in its relatively high degree of autonomy, and in its own norms and practices, but it is an island with many bridges to nearby islands and to the mainland."* (Katz and Golomb, 1983: 67).

Like any other organization, the kibbutz is embedded in an environment containing other organizations and institutions. The kibbutz ideology, unlike that of many other utopian societies, never dictated a separatist stance (Kanter, 1972). On the contrary, the kibbutz movement always proclaimed openness to its surroundings, partly because it wanted to affect the society and spread its utopian-socialist way of life (Barkin and Bennet, 1983). The basis for the relationship between the kibbutzim and the Israeli society is a social exchange where kibbutzim received autonomy and resources, and contributed to the economy, the political and defense systems, and to the culture (Katz and Golomb, 1983). This social exchange is governed and managed by a set of interorganizational relationships. These relationships are complex and problematic exactly because of the relative openness of the kibbutz (Saltman, 1983).

Kibbutzim have had relationships with each other to form the federations, and regional enterprises to provide various centralized services such as cotton gins (Bijaoui, 1994; Niv and Bar-On, 1992). They have also had mutualistic and competitive relationships with other organizations. Mutualistic relations characterize organizations that share a goal such as promoting an ideology of socialism. Organizations that either disagree on ideological matters or compete for resources will have competitive relations (Ingram and Simons, 2000). Before detailing the kibbutzim's mutualistic and competitive relationships, we first consider their most prominent and complicated relationship, that with the state.

### **State-Kibbutz Relations**

The kibbutzim offer a natural laboratory for investigating organization-state relations because their history spans the weak-state of the British Mandate in Palestine, and the strong Israeli state. Britain occupied Palestine in 1917, and in 1922 was granted a mandate to rule there by the League of Nations. From the beginning, however, British rule struggled. The frustrations of the persistent Arab-Jewish conflict combined with poor prospects for economic gain by the British, resulted in a *de facto* abdication of many responsibilities of governance (Migdal, 1988; Shalev, 1992). Organizations, notably the comprehensive labor federation, the Histadrut, expanded their role to fill the institutional vacuum that resulted (Ingram and Simons, 2000). The kibbutzim, as the vanguard members of the Histadrut, played a major role in this corporatist system. The contribution of the kibbutzim to the governance of Palestine's Jewish society was multifold, encompassing defense, settlement of immigrants, and the conquest of unproductive or contested land. We have claimed that the kibbutz population expanded to satisfy the 'demand for order', with supporting evidence that kibbutz founding was stimulated by political violence and Jewish immigration during the British Mandate (Simons and Ingram, 1999).

The establishment of the Israeli State in 1948 brought a marked change in the political role of kibbutzim by bringing into existence an actor with the interest and capacity to provide order in Israel. This created a fascinating form of competition, between the state and corporatist organizations. Qualitative evidence of this competition comes from the rhetorical attacks on the kibbutzim by state officials. David Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister was vocal and persistent in criticism of the kibbutzim for failing to respond to state mandates, such as the demand that they absorb more immigrants (Near, 1997). The kibbutzim and their federative organizations were perceived as a threat to Ben-Gurion's view that the state alone should handle national objectives such as security and agricultural settlement. This attitude is succinctly summarized in a kibbutz member's recollection that [Ben-Gurion] "feared our strength, so he had to break us up. He didn't want any strong autonomous organizations, because he considered them a threat to the new State (Lieblich, 1984: 119)." The quantitative evidence of State-kibbutz competition is that after the formation of the Israeli state in 1948, political violence and Jewish immigration no longer stimulated kibbutz founding. Instead, organizations associated with the state arose in response to those needs (Simons and Ingram, 1999).

It would be easy to dismiss the relationships between kibbutzim and the state as idiosyncratic—few other organizational forms seem so central for the generation of order, and so much in conflict with the state. Our position, instead, is that the unusual experience of the kibbutzim serves to illustrate the underlying, but seldom observed, reality of state-organization relations. The state, despite some unique capabilities is really just an organizational actor, pursuing its interest of maintaining power by providing order. At the same time, other organizations can generate order, which can bring them into conflict with the state. The resulting view is of organizations and the state interacting in relations that are mutualistic or competitive,

depending on state and organizational strength. This view is more useful for explaining state actions towards particular organizations, and gives a fuller account of the sources of order.

### **Mutualistic Relations**

*Kibbutz Federations.* In recent years there is a growing interest in the role of associations (organized interests) of organizations in the social-economic sphere. Business groups, as Granovetter (1994) refers to them, serve as an important intermediate level of analysis between atomized firms and macro-economic activity, but are understudied. The kibbutz federations perform many of the roles and activities that business groups do. The relations among kibbutzim in a federation facilitate interorganizational learning, and have operating implications for members (Ingram and Simons, 1999). Individual kibbutzim gave the right to regulate to the federation, thus relinquishing some of their autonomy. The federation establishes rules and norms of behavior and reduces transaction costs for member organizations by coordinating production and managing competition (Ingram and Simons, 2000). The kibbutz federations were also active in the cultural, educational, political and ideological spheres.

The federations provided various services to the kibbutzim such as training in specific agricultural methods or new educational ideas (Ingram and Simons, 1999). They also carried out recruiting and initial screening of potential new members for the kibbutzim. Another important role was that of generating a sense of mutual responsibility and support among the kibbutzim. An example of such mutual support is getting people from older kibbutzim to go to newer ones where their experience and maturity are needed. Federations also channeled aid from wealthier kibbutzim to others in need within the federation as well as allocating resources obtained from the government or banks (Rosolio, 1994, 1998). Political representation and protection of kibbutz economical interests in the distribution of the national resources were other prominent

roles. Generally, the efforts of the federations can be seen as attempts to do things that individual kibbutzim are too small to do themselves (Granovetter, 1994).

Federations also served as ideological centers and brokers. Each developed and shaped kibbutz ideology and translated it to strategic plans and daily operations. In doing that they had to balance between the ideological tenets and pragmatic considerations. A case in point is the issue of hired labor - many conventions and discussions were devoted to the ideological ramifications of this practice. All the federations had resolutions and plans for reducing the number of hired employees used by their member kibbutzim (Simons and Ingram, 1997). Thus, the federations were actively involved in monitoring the implementation of ideology and served as ideological supervisors. Ideological education is also achieved through institutions that the federations established, such as the youth movements and educational centers.

While each federation developed a different pattern of relations with their individual units, trends of centralization and decentralization of the Israeli state have led to parallel processes at the federations (Rosalio, 1998). This supports the idea that the state exerts isomorphic pressures on its subject organizations (Meyer, Scott and Strang, 1987). The Israeli State was initially centralized, reflecting the need to mobilize resources to meet early crises. As the need for the mission-oriented society gradually diminished so did the need for a centralized governmental system, and a shift of power from the center to the periphery occurred. This shift was accompanied by an increase in the number and power of various kibbutz regional associations (e.g., regional municipal councils, regional schools, and economic organizations) at the expense of the federations. In the face of the severe economic crisis of the 1980s the relationships between the federations and the individual kibbutzim became more strained,

creating sentiment among the kibbutzim to further loosen ties to the federations (Ben-Rafael, 1997).

*Other cooperative organizations.* Kibbutzim have ties with ideologically similar groups both within Israel, such as the various urban cooperatives, and internationally (Daniel, 1976).

Organizations sharing an ideology can support each other by sharing experience and information, patronage, money encouragement, and legitimacy, and by cooperating in efforts at political influence. That rationale explains the finding that the growth of two separate socialist populations – credit cooperatives and kibbutzim, decreased the failure rate of Israeli workers' cooperatives (Ingram and Simons, 2000).

More distant relations with utopian communities outside the borders of Israel exist and prosper. Cooperation between the kibbutzim and other organizations has often been in the form of knowledge sharing. Since the kibbutz has become world renowned for its success in fulfilling the utopian-socialist ideal, it has attracted attention and interest of those who were interested in implementing similar models. Representatives from Asia and Africa have visited kibbutzim training centers to gain an understanding of the kibbutz success (Katz and Golomb, 1983). Likewise, kibbutz members have always been drawn to organizations elsewhere that shared their ideology. A case in point is the relationship that has developed over the years between the Bruderhof communal movement and the kibbutz movement and is described in Oved's (1993) monograph titled "Distant Brothers". Even currently, when the kibbutz's status in the Israeli society is on the decline, interest from around the world persists (Yediot Aharonot, January 3, 1997).

## **Competitive Relations**

*The Moshav.* A moshav is a cooperative smallholders agricultural settlement. Moshavim (plural) differ from kibbutzim primarily in the private ownership of homes and a lower degree of communalism and collectivism in the organization of production (Ben-David, 1983). Basic principles of all moshavim include cooperative marketing and purchasing, water supply, use of agricultural machinery and communal services. One type of moshav (moshav shitufi) has all-inclusive cooperative joint production and is thus close in ideology and structure to the kibbutz. However, the moshav-shitufi is a small minority among moshavim, so moshavim on the whole are less communal than kibbutzim (Viteles, 1966). A moshav, as an agricultural settlement, requires the same resources of land, water and people, as a kibbutz.

Kibbutzim and moshavim competed for resources and for the status of pioneering leaders in the Zionist struggle. Until 1948 kibbutzim had a great deal more manpower, prestige and public influence than moshavim and they performed better on a number of dimensions such as productivity and education. Kibbutzim had an advantage in recruiting because of their established ties with the youth movements and because, according to Near (1997), they were more attractive to young people. The influx of immigrants after 1948, however, lacked a youth movement background and any affinity to socialist ideas. Between 1948 and 1954, 180 moshavim were founded by immigrants, and 43 by the second generation from veteran moshavim. One hundred kibbutzim were founded in the same period. Ninety-seven of these new moshavim were located in vital and dangerous border areas as defined by military authorities (as were 64 of the new kibbutzim; Near, 1997). So, the moshavim, especially the new immigrant ones, were impinging on defense, traditionally one of the kibbutzim's primary functions. Another crucial function of the kibbutzim prior to the establishment of the state was

the absorption of immigration (Ben-David, 1983). After 1948 the majority of immigrants that went to rural settlements went to moshavim. The competition between kibbutzim and moshavim is also borne out in Parag's (1999) analysis of the failure rates of kibbutzim. Those rates were found to increase as a function on the density of moshavim in a kibbutz's geographic region.

The competition between kibbutzim and moshavim is particularly notable in light of our earlier argument that organizations with similar ideologies (such as the kibbutzim and urban cooperatives) will have mutualistic relationships. Moshavim are less communal than kibbutzim, but their ideologies are clearly similar when considered relative to the set of ideologies that influenced other organizations in their environment. Certainly, both kibbutzim and moshavim are variants of rural cooperatives. Why then do they exhibit competitive rather than mutualistic relations? The answer is that there is an interaction between their similarity of ideology and similarity of required resources, such that the combination brings them into close competition. Unlike urban cooperatives, moshavim pursue a set of resources similar to those pursued by kibbutzim. Indeed, kibbutzim and moshavim may be seen as functional substitutes in terms of the exchange they sought with Israeli society. This indicates an important scope condition to the prediction of mutualism between organizations of similar ideology, that it will only occur if the organizations pursue substantially different sets of resources.

*Development towns.* These towns were established in the 1950s as massive waves of immigration arrived to the young state and many new immigrants, primarily from North Africa, were settled in them. Many development towns were located in the periphery, often close to Israel's borders with its adversary Arab neighbors. By 1957, thirteen development towns were founded in such localities. This created a substantive infringement on the status of kibbutzim as border posts. It also meant the kibbutzim now had new neighbors in their close vicinity, people

who had a dramatically different background and as things evolved, very different socio-economic futures.

The development towns did not enjoy the same level of education, availability of work and amenities as their neighbor kibbutzim, and were excluded from the kibbutzim regional high schools and libraries (Rayman, 1981b). Development town residents were often employees in kibbutzim, and labor disputes were not uncommon. This situation was the basis for high levels of alienation and resentment of the development towns' residents toward the kibbutzim (Bijaoui Fogiel, 1988). This state of affairs is portrayed by a development town resident: "I do not care that they [the kibbutzniks] have a high standard of living, that they exploit workers from town, that they live in a closed society which forbids entrance to people of other classes... What I care is that these fattened hens dress up like peacocks, that they live like rich farmers, but call themselves progressive, the best of the youth, socialists (Ben Chorin, 1983: 84 in Ben-Rafael, 1997)." The most dramatic manifestation of these sentiments was the 1977 election's campaign and results. Menachem Begin, the Likud (right wing) party leader, led a successful campaign that focused on the development towns' inferior circumstances as compared to the kibbutzim. For the development towns' residents the kibbutzim were equated with the establishment, which they perceived as discriminatory.

Some kibbutz members expressed their reservations about the hostile relations they had with the development towns (Ben-Rafael, 1997). Further, the kibbutz federations allocated money and personnel to help immigrant towns (Rosolio, 1994), focusing primarily on education related activities to youth after school hours and illiterate adults. Starting in 1965 many young kibbutz members spent a year of community service in development towns before going into the army. But those activities were often interpreted in the towns as attempts by the establishment to

increase its control (Ben-Rafael, 1997; Near, 1997). So, although kibbutzim did not subscribe to isolationism, over the years, some segments in Israeli society consolidated a perception of the kibbutzim as an exploitative, affluent, elitist group. A slow but persistent process of erosion of the kibbutz movement's legitimacy and standing in Israeli society was the result.

*Capitalist Organizations.* There is a competitive analog to the tendency of ideologically similar organizations (excepting those that compete for the same resources) to help each other. Since ideology defines the propriety of social arrangements, organizations infused with one ideology can be expected to act to restrict, change or eliminate other organizations that subscribe to a different ideology. We generated evidence of this in the form of a finding that kibbutzim were more likely to forego their socialist organizing principles when they were indebted to capitalist banks and therefore subject to ideological coercion from the banks (Simons and Ingram, 1997). At the level of populations, we have shown that the growth of capitalist banks in Israel increased the failure rate of urban cooperatives (Ingram and Simons, 2000). As the Israeli society moves away from socialism and embraces capitalism, the struggle between organizations representing those ideologies is probably at its climax. The current conditions are such that kibbutzim are considering dramatic departures from their ideologies and practices.

The rise of capitalist organizations, and of functional substitutes to the kibbutz such as moshavim and development towns, has been apparent in public attitudes. These indicate a gradual decline in the legitimacy of the kibbutz as a central organizational form in Israel. Until the mid-1980s appreciation of the kibbutzim's contribution to society and support for them were high. At about that time, it became apparent that the kibbutzim faced an economic crisis. The loss of political influence since the Likud victory in 1977, lagging agricultural markets, skyrocketing interest rates, and poor decisions on industrial investments and spending on

consumption combined to create the crisis (Ben-Rafael, 1997). Total debt of kibbutzim more than doubled between 1984 and 1988, and ultimately, a bailout supported by major banks and the government was required. These events affected internal and external perceptions of the kibbutz. Results of a public opinions survey from 1996 show that 50% of the Israeli public still has a positive attitude toward kibbutzim (60% a decade earlier) but 25% expressed a negative attitude (8% a decade earlier). Another survey done in 1995 showed that only 54% (70% in previous years) thought that the kibbutzim contributed to the achievement of social and national goals (Leviatan, Quarter and Oliver, 1998).

## **CHANGE**

*We are losing our identity. The kibbutz movement nowadays is very heterogeneous; it is hard to say what the kibbutz movement consists of, what a kibbutz is.*” (Aharon Dagan, a Takam leader in Ben-Rafael, 1997: 139).

Kibbutz, change, and crisis are three words that in the past 15 years seem inseparable, be it in research or popular writing (Ben-Rafael, 1997; Leviatan, Oliver and Quarter, 1998). Since the unveiling of the kibbutz financial crisis in the mid-1980s, there is a widespread sentiment that the old kibbutz is “dead,” and active speculation on the new form that the kibbutz will take.

Consultants, academics and kibbutz leaders talk of mass privatization, separation of community and business, differential wages, and staffing committees with experts instead of kibbutz members (Getz, 1994, 1998). The Registrar of Cooperatives, who is a government official in charge of all cooperatives, including kibbutzim, gives facts that shed a different light on changes in kibbutzim. A kibbutz is a legal entity and as such there is a clear articulation of the parameters a community must exhibit in order for it to “qualify” as a kibbutz. Kibbutzim that wish to incorporate changes that potentially contradict the legal parameters of a kibbutz have to submit the proposed change(s) to the Registrar for approval. If the proposed change is within the

legal definition of the kibbutz and the process of its approval within the kibbutz was according to the law, then it will be approved. However, if it diverges from the letter of the law, the Registrar has the authority to refuse the change, and if a kibbutz tries to implement a change without approval, to prosecute the kibbutz. The Registrar is firm, for example, that kibbutzim that implement differential wages will lose their kibbutz status. According to the Registrar, as of June 1999, only five to seven percent of kibbutzim have implemented or are in the process of trying to implement changes that will result in a change in their legal status. Thus, it seems that many accounts of the rapidly changing kibbutz are overstated. The debate on change is passionate and infused with rhetoric because of the ideological ramifications and because of the practical implications for kibbutz members' life now and in the future, the kibbutz movement, and the Israeli society and economy.

### **Ideology/practicality “battle” as a trigger to change**

All organizations and social systems either adapt to new circumstances by changing, or ultimately fail (Katz and Kahn, 1978). It is also reasonable to assume that, because all organizations are infused with ideology, many confront an ideological-practical conflict like that of the kibbutz (Rosner et al, 1990). This can occur even for organizations that employ an ideology that leads to favorable material outcomes, as did kibbutz ideology. Other organizations supporting rival ideologies may challenge an ideology's practicality with little regard for objective evidence. This happens, for example, when capitalists argue that cooperative organizations are inefficient, despite evidence to the contrary. And organizational participants may question the practicality of specific ideological practices apart from the overall effect of a set of practices. Ideology may also include a conception of organizational change, as on the

kibbutz where there is a newer conception that the kibbutz has to adapt to the member instead of the other way around.

In the current change “craze”, the assumed contradiction between ideology and efficiency, between the ideological imperative and the technological imperative, are more salient than ever. The kibbutz ideology combined with its striving to exist as a viable economic community and remain open to its environment, render the dilemma inevitable. But kibbutzim always modified their structure and practices to address changing circumstances and needs. Examples abound: the abolishment of the communal sleeping arrangement because parents wanted their children in the family home; accepting the use of hired labor because of chronic manpower shortage; allowing the university matriculation exams in kibbutz high schools; and changing the form of personal budgets to allow greater autonomy and individual choice for members (Helman, 1994). So, is the current change debate different?

Most researchers seem to think that it is. While the fundamental issue is still the ideology/pragmatism conflict, two areas of difference appear. One is the kibbutzim’s baseline situation as they enter the change debate. Kibbutzim were never in such economical dire straits accompanied by relatively weak public and political standing. This negative combination results in calls to strengthen the market approach both in the production and consumption spheres and to prevent intervention of “irrelevant” social and ideological constraints in the management of economic enterprises. The second component has to do with the pace of changes and their origins (Ben-Rafael, 1997). In the past changes were diffused, and developed in an “evolutionary process”. The changes were slow, communities could treat each change independently and in many cases grassroots initiators started the change. Whereas now kibbutzim are facing clusters of changes and the pace is revolutionary rather than evolutionary.

Kibbutzim may consider a number of simultaneous changes, such as charging for domestic electricity, allowing meals to be eaten in the home, implementing food budgets for families, establishing boards of directors for factories, broadcasting general assembly meetings via internal television, encouraging members to work outside the kibbutz, and opening the kibbutz swimming pool to the public (Ben-Rafael, 1997). The breadth of change makes careful consideration and evaluation less feasible. An “ideology of change” is developing, potentially leading to a wholesale acceptance of anything that is different and new (Rosner and Getz, 1994).

### **Sources of inertia**

Change is always in the face of inertial forces that maintain an organization’s existing structures and practices. The kibbutz experience illustrates that ideology is one such force. Ideology serves as a yardstick for evaluating change and thus any change that deviates from the ideological dictates is likely to be rejected. In practice, kibbutzim have been pragmatic in their evaluation of suggested changes. Nevertheless, the role of ideology as an inertial force should not be under-emphasized. The inertial properties of ideology are reflected in individuals’ attitudes toward changes that are counter to their ideology.

Individuals vary in their interpretations of reality and their preferences for action to address it. Thus, responding to kibbutz members’ interests isn’t easy because there are multiple preferences and ideas for action. This is particularly relevant when discussing change in kibbutzim and analyzing the “force field” of the opposing and supporting camps of the changes. In kibbutzim some of the most stable and consistent realities are tied to the process of change. One, mentioned above, is the ideology-practical conflict as a trigger for change. Another is the intergenerational difference in attitudes toward change and particularly change that involves a

departure from the kibbutz ideological tenets (Rosner et al, 1990). As Ben-Rafael (1997: 155) stated more generally “we expect that in the kibbutz, aspirations and commitments to change, or, on the contrary, to the retention of existing social arrangements, might be accounted for not only by a variety of specific social interests, but also by tensions or dilemmas embedded in, or at least relating to, the structure of the collective identity.” It is a widely accepted assumption that the younger generation is more supportive of changes than the older generation. In the context of kibbutzim the gap between the second generation and the founding generation should be even larger because of the latter’s special character and their huge personal investments in establishing the kibbutzim (Rosner and Getz, 1994). Both Rosner et al (1990) and Ben-Rafael (1997) find in their studies evidence supporting the more conservative attitudes among the first generation or older kibbutz members respectively.

The kibbutz federations performed a dual role of linking between the kibbutzim and the environment but also as buffers for the kibbutzim. Their size, status and credibility enabled the federations access to resources that were then transferred to the individual kibbutzim. Any buffer that isolates, or protects an organization is also an inertial mechanism because of its shielding effect. The kibbutz federations did not view the 1977 overthrow of the Labor government as a political cultural change that requires adaptation by the kibbutz movement; they treated it only as a political accident. The changes in the economic policy were perceived merely as political moves. The federations’ rigid interpretation of the occurrences in the social economic environment resulted in the continuation of their policies and economics as though nothing had changed. In their capacity as buffers the federations were in charge of interpreting the environment thus the same attitude was passed on to the individual kibbutzim. In the face of a fundamental change in the government’s attitude toward the state’s role in the economy, the

kibbutzim were not directed to change their economic plans and assumptions, nor did the federations change (Rosolio, 1994).

Lastly is the inertia that results from the kibbutz's legal definition. The earliest legislation concerning cooperative societies is from the British mandate period and it has remained, with some changes and additions, over the years. A number of elements of the kibbutz definition create an inertial force that reduces the likelihood for substantial changes. Maron (1994:7-8) describes a kibbutz "that decided to end collective responsibility by the kibbutz as a whole and to shift that responsibility to the individual members. ...At that point the government Registrar of Cooperatives stepped in and reminded the members that kibbutz principles, including that of a shared purse, are grounded in law and not subject to alteration only on the basis of internal decision-making within a particular kibbutz. Changes [required] transforming the particular settlement from 'kibbutz' to a different legal definition." Notably, when a kibbutz changes its legal form, it loses its beneficial status for tax and social security payments.

## **CONCLUSION**

Recent interpretations of economic history, and the related evaluations of organizational forms, celebrate the triumph of capitalism. The alternative of state socialism seems destined for the junk-heap of failed social experiments. Many commentators seem to have doomed the kibbutz by association. In truth, the kibbutz is in much better condition than contemporary observers admit, but was never as glorious as observers of the past have boasted. The reality is an organizational form that has exhibited notable robustness and adaptiveness in an environment that was turbulent and often hostile. It can claim successes that will evoke envy from the stakeholders of many capitalist-hierarchical organizations. It has generated economic performance better than its alternatives, while achieving difficult political objectives, and

maintaining a level of workplace democracy that appears to flaunt the ‘iron law’ of oligarchy. At the same time it has incurred failures that would appear to its founders to be devastating. Once sacred organizing principles have been sacrificed, principally those of self-labor and gender equality. The socialist society that all of the kibbutz federations pursued has not materialized.

To begin to summarize the implications of the kibbutz for organizational behavior, it is useful to think about how the kibbutz model be received if it was introduced into the contemporary landscape of dominant understandings about organization. What if a consultant proposed to senior management that hierarchical authority be abolished, and that social relations between employees be cultivated as the basis for emergent, normative control? If the founder of a dot-com enterprise explained to a venture capitalist that the organization would pay every participant in the organization the same, that it would give jobs to them as long as they and the organization both lived, and that she herself would soon become the mail clerk thanks to mandatory job-rotation. Or if an MBA student recommended to classmates that the subject-organization of a case study undertake not only to manage its production process according to a set of values that reflect economic and non-economic goals, but also to directly provide policing for its headquarter city? No doubt these proposals would be met with ridicule. Their advocates would probably be told that it is simply impossible for organizations to do these things while satisfying the material desires of their participants. Yet, the kibbutz has done all of these things and has a good record of providing for participants.

For organizational behavior, three lessons from the kibbutz experience are most significant. Regarding internal organization, the kibbutz demonstrates the feasibility of a control

system that is decentralized and reliant on social control, an alternative to the pervasive hierarchical model. More than that, the kibbutz illustrates the complete system of components necessary for this system to flourish. These include a socialization system that promotes group values; organization of work to emphasize participant equality, group cohesiveness, and non-material rewards; and a close-coupling between the work and non-work spheres that gives teeth to social sanctions.

At the interorganizational level, the kibbutzim used federations to achieve the ends that no lone organization could. Most remarkably, the federations, and other superorganizations such as the Histadrut, provided corporatist governance to Jewish society under the British Mandate. This example prompts the recognition that organizations provide political order as well as rely on it, and suggests a re-evaluation of the relationship between organizations and the state. The federations acted towards other collective interests of their members, particularly the maintenance of ideology. They also generated the type of operational mutualism (e.g., the sharing of experience) that is the elusive goal of many business groups in Western economies.

The final lesson is about the role of ideology for understanding organizational behavior. By now it is clear that kibbutzim's internal organization and external relations can only be understood in the context of their utopian ideology. There is no other way to understand why, for example, they chose not to employ outside labor when it was profitable, or why capitalist organizations coerced them to reverse that policy. Despite the obvious relevance of ideology to kibbutzim, however, our position is not that they are "ideological organizations." We believe that ideology affects all organizations, that General Motors is no less ideological than Kibbutz Degania. The salience of ideologies is lower in countries like the United States where organizations that make products and provide services are relatively homogenous in their

commitment to capitalism's ideology. The difference for the kibbutzim is not that they are more ideological, but rather that their ideology differs from that of most observers, and from that of many organizations in their economic system. We advocate recognition of and attention to the ideological character of all organizations as a means to a clearer understanding of why they do what they do.

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