THE CHANGING STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF FAMILY IN ISRAELI *KIBBUTZIM*

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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2003

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled **THE CHANGING STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF FAMILY IN ISRAELI KIBBUTZIM** submitted by **KUMAR RAKA** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (M.Phil)** of this University, to the best of my knowledge, is his own work and has not been previously submitted for any degree or diploma of this or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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To
My Parents
Who Indoctrinated Regard For The Traditions

PREFACE

Over the past hundred years, the structure and functions of family have undergone a fundamental change, a change so great that a radical reformation of family is seen as inevitable and its future existence is even being occasionally questioned. Whereas once family life was concerned with the fulfillment of objective functions, now its main interest lies in the satisfaction of individual needs. The structure of family is in a state of transition from an institution to a voluntary group established for the purpose of companionship. In this new form of family life great emphasis is placed on the value of love, emotions and individual happiness.

An extreme form of voluntary group establishment was developed by certain communes including *kibbutzim*. They regarded the conventional and institutional form of family as solely an obstacle to the feeling of brotherhood and considered it as a source of jealousy and tension. For a long time the *kibbutz* tried to rebel against this form of family. There were strong anti-familistic tendencies directed towards the control of practical family tasks and severance of emotional ties. These evidences suggest that universality of family is not the issue. But the more important issue is to explore the diversity of families. In fact, family is a socially created institution influenced by the social factors, the cultural norms of society and the prevailing economic conditions.

For anyone interested in the potentialities and limits of human nature for the achievement of radical change in human social relations, utopian communities, created for the purpose of implementing a vision of society based on man's highest ideals of equality, justice, and humanity, constitute crucial experiments for

study and analysis. *Kibbutz* community that is arguably not a family but are capable of performing family's functions, present an invaluable test case to study the family organization in this unique settlement.

This dissertation proposes to study the origin, evolution and establishment of family as well as its dynamic structure and functions in the *kibbutz*. The whole schematic presentation has been divided into five chapters.

The **first chapter** introduces the *kibbutz* in general and in historical perspective to create a conceptual framework on the basis of which the presentation proceeds.

The **second chapter** records the changing perception and structure of family and population in the *kibbutzim*.

The **third chapter** deals with the changing roles and role conflicts of the members within and outside the family in the *kibbutzim*.

The **fourth chapter** analyzes the causes that brought about a radical reformation in the conventional structure and functions of family and further initiates a discussion of its future prospects within the *kibbutzim*.

The concluding **fifth chapter** summarises the whole discussion in the form of certain definitive arguments.

Acknowledgements

My intellectual debts are too numerous to be acknowledged individually. More tangibly, I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Prakash C. Jain who has rendered constant help and invaluable guidance throughout. It has been a source of great inspiration to the researcher throughout the period of this work, to be beneath the shade of Dr. Prakash C. Jain's extensive and highly esteemed scholarship. It is most gratifying to the researcher to remember how greatly it helped the cause of the work to be graced by frequent display of considerations and magnanimity by him.

My acknowledgements are also due to Prof. S. N. Eisenstadt and Dr. Gila Adar who assisted and provided me with materials which are of great importance.

My deepest regards to my Maa, Daddy and sister to whom I owe so much. No form of expression can realize my indebtness to them.

I would like to thank the staff members of the JNU Library, Sapru House, American Center Library (ACL) and the Institute of Defense Studies and Analyses (IDSA).

I am no less indebted to Vishal sir, Rakesh, Niketa, Ritesh, kamala, Dhrub, Atul, Pallav and Tuntunji who provided me with their invaluable suggestions as well as technical and moral support throughout the work.

Last but not the least, my gratitude goes to my brother Chhotey, also my most intimate friend, who provided me with continuous support during this work.

Errors, if any, are mine.

KUMAR RAKA

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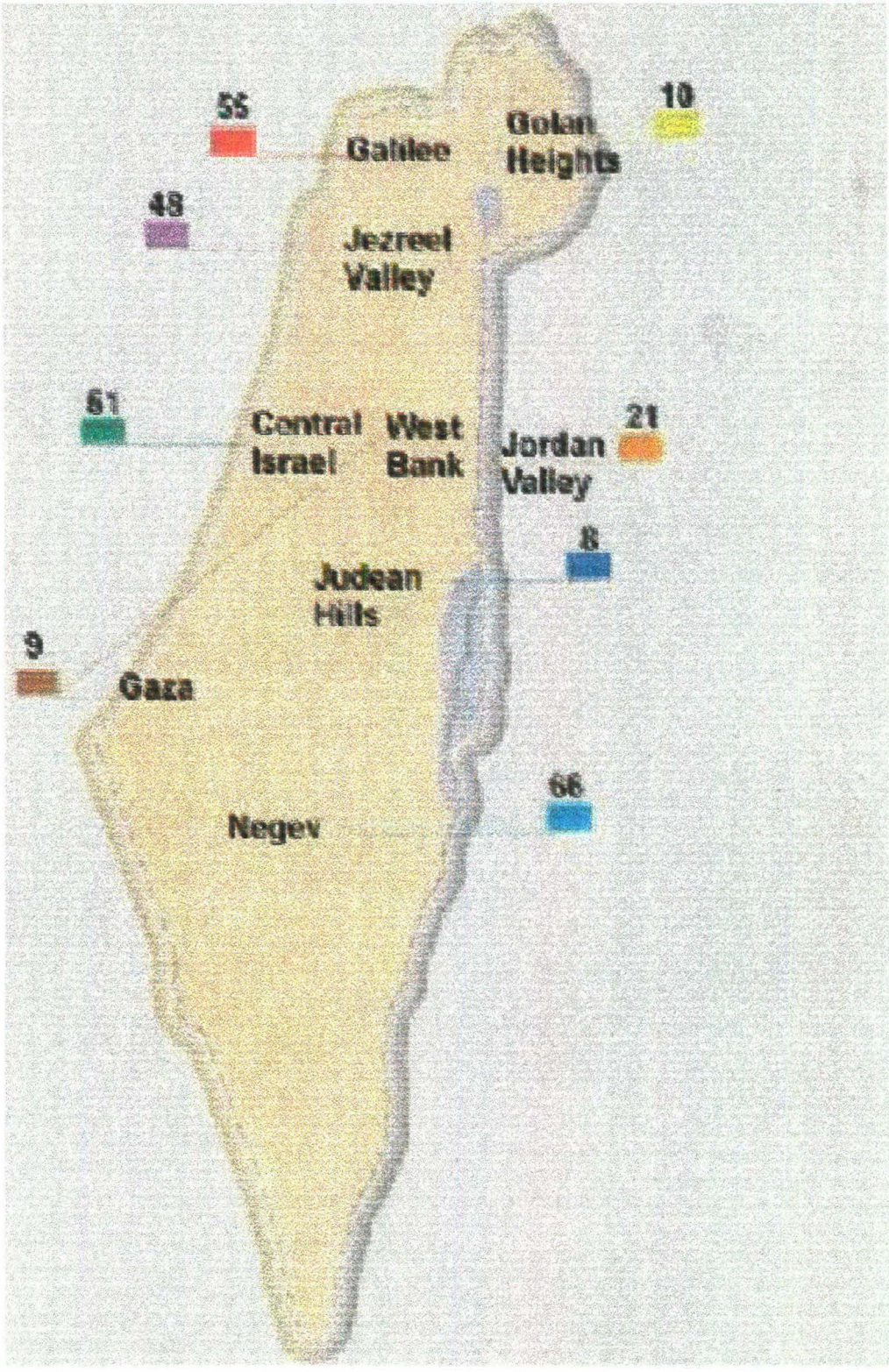
DISTRIBUTION OF *KIBBUTZIM* ACROSS ISRAEL



Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

ORIGIN, EVOLUTION AND HISTORY OF *KIBBUTZIM*

> "Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, the *kibbutz* is reexamining values and ideas, changing its way of life and renewing itself as a community based on the principles of cooperation. The *kibbutz* that enters the 21st century is very different from the one founded at the beginning of the 20th."[1]

As much as any twentieth-century organizational form, the *kibbutz* too has captured the imagination and attention of the public and the research community. Number of books, papers and thesis in such diverse fields as psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, political science, and education has 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 given a starring role to the *kibbutz*, at least until recently. All of this attention derives from the status of the *kibbutz* as a great experiment in utopianism, the extension of the control of a democratic organization to almost all elements of social and economic life.

The *kibbutz*, a Hebrew word for communal settlement, is a unique rural community. A society dedicated to mutual aid and social justice, a socio-economic system based on the principles of joint ownership of property, equality and co-operation of production, consumption and education. It is the fulfillment of the idea, "from each according to his ability to each according to his need", and a home for those who have chosen it.

It is almost a century since a small group of young Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, inspired by Zionist and socialist ideals, set up the first

[1] Shlomo Getz, "Winds of Change", in Uri Leviaton, Hugh Oliver and Jack Quarter (eds.), Crisis in Israeli Kibbutz, Praeger, London, 1998, p. 5.

Kvutza ("group" in Hebrew) renamed *kibbutz* (community), when membership grew on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. The first *kibbutzim* (plural of *'kibbutz'*) were founded some 40 years before the establishment of the State of Israel (1948). Their founders were young Jewish pioneers, mainly from Eastern Europe, who came not only to reclaim the soil of their ancient homeland, but also to forge a new way of life. Their path was rendered difficult due to a hostile environment, their inexperience with physical labor, lack of agricultural know-how, scarcity of water in the region and shortage of funds. Overcoming many hardships, they succeeded in developing a thriving community which played an important role in the establishment and the building of the State of Israel.

Organization

Most *kibbutzim* are laid out according to a similar plan. The residential area encompasses carefully tended members' homes and gardens, children's houses and playgrounds for every age group, and communal facilities such as a dining hall, auditorium, library, swimming pool, tennis court, medical clinic, laundry, grocery and the like. Adjacent to the living quarters are sheds for dairy cattle and modern chicken coops, as well as one or more industrial plants. Agricultural fields, orchards and fish ponds are located around the perimeter, a short tractor ride from the centre. To move from place to place within the *kibbutz*, people either walk or ride bicycles, while electric carts are provided for the disabled and elderly.

The *kibbutz* functions as a direct democracy. The general assembly of all its members formulates policy, elects officers, authorizes the *kibbutz* budget and approves new members. It serves not only as a decision- making body but also as a forum where members may freely express their opinions and views.

Day to day affairs are handled by elected committees, which deal with areas such as housing, finance, production, planning, health, and culture. The chairpersons of some of these committees, together with the secretary (who

holds the top position in the *kibbutz*), form the *kibbutz* executive. The positions of secretary, treasurer and work coordinator are, as a rule, fulltime, while other members serve on committees in addition to their regular jobs.

Making the Desert Bloom

For the founders, tilling the soil of their ancient homeland and transforming city dwellers into farmers was an ideology, and not just a way to earn a livelihood. Over the years, *kibbutz* farmers made barren lands bloom, with field crops, orchards, poultry, dairy and fish farming, and more recently, organic agriculture is fast becoming the mainstay of their economy. Through a combination of hard work and advanced farming methods, they achieved remarkable results, accounting for a large percentage of Israel's total agricultural output to this day.

Production activities of the *kibbutzim* are organized in several autonomous branches. While most of them are still in agriculture, today virtually all *kibbutzim* have expanded into various kinds of industry. Although manufacturing a wide range of products, from fashion clothing to irrigation systems, the majority of *kibbutz* industries are engaged in metal works, plastics and processed foods. Most industrial facilities are rather small, with less than hundred workers.

In many areas, *kibbutzim* have pooled their resources, establishing regional enterprises such as cotton gins and poultry packing plants, as well as providing a gamut of services ranging from computer data compilation to joint purchasing and marketing. The contribution of the *kibbutzim* to the country's total production, both in agriculture (33 percent of farm produce) and in industry (6.3 percent of manufactured goods), is far greater than their share of the population (2.5 percent). In recent years, increasing number of *kibbutzim* have become centres of tourism, with recreational facilities such as guest

houses, swimming pools, horseback riding, tennis courts, museums, exotic animal farms and water parks for Israeli and foreign visitors alike.[2]

As Israel's population grew and urban centers expanded, some *kibbutzim* found themselves virtually reduced as suburbs of cities. Due to their proximity to the rapidly growing urban areas, many of them now offer such services to the public as commercial laundries, catering, factory outlet stores and child care, including summer camps.

The Work Ethic

Work is a value in and of itself. The concept of the dignity of labour, elevating even the most menial of jobs with no special status, material or otherwise, was attached to all tasks crucial for the successful evolution and development of *kibbutzim*.

Table 1.1

Occupational Distribution of *Kibbutz* Members

Occupations	Percentage
Agriculture & fisheries	24
Industry & quarries	24
Tourism, commerce & finance	11
Transportation & communication	5
Building & utilities	1
Public & community services	18
Personal services	17

Source: Menachem Rosner, "Work in the *Kibbutz*", in Uri Leviathan, Hugh Oliver and Jack Quarter (eds.), Crisis in Israeli *Kibbutz*, Praeger, London, 1998, p. 13.

Members are assigned to positions for varying lengths of time, while routine functions such as kitchen and dining hall duty are performed on a rotation basis. Each economic branch is headed by an elected administrator who is replaced every two to three years. The post of economic co-ordinator is

[2] Menachem Rosner, "Work in the *Kibbutz*", in Uri Leviathan, Hugh Oliver and Jack Quarter (eds.), Crisis in Israeli *Kibbutz*, Praeger, London, 1998, p. 17.

responsible for organising the work of the different branches and for implementing production and investment plans.

Although management positions are getting increasingly professionalized, the *kibbutzim* have adopted various methods of administration and organization to adapt their economic structure to the needs of the times without losing a sense of mutual responsibility and equality of work.[3] Women are equal participants in the labor force, with jobs in all parts of the *kibbutz* open to them. However, in contrast to *kibbutz*, where women two generations ago sought to prove their worth by doing "men's work," the majority today are reluctant to become involved in agriculture and industry, preferring jobs in education, health and other services. Older members receive suitable work assignments according to their health and stamina.[4]

Most members work in the *kibbutz* itself. However, some are employed in regional *kibbutz* enterprises, a few are sent by the *kibbutz* to perform educational and political functions under the aegis of its ongoing national movements, while few others pursue their own special talent or profession outside the *kibbutz* framework. The income of these outside workers is turned over to the *kibbutz*.

The occasional lack of personnel for factories, agricultural tasks, tourism services and other jobs necessitates hiring of paid workers, although this practice runs contrary to the basic *kibbutz* principle of self-reliance in labour. Many *kibbutzim* host young volunteers from Israel and abroad for a period of one month or longer in exchange for work, thus partially solving the dilemma of obtaining outside labour.[5]

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[3] Ibid, p. 32.
[4] Ibid, p. 36.
[5] Ibid, p. 36.

Meeting Individual Needs

Based on the voluntary participation of its members, the *kibbutz* is a communal society which assumes responsibility for its members' needs throughout their lives. It is a society that strives to allow individuals to develop to their fullest potential, while at the same time demanding responsibility and commitment from each member to contribute towards the overall welfare of the community. For some, the feeling of security and satisfaction engendered by a sense of association to a small and closed community are among the advantages of *kibbutz* living, while others might find communal life very confining.

Initially, *kibbutz* society as a whole took precedence over the family unit. In due course of time, this priority shifted as the community became increasingly family-centred. Today, in the context of a normal society of grandparents, mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, sons and daughters, the *kibbutz* still offers a level of cooperation that provides a social framework and personal economic security.

Compared to the past, *kibbutzim* today offer their members a much wider range of individual choice. Members here have more latitude in all aspects of their lives, from the selection of clothing and home furnishings to where and how to spend their vacations. More opportunities are available to participate in higher education, and the special needs of artists and writers are recognized, with time made available to them to pursue their own projects. Although no money actually changes hand, members allot to themselves a predetermined amount of credit each year to spend as they wish.

Contributing to the State

The *kibbutz* is not only a form of settlement and a lifestyle, it is also an integral part of the Israeli society. Before the establishment of the State of Israel and in the formative years of statehood, the *kibbutzim* assumed central functions in settlement, immigration, defense and agricultural development. When these

functions were transferred to the government, the interaction between the *kibbutz* and the society at large decreased, though it never stopped completely. Besides active involvement in the country's political life, the *kibbutz* has also carried out various national tasks over the years.

A number of *kibbutzim* run five month study courses for fresh immigrants, which combines an intensive instruction in Hebrew language with an extensive tour of the country and lectures on various aspects of Israeli life, including periods of work on the *kibbutz*. Participants who decide to stay in the *kibbutz* may also apply for membership. Some *kibbutzim* take part in projects to accept youths from disadvantaged families until their high school years. Some of these young people who choose to continue living on the *kibbutz* are made members.

Traditions

Over the years, the *kibbutzim* have evolved unique ways of celebrating traditional Jewish festivals and national holidays, as well as personal milestones such as weddings, *bar/bat mitzvahs* (marriage ceremonies) and anniversaries. Seasonal and agricultural events, which were commemorated in biblical times, were revitalized through the performance of song, dance,drama and other forms of art.

Cultural activity abounds, with films and professional performances presented frequently in *kibbutz* auditoriums, and also through closed-circuit televisions placed at different locations, offering programs geared to the interests and tastes of the members. Pooling the talents of *kibbutz* members all over the country, the *kibbutz* movement sponsors a number of professional groups, including symphony orchestras, chamber ensembles, modern and folk dance troupes, choirs and theatre companies, who perform regularly in Israel and abroad.

Museums which specialise in subjects such as archaeology, natural art, Jewish history and the development of the land of Israel have been established by some *kibbutzim*, attracting members and visitors in large numbers.

Looking to the Future

The *kibbutz*, a social and economic achievement that grew out of a pioneering society, prospered along with a rapidly expanding economy and distinguished itself with its contribution to the establishment and development of the state of Israel.

Today's *kibbutz* signifies the accomplishment of three generations. The founders, motivated by a strong conviction and a distinct ideology, forged a society with a unique communal way of life. Their children, born in *kibbutz* framework, worked hard to consolidate its economic, social and administrative structures. The present generation, which grew up in an established and prosperous society, is applying its energies and talents to meet the challenges of modern life in this fast changing technological age.

Some fear that by adjusting to changing circumstances, the *kibbutz* is abandoning many of its original principles; whereas others believe that its ability to adapt and compromise is the key to its survival. Whatever lies ahead, as long as the *kibbutz* maintains its democratic nature and as long as the spirit of voluntarism, commitment and idealism continues to motivate its members, it will continue to have creative and compelling resources to meet the demands of the future.

Presently some 120,500 people live in some 269 *kibbutzim* spread across Israel, from the Golan Heights in the north to Red Sea in the south. Membership in *kibbutzim* ranges from less than hundred in few cases to more than 1000, with majority having several hundred members. Although each

kibbutz is socially and economically an autonomous unit, but their major activities are coordinated and some crucial services are provided by one of the national federations they belong to. The largest national federation is the United *Kibbutz* Movement, usually referred to by its Hebrew acronym *TAKAM*, with which 60 percent of the *kibbutzim* are affiliated. Some 32 percent of the *kibbutzim* belong to the *kibbutz Artzi* movement. The third largest federation is the *kibbutz Dati* (religious *kibbutz*) with which about 6 percent of *kibbutzim* are affiliated. Finally there are two national ultra-orthodox *kibbutzim*, which belong to *Poalei Agudat Yisrael*.

By Definition a *kibbutz* Is

"--- a voluntary collective community, mainly agricultural, in which there is no private wealth and which is responsible for all the needs of its members and their families."

— Encyclopedia Judaica, 1969

"--- an organization for settlement which maintains a collective society of members organized on the basis of general ownership of possessions. Its aims are self labour, equality and cooperation in all areas of production, consumption and education."

— Legal Definition in the Cooperative Societies Register

History of *Kibbutz* Movement

The Beginning

In 1910, a group of young pioneers, who swamped near Hadera and lived as a collective community, decided to establish an independent farm owned by its worker-members at Degania, thus forming the first *'kvutza'*. Other groups followed suit and by World War II there were over 30 such communities in Palestine. At that time the number of Jews living in Palestine was about 70,000, two-third of whom were orthodox Jews living on charity, while the remaining one-third members of the first Zionist immigration wave had become landowners and employers of Arab labour. The land was barren and desolate,

and living conditions were harsh and primitive. Outside the small urban centres of Jewish life, a settler found himself in a hostile Arab environment, desperately alone and isolated. It is to this world where the founders of "Degania" arrived.[6]

These founding fathers, who had emigrated in the late 19th and early 20th century, mainly from Russia, were imbued with the same ideals of socialism and spirit of the period, which had led to the Russian revolution in 1917. They also believed in 'Zionism' which was based on the return of Jews to the land of Israel and the tilling of its earth. They believed that this would lead to the creation of a new Jewish identity, which also expressed their political goal of establishing Jewish settlements in Palestine.

There decision to work together was an act of collective genius, generated by the cultural background of the members and the effect on them of the harsh conditions of their new life. There were members imbued with the Russian ideals of social revolution which formed part of their struggle in Palestine and a similar aspiration for a better society. The members of the group, disturbed by the hardships of working as hired labourers and of social isolation, came to see the establishment of a voluntary and a collective community as the only way of fulfilling their Zionist and socialist dream. They viewed *kibbutz* as a closely-knit egalitarian community based on the common ownership of the means of production and consumption, where all, conferring together, made decisions by a majority vote which bore responsibility for all. Despite economic setbacks and a waning ideology, the *kibbutz* movement since than has become the world's largest communitarian movement.

These first settlements regarded themselves as enlarged families and kept their membership small. In 1913-14, for example, Degania had only 28

[6] See: Menachem Gerson, Family, Women and Socialization in the *Kibbutz*, Lexington Books, D.C. HEATH and Company, Lexington, Massachusetts, 1978.

members.[7] They were poor, life was harsh and work centred on agriculture, which required draining swamps, removing rocks from the hills and transforming parts of the desert into fertile farmland. They had also to cope with extreme heat, malaria and food related illness. Social life revolved around the dinning room, where people would meet, eat and talk. Decisions were made by direct democracy. In discussions, which often continued late into night, members would decide how to allocate the following days work, guard duties, kitchen chores and other tasks, as well as debate problems and make decisions.

Growing Up

During the 1920s and the 30s, the settlements of single changed to one, in which families were formed, further leading to the establishment of schools and children's houses. Small industries began to appear mainly as an extension of agriculture, and these soon became profitable enterprises. Thereafter, the *kibbutzim* emerged, aiming to become large self-sufficient communities combining agriculture with industries.[8]

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The 30s also witnessed the beginning of a religious *kibbutz* movement, which saw the ideals of the movement, including equality, mutual help and building the land, as a realization of the Jewish way of life.[9] By 1948, with the establishment of the State of Israel, the *kibbutz* had not only succeeded in creating a unique society, but had also been instrumental in many aspects of struggle towards the creation of the state and in its early development. They assumed key functions in establishing settlements in outlying areas and along the country's future borders, immigrant absorption, defense and agricultural development. Once these functions were taken over by the government, the interaction between the *kibbutzim* and the society at large diminished, though it never stopped completely and remains marginal today.

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[7] Ibid, p. 56.

[8] Jon Fidler, "*Kibbutz*: What, Why, When, Where", in The *Kibbutz* Directory, Website: www.mishkei.org.il/english/ekibutz/htm, p. 3.

[9] Ibid, p. 4.

The first few decades after the establishment of the state, despite some ups and downs, showed accelerated growth of the *kibbutzim*, both demographically and economically. Birth of third and fourth generation *kibbutzniks* (members of *kibbutz*) led to the creation of large family groupings. Living standards also went up. In fact, in the 1960s their population rose more rapidly than in the country as a whole. Over the period of some 75 years the *kibbutz* population grew continuously, but since 1990 it has been slowly declining.[10]

The Crisis of 80s and 90s:

H.Barkai (1996) cites the prediction of the well-known economist, Franz Oppenheimer, who in 1926 predicted the "immediate, inevitable demise" of *kibbutzim*. Barkai explains the failure of latter's prediction and the economic success of *kibbutzim*, until the recent crisis, by citing two factors: (a) the special conditions in the initial stages of the evolution of the *kibbutz* and its central role during the period; (b) and the fact that the *kibbutz* membership was voluntary and that its members were a self-selected minority with behavioural traits that differed from those of the general population. On the basis of the economic decline since the crisis, he concludes that Oppenheimer's main error was "in timing". He did not take into consideration the special historical conditions and the behavioural traits of *kibbutzniks*.[11]

In the 1980s, triple digit inflation and exorbitant interest rates caused near economic ruin for many *kibbutz* factories (along with their non-*kibbutz* counterparts) and for the communities they supported. *Kibbutz* debts with banks rose dramatically as inflation rocketed, peaking at 450 percent in 1984.This micro instability caused great problems for the *kibbutzim* as they had

[10] Ibid, p.4.

[11] Menachem Rosner, Future Trends of the *Kibbutz*- An Assessment of Recent Changes, The Institute for Study and Research of the *Kibbutz*, University of Haifa, Publication No., 83, 2000, pp. 1-15.

borrowed heavily to develop industry and to change their internal structure. By 1985, one-third of the *kibbutzim* were in financial difficulties.[12]

The government, banks and *kibbutz* federations hammered out two major agreements for canceling and restructuring *kibbutz* debts. The price was heavy as some *kibbutzim* had to sell their agricultural lands to pay off debts; others had to slash operating costs and find new sources of income generation and ways for increasing the production. Often this required to cut back on expenses for basics like food, non-essential medical care, education and travel, as well as abandoning certain long held ideological beliefs, particularly in the realm of equality.

Global and national factors also influenced *kibbutzim* thinking. Ideologically, the collapse of the USSR played a part. Apart from this, members were exposed to new technologies of global communication as cable or satellite television found its way into many *kibbutz* homes, and the use of computers and the internet, both at work place and at home, spread rapidly.[13]

These developments and arguments underlie the questions about the future of the *kibbutz* and the possibility of its demise. Over the last 20 years since the beginning of the crisis almost all *kibbutzim* have continued to function as communal communities. Most of them have had to face economic hardships and demographic imbalances, with more members leaving than joining. Only recently a comprehensive financial recovery plan was implemented to deal with the large debts of many *kibbutzim*. However, a minority has continued to grow, both economically as well as demographically. Much larger inequalities than in the past have therefore arisen between communities. These developments have also led to the weakening of the role and the authority of the *kibbutz*

[12] Jon Fidler, op.cit., p. 5.
[13] Ibid, p. 5.

federations, which in the past were a major factor in the development of *kibbutz* communities.[14]

Doubts about the future of the *kibbutz* are also related to the institutional changes discussed and introduced in many communities. We can distinguish two stages of the change process that started in the late 1980s. The first stage, presented as a transition to a "new *kibbutz*"[15], was conceptualized as one based on market and hierarchical principles and mechanisms in the *kibbutz*.[16] The proponents of these changes assumed that it would enhance the economic efficiency of the *kibbutz*, increase the autonomy of members, and attract new members from outside.

These proposals have been partially implemented in three areas, with degree of implementation varying among different communities:

a. Partial privatization of the communal household through transition from direct supply of commodities and services to a system of allocation of monetary budgets to members, where commodities and services can be bought from both inside or outside the *kibbutz*. In almost all communities monetary budgets have replaced direct supply of commodities and services such as electricity, bus tickets, travel abroad, etc. Monetary budgets for clothing and furniture had been already introduced at preliminary stage. In almost half of the communities members receive money to pay for meals in the dining room.

b. Introduction of a quasi-market system of work allocation based on a free choice of work place by members. On the other hand, managers of *kibbutz* branches are free to decide whom they want to and whom they do not want to employ. While in the conventional labour market the balance between offer and

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[14] Danial Rosolio, "The *Kibbutz* Movement and the Way It Functions as a Cause of the *Kibbutz* Crisis: A Study of Political Economy", Journal of Rural Cooperation, Vol. 22, 1994, pp-63-78.

[15] Y. Harel, The New *Kibbutz*, Keter Publishing, Jerusalem, 1993.

[16] Menachem Rosner and Sholomo Getz, "Towards a Theory of Changes in the *Kibbutz*", Journal of Rural Cooperation, Vol. 22, 1994, pp. 41-61.

demand is realized - at least theoretically - through the mechanism of differential wages, but the proponents of this change opposed such inequalities and favoured equal wages. This basic inconsistency has created problems in the implementation of changes in this area.

Many *kibbutzim* have adopted free choice of workplace which in many cases resulted in a sharp rise in the number of members working outside the *kibbutz*. A parallel development is a significant increase in the number of hired workers employed in almost all aspects of the economy and community. The percentage of hired workers in the overall workforce of *kibbutz* industry increased from 29% in 1990 to 60% in 1997. On the other hand, it is difficult to implement a labour market system without wages. It is especially difficult to create a balance between the demand for labour in the existing work branches and the work preferences of members.[17] To overcome this difficulty some *kibbutzim* have introduced payment for specific types of work, e.g., for doing overtime and nightshifts and monetary sanctions for not fulfilling work duties.

c. The separation of community and economy. The rationale for this change was to "liberate" *kibbutz* economic organizations from restrictions caused by *kibbutz* values or social considerations. The assumption was that the separation would lead to an opening of the economic branches to the Israeli labour and capital markets, employing of hired workers and developing partnership with private capital. Another related aspect of this separation is the introduction of a more hierarchical form of organization, such as boards of directors, and the enhancement of managerial authority, as part of a general trend toward deviation from *kibbutz* self - management principles and conformity with conventional patterns.[18]

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[17] Menachem Rosner, 2000, op. cit., pp. 68.

[18] See: A. S Tanenbaum, Bogdan Kavcic, Menachem Rosner, Mino Vianello and George Wieser, Hierarchy in Originations, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1994.

All these developments are still continuing. The result of this was an unparalleled wave of soul searching, reexamination of basic principles, values and change. All these affected the social structure of *kibbutzim* as well. Thus, from the earliest days of Degania in 1910, the *kibbutz* has been a dynamic and an ever changing society.

In the sphere of family, at first the *kibbutz* society as a whole took precedence over the family unit. The institution of family was regarded as a potential rival, capable of limiting its independent activities. Therefore, family occupies a subordinate position and limits its size for the sake of *kibbutz*. Thus the institution of *kibbutz* had a traditional family structure with a group framework as its base. In fact, the family in *kibbutz* has been shaped by a number of ideological and economic factors, as the *kibbutz* itself.

Many sociologists have regarded family as the cornerstone of society. It forms the basic unit of social organization and it is difficult to imagine human society without it. Although the composition of family varies it is seen as a universal social institution indispensable to human society. But there are also evidences to suggest that some societies have very different arrangements for carrying out the role and functions of family. There are organizations that are arguably not families but are capable of performing the functions of family, of which kibbutz is one fine example.

Conceptual Framework

The analysis of family from a functional perspective involves three main questions. Firstly, "what are the main functions of the family?" Answer to this question deals with the contributions made by the family to the maintenance of the social system. It is assumed that society has certain functional prerequisites or basic needs that must be met if it is to survive and operate efficiently. The family is examined in terms of the degree to which it meets these functional prerequisites. A second and related question is, "what are the functional relationship between the family and other parts of social system?" It is assumed

that there must be an appropriate degree of integration and harmony between the parts of the social system if the society has to function efficiently. For example, the family must be integrated to some extent with the economic system. The third question is concerned with the "function performed by an institution or a part of society for the individual". In the case of the family, this question considers the functions of the family for its individual members.[19]

Based on this functional perspective, after an analysis of 250 societies, Murdock argues that the family performs four basic functions in all societies- sexual, reproductive, economic and educational. They are essential for social life since without the sexual and reproductive functions there would be no society. Without the economic functions, for example the provision and preparation of food, life would cease. Similarly, without education, a term Murdock uses for socialization, there would be no culture and without culture human society cannot function.[20] Murdock defines the family as, "a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually co-habiting adults".

What is interesting here is that in terms of Murdock's definition, the family does not exist in *kibbutz*, but from a functional and psychological viewpoint it is possible to see *kibbutz* as 'a large extended family', earlier concluded by a leading anthropologist Melford E. Spiro. In *kibbutz* the family members do not share a common residence and their relationship is not characterized by economic co-operation. Spiro examined the family in *kibbutz* in terms of Murdock's definition and reached the following conclusion, "it can only be concluded in the absence of the economic and educational functions of the typical family, as well as of its characteristic of common residence, that the

[19] M. Haralambos, and R.M Heald, Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990, p. 330.
[20] Ibid, p. 331.

family does not exist in *kibbutz*". However, Spiro argues that from a functional and psychological perspective it is possible to see *kibbutz* as 'a large extended family'. As a unit, *kibbutz* performs all the functions of a nuclear family. In psychological terms, members of the *kibbutz* act as if they were members of a large family. Adults, with or without children, refer to all children in the *kibbutz* as 'our children'[21]. Those born and raised in the *kibbutz* usually practice group exogamy that is they marry outside the *kibbutz* just as member of a family marries outside the family. Members of the same generation view their peers as brothers and sisters. In this way the *kibbutz* can be seen as a large extended family.

Some four years after reaching these conclusions, Spiro reconsidered his position. He claimed that Murdock's definition of the family is 'unduly specific' and that it is possible to argue that families exist in the *kibbutz* for the following reasons. Permanent unions are formed between spouses; ideally there is an exclusive sexual relationship between them which leads to the birth of children. The relationship between parents and children is unique in the *Kibbutz*. Parents refer to their children as 'son' or 'daughter', children to their parents as 'mother' and 'father'. Parents provide a special kind of 'love and security' for their children and there are powerful emotional ties between them. Spiro concludes by saying that it is possible to see this 'unique relationship' in the *Kibbutz* as a family.[22]

In fact, the reality is that the *kibbutz* did not set out to eliminate the structure of family altogether. What it did rather was to try and prevent it from establishing itself as a significant and an autonomous unit within the *kibbutz*, in the name of which members could stake claims and demand from the communal institution. In practice this meant that the *kibbutz* sought to transfer many of the family's traditional functions to specialized communal institutions,

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[21] Ibid, p. 329.

[22] Ibid, p. 329.

thus freeing the family to concentrate on its socio-economic functions within the *kibbutz*. But with the passage of time, influenced by external as well as internal conditions, a rapid change is taking place in the conventional structure and functions of *kibbutz* family, as is in society in general. There are various internal and external factors contributing to the development of individualistic tendencies, affecting the traditional structure and functions of family in the communal institution of *kibbutzim*. The familistic tendencies have been greatly encouraged by the growing consumerism, a product of industrialization and globalization.

William J. Goode had surveyed the relationship between industrialization and family structure in his book World Revolution and the Family Patterns. Like Talcott Parsons and other functionalists he argues that industrialization tend to undermine the standard family and larger kinship groups. Goode offers the following explanation for this process. The high rate of geographical mobility in industrial society undermines or decreases, "the frequency and intimacy of contact among members of kin network". The relatively high level of social mobility also tends to weaken kinship ties. The importance of the achieved status in industrial society means that the kinship group has less to offer their members.[23]

However, Goode does not regard the pressure of industrialization as the only reason for the breakdown of extended family ties. He argues that the move to nuclear families has been far more rapid than predicted from the degree of industrialization alone, as nuclear families are also found in many areas where the rate of industrialization is slow. Goode also applies the concept of role bargaining in his study of the family. This means that the individuals attempt to obtain the best possible 'bargain' in their relationship with others. In terms of family relationship, this implies that they will maintain relationship with their kin and submit to their control if they feel that they are getting a good return of

[23] William J. Goode, World Revolution and the Family Patterns, The Free Press, New York, 1963, p-346.

their investment of time, energy and emotions. Goode concluded that extended kinship ties are retained only if individuals feel that they have more to gain than to lose by maintaining them.[24]

Thus, the rapid changes that are taking place in the structure and functions of the family within *kibbutzim* across Israel can be analyzed on the basis of the above-discussed conceptual framework.

[24] Ibid, p. 346.

Chapter II

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF FAMILY IN ISRAELI *KIBBUTZIM*

The familistic trend is very strong in most of the *kibbutzim*, and in many of them it seems to be gaining momentum. *Kibbutzim* also vary appreciably in their capacity to withstand and arrest the tendency towards familism. Ultimately, its capacity to curb the growth of familism is related to the degree of intensity of collective identification. The less pronounced the primacy of communal ideas and weaker the sense of togetherness, the stronger the appeal of familistic innovations.

Although the anti-familism of the revolutionary phase has abated, it has not disappeared altogether. It has been superseded by a moderate collectivism that regards the family as sometimes useful to check the disintegrative tendencies within. However, the *kibbutzim* still try to control and limit the family and direct it towards the attainment of collective goals. The main problem of the *kibbutzim* from a dynamic point of view is how to allow the family more privacy and a certain internal autonomy without harming the cohesion of the community.

Over the past hundred years, the structure of family has undergone a fundamental change along with its functions, a change so great that a radical reformation of family structure is seen as inevitable, even as its future existence is being occasionally questioned. Whereas once family life was concerned with the fulfillment of objective functions, now its main interest lies in the satisfaction of individual needs. This change has been well-defined by E.W. Burgess, Locke and Thomes[1], who see the structure of family in a state of transition from that of an institution to that of a voluntary group established for the purpose of companionship. In this new form of family life, great emphasis is placed on the

[1] See: E. W. Burgess, J. Locke and M.M. Thomes, The Family from Institution to Companionship, American Book Co., New York, 1963.

value of love, of emotional and spiritual incentive and of individual happiness. It becomes important to foster the personality development of every member of the family.[2]

Certain communes developed an extreme form of change, regarding the family solely as an obstacle on the road to brotherhood and as a source of jealousy and tension.[3] These communes took the children from their parents and raised them communally, only allowing the parents to meet the children in a group setting and not individually. For a long time it was assumed that the *kibbutz*, too, was trying to rebel against the established form of nuclear family and was even going to the extremes of these communes in trying to do away with family life. This view is simply not borne out by the facts. It is true to say that in the early days of *kibbutz*, there were strong anti-familistic tendencies, but they were directed towards the control of practical family tasks and not towards the severance of emotional ties which bind parents and children.[4]

This approach to parent–child relations which prevailed in the *kibbutz* movement was established in the early 1920s, at a time when the *kibbutz* movement was still young and most members were still single. It was the time of introspection and questioning of the family as agents of the old bourgeois order, and which had been resented and rejected by the new pioneers in an overwhelming desire to build a different and a better society. It is important to note here that at the same time, a veteran member of Degania, David Schmetterling, produced an article in which he examined the problems that the *kibbutz* faced with the birth of the first child. He asked if the parents are likely to regress to a private way of life,

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[2] Also see: E.W. Burgess, "Educational, Cultural and Social Factors in Family Breakdown", American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 8, No.3, 1954.

[3] R. Moss Kanter, Commitment and Community, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 10-12.

[4] See: Menachem Gerson, Family Women and Socialization in the Kibbutz, D. C. Heath and Company, Lexington, Massachusetts, Toronto, 1978.

preferring an isolated existence in an enclave of domesticity and relating to their children as to a form of private property. Schmetterling concludes that there is no reason why such an intimate and emotional relationship between parent and child should be suppressed. In his opinion they are in no way regressive, in no way an expression of the desire to have personal possessions. To renounce the parental bond, according to Schmetterling, would be to initiate a falsehood alien to the human spirit. There were times when contact between parents and children was regulated and curtailed, especially in *kibbutz Artzi*, but after a transition period, it was Schmetterling's approach which was accepted by the *kibbutz* movement.[5]

The young pioneers' desire to alter the relations between the sexes and the generations led to redefining of marriage, work and motherhood. The bourgeois model of marriage that prevailed in the nineteenth-century Europe, with its disadvantages for women and children and marked by romantic illusions and filial pieties, was rejected in favour of a more personal and private one. The woman was no longer to depend on husband for any of the usual support. She could earn her own living, she need not maintain a private household for her mate and assume his name, and she also need not exclusively care for her children. Hence, the relations between the couple could rest on intrinsic consideration of affection and compatibility rather than on status and security. And since each partner was to have a distinct legal identity, neither a women's social status nor her standards of living depended on her husband's failures or achievements.

In the very early years there were attempts to do away with monogamous marriage altogether by experimenting, informally with polygamy and by abandoning such terms as husband, wife and marriage. But monogamy soon became the accepted form, though with some important innovations. Although a

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[5] Yonina Talman Garber, "Family vs Community-Patterns of Divided Loyalty in Israel", in Yonina Talmon (ed.) Comparative Perspective on Marriage and Family, Little Brown, New York, 1968, pp. 46.

man and a woman could now join together on the basis of desire uncontaminated by the mundane needs for economic security or social status, the couples as an entity were somehow to keep themselves in the background. Couples were discouraged from spending their leisure time together. Marriage was considered a private affair, public displays of affection were kept to a minimum, and divorce was relatively painless.

In this new atmosphere, where the settlement was the main concern, the warmth between comrades increased with the feeling that they were to share the experience of a life time, the chance to build a socialist community and at the same time to serve the principle need of Jewish people. No wonder that in this atmosphere community needs took preference over kinship obligations and productive work took preference over domestic work. Even during 1930s, as relationships within the group continued to be all-important, family ties were not demonstrated in public. Any demonstration of emotional closeness between couples was scornfully derided as a sign of middle class morality. During this time the birth rate was very low and it is difficult to say whether this was an outcome of the strenuous living conditions or an expression of certain reluctance about family life. Marriage was regarded as a purely personal matter that officially hardly concerned the community as a whole. Close personal friends might seek to tender advice in situation of personal crisis, which the community and its organs refrained from taking up for discussion howsoever grave a problem, like the frequency of divorce, may be. When the interruption of love relations manifested itself in the separation of couple, the community felt that it has no right to interfere. Similarly, since marriage was considered a purely personal mater between the parties concerned there was no arrangement for public wedding ceremonies in which the whole *kibbutz* participated. This practice continued even till 1940.

Thus, one can understand that given the pressures and problems of building a settlement in the harsh conditions of desert, communal loyalty was placed above family loyalty. The *Kibbutz* assumed many of the functions formerly assigned to the family and developed many devices to prevent, "the consolidation of the family as a distinct and independent unit".[6] Initially too, because of the difficulties of building a community right from the scratch and under extremely unfavourable conditions, children were especially not welcome. It was feared that children would divide rather than unite the community by deflecting energies and loyalties from the communal to the personal sphere.[7] Later these attitudes changed, and children were hailed as a treasured link to the future, but the highest acclaim continued to be reserved for productive work. Collective nurseries, one of the key social contributions of the *kibbutz*, were initially developed to free the mothers for the needed labour and to free the children from things perceived to be the worst features of traditional family life.

Thus we notice that there was a curious contradiction in the *kibbutz* family sphere from the start. Adults were expected to marry and live in a sustained partnership with a member of the opposite sex. But at the same time they were not to put conjugal ties above their ties to the community. This thin line between conjugal and communal commitment was a source of unresolved tension from the very beginning. As the community grew so did the concern for the birth rate, which was far below the replacement level. Hence, there was an early stimulus to family and procreative concerns.

The *kibbutz* has made extraordinary achievements in the sphere of family life, and has accomplished a large part of what its founders set out to do:

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[6] Ibid, pp. 46.

[7] Herbert Russcol and Margalit Banai, The First Million Sabras, Dodd Mead, New York, 1970, pp. 32.

A. It broke the position of power traditionally enjoyed by the husband and father in the family, or of the patriarchy, over women, children and household.

B. It eliminated the legal, economic and personal dependency of the wife on the husband.

C. It developed an effective method of child rearing.

What we see here is that a negative approach to the concept of family, as is found in various communes, could not be sustained in the *kibbutz*. As a voluntary socialist cell, dependent for its very existence on the identification of its members with its aims, the *kibbutz* could not disregard so vital a need (human) as the desire for family affiliations. However strong the anti-familistic tendencies of the early enthusiasts may have been, it soon became apparent to them that relations among members even in a small kibbutz could not be a substitute for family ties. When the extreme hardship of the first few years had eased and the burden of bad living conditions alleviated, the population of children grew considerably. Changes for the better helped the family to play a more conspicuous role in *kibbutz* life. When a proper dwelling with its own garden replaced the ramshackle tents and wooden huts which had previously been the home of the family, it provided a proper place for the enjoyment of leisure, for breakfast on Shabbat morning, for afternoon tea and for meeting with friends.[8]

Youina Talman is of the opinion that this process of change in the *kibbutzim* may be described as a transition from "bund" to "commune". She describes the main characteristics of the *kibbutzim* during the bund stage as:

1. Dedication to an all-pervasive revolutionary mission

[8] Menachem Gerson, op. cit., p.46

2. Intense collective identification

3. Spontaneous and direct primary relations among all members

4. Informal social control

5. Homogeneity

Young unattached individuals who shared a comparatively long period of social, ideological and vocational training established *kibbutzim*. The social and economic systems were in a rudimentary, almost embryonic stage, so there was little functional differentiation. The processes that brought about the emergence of communes are:

1. Differentiation. The original homogeneity of the bund stage is disrupted by the differentiation of functions and of groups that perform them. Most important in this context is the division of labour in the occupational sphere and the establishment and growth of families. Another major source of differentiation is the persistent internal solidarity of the various nuclei of settlers, who join the core of founders at later periods.

2. Attenuation and accommodation of the revolutionary ideology.

3. Decline in the intensity of collective identification.

4. Standardization of norms of behaviour and formalization of social control.

The process of institutionalization may be observed in the history of collective movements as well as in the development of any single *kibbutz*.

Child – rearing and socialization

During the early period, the anti-familistic tendencies were inherent in the revolutionary and collectivist ideology, and were enhanced by the conditions under which the *kibbutz* developed, and also by the nature of functions it performed for the society as a whole. In this context, it is surprising to take into account the fact that the attitude towards children in the *kibbutz* was very positive, as they symbolized the future of the community. Children were highly valued and cherished. They were accorded much better living conditions than adults and were given excellent care even in the early days of *kibbutzim* which were full of hardships.[9] The physical care and rearing of children were the responsibility of *kibbutz* rather than of individual parents. In most *kibbutzim* children lived apart from their parents. They slept, ate and studied in special children houses. Children of different age groups lived separately and had different set of tasks to be performed. Parents were, however, not completely excluded. Infants were nursed and fed mainly by their mothers, and the fathers came to see them in the nursery every day after work. When the infants were about six months old, most of the task of looking after them was transferred to a nurse, but they were taken to their parent's room for an hour or so every day. As they grew older, the amount of time that children spent with their families increased. They met their parents and siblings in off hours and regularly spent the afternoon and early evening with them. On Saturdays and holidays they stayed with their parents most of the time. Thus, though the parent and children did not live together still theirs was an intense relationship. However, the main socializing agencies were the peer group and the specialized nurses, instructors and teachers. The age group substituted for the sibling group. It duplicated the structure of the community and mediated between children and adult.

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[9] Yonina Talmon, Family and Women in the Kibbutz, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1972.

Thus, there were two very unique features about child-rearing in a *kibbutz*. Like all other pioneering societies, the *kibbutz* was also extremely child-centred. Children represented the future, the vindication of one's struggle and sacrifice. The other unique feature was that the child rearing in a *kibbutz* was performed by communal agents, an innovation which signified communal child rearing. Whatever were the shortcomings and problems with this method, it had no doubt proved itself as an effective method of raising children. This is attested to by numerous studies that show the superiority of *kibbutz* reared children in a number of areas, be it in terms of their idealism, autonomy, spirit of cooperation, capacity for leadership, courage and loyalty to the community. In fact, the *kibbutz* seems to have managed to combine the individual and the collective aspects of childcare in an admirable fashion. A child not only knew and loved his mother but also formed close and enduring ties with other adults and with children of his own age group. This peer group, varying between eight and sixteen members at different stages of childhood, was part of the child's life from the time he entered the infant's house at the age of four days until high school.

Altogether at least four adult women were involved with childcare. There was, of course, the child's biological mother, who was joined by the chief communal nurse (the *metapelet*) and her two assistants. The biological mother used to leave the child after birth in the custody and care of communal nurses, who used to care of many children at the same time. This, then, formed the setting for the socialization of the child as he moved from the toddler's house to kindergarten, to primary grades and then on to high school at 12 years of age. From their needs, children learned the fundamentals of the world in which they were to live.

The system of socialization which initially developed by way of trial and error can be partly accounted for by situational factors. It enabled the mother to continue with her communal tasks, which in turn helped to reduce the number of

workers engaged in the upbringing and education of children. This also helped in providing children with better living conditions and a specialized care. The children's houses were in more than one way an economical and convenient solution of practical problems relating to childcare and childrearing. Yet there is much more to it than that. At the root of the matter lies the conscious intention of transferring the main responsibility for socialization from the parents to the community. Basically, the children belonged to the community as a whole.

Sex – role differentiation

The *kibbutz* did not have a clear-cut ideology concerning sexual relations, and evidence on the sexual behaviour of members is scanty and very often contradictory. Here too we find a number of ideological, structural and situational factors at work. There was, first of all, a reaction against the set patterns of the 'bourgeois' way of life and an attempt was made to do away with such restrictive conventional norms as chastity and life long fidelity, and such other double standards for women and men. It was felt that sexuality should be anchored in spontaneous love. Marriage was to be a voluntary union between free persons and was to be binding only so long as it continues to be based on sincere and deep attachment, and so long as both partners desired to maintain it. Sexual relations were considered as a purely personal matter of the couples concerned. This doctrine had a strong formative influence on the attitude and actual behaviour. Freedom of choice and informality became the norm. Premarital relations were considered legitimate and were not censured. Marriage did not change the status of wife. Wives remained *kibbutz* members in their own right and many retained their original names (maiden). The right of separation and divorce was not restricted in any way.

This extremely liberal position with a strong emphasis on personal autonomy and erotic gratification, was counter- balanced and checked by the deep

seated sexual modesty and reticence instilled in the members by their traditional Jewish upbringing and the asceticism and collectivism of the *kibbutz*. Life in the *kibbutz* required a prolonged postponement of gratifications. It was oriented towards duties and responsibilities rather than direct rewards, with a premium on rigorous self-discipline. A high regard for sexual gratification ran counter to the pervasive emphasis on ascetic dedication and self-abnegation. Yonina Talman asserts that equally problematical, from the point of view of the collective, was the potential divisiveness of individual love relationships. Romantic love by its very nature exclusively sets lovers apart from their comrades, based as it is on intense desires and emotions. Apart from this, it is not readily amenable to social control as it strongly seeks to be free of all restrictions and controls.

Another important factor was scarcity of women. In the initial stages of most of the *kibbutzim*, women constituted a minority comprising 20-35 percent of the total membership. Many members had to forgo sexual gratification and postpone the founding of a family for lack of a partner. This imbalance between the sexes had a dual effect. In as much as the scarcity of sexual partners resulted in competition, it enhanced the tendency towards shifting relations and instability. At the same time, it indirectly had the opposite effect of deepening the asceticism already prevalent in the *kibbutz*.

Thus the doctrine of free love had a strong impact on emerging institutional patterns. Yet while maintaining a positive attitude towards erotic attraction, *kibbutzim* developed many ingenious mechanisms to check its potentially disruptive effects. Relations between the sexes were de-eroticized and neutralized by the practice of dealing with sexual problems in a straightforward and objective manner and also by minimizing the differences between the sexes. Women adopted the male style of dressing and male patterns of behaviour. Beauty care and

personal adornment were eliminated. The *kibbutzim* de-emphasized the physical shame between the sexes. Earlier there were very few sex-differentiated activities.

The dual emphasis on free love and on restrained behaviour operated simultaneously and served to check one another. This accounts for the fact that in spite of the complete absence of institutionalized restrictions, sexual relations were, generally speaking, not taken lightly. There was almost no promiscuous or indiscriminate mating, no wild and irresponsible experimentation. Only in a small minority of *kibbutzim* there was high incidence of shifting relations, separations or divorce. It is important to note that most of the members of these *kibbutzim* had been brought up in urbanized "emancipated" milieus and were not deeply imbued with Jewish tradition. In absence of the restraining effects of a traditional upbringing, a permissive attitude towards sex sometimes gained an upper hand.[10] In such cases, permissiveness towards sexual gratification served as a counter balancing mechanism that compensated members for rigorous restrictions in other spheres.[11]

The structure of internal relations

Internal relations among members of the elementary family were patterned to a large extent on *kibbutz* relations in general, with an emphasis on equality and companionship in particular. Husbands were expected to share with their wives the household chores and responsibilities of child care. Both conjugal and parent-child relationships were non-authoritarian. The attitude towards children was very permissive; parents tried to win a child's cooperation by implying, suggesting or

[10] Comparative data kibbutzim affiliated with the Federation of Religious *Kibbutzim* confirm this interpretation. These *kibbutzim* rejected free love from the outset, and insisted on restrict standards of reticence and modesty. (Yonina Talmon)
[11] Youina Talman, 1972, op. cit., pp-10-11.

explaining their view points and not by making demands or exerting pressure. The relationship was, thus, easy going and uninhibited.

The changes wrought by the *kibbutz* in family relations were mirrored to some extent in terminology also. The Hebrew terms for husband and wife were abandoned since they connoted a concept of the family as a legally binding paternalistic institution. According to Younina Talman, a women and man in love were said to "become a couple." The term for establishing a family was, "to enter a family room". The husband was referred to as "my (young) man", and the wife was called "my (young) women". Even these terms were often felt to be too familistic, and members would try to avoid them by using proper names only. Children were encouraged to use their parent's proper names for both reference and address instead of 'father' and 'mother.' The terms 'son' and 'daughter' were extended to all children of the *kibbutz*, so that the only distinction was the occasional use of 'my' when the parent was referring to his own children and 'our' when referring to children of the *kibbutz*.[12]

Segregation of family was made almost possible by the nature of housing policy. Expenditure on living quarters was kept as low as possible. Couples often had to wait many months before being allocated a room of their own. Families were routinely requested to accommodate an additional member in their one-room apartment whenever the problem of housing became acute. Although only temporary, these recurring violations of conjugal privacy expressed clearly the precedence of collective over personnel considerations. Examination of the houses built in the first *kibbutzim* provides another indication of the same tendency. Rooms were arranged in a row and opened into a long narrow corridor or veranda. Bathrooms and sanitary facilities were built in the centre of the compound and were shared by all members alike.

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[12] Ibid, p.1-50.

Any tendency to stay closeted in the family room and to build up a segregated family life was strongly condemned. Private radios and electric kettles were banned for a long time as they possibly enhanced the attraction for home and undermined full participation in communal affairs. Much of the *kibbutz* life was lived in public view, and members spent most of their free time in a group. Public opinion discouraged frequent joint appearance of couple in public. Husbands and wives who stuck together and were seen often in each other's company were viewed with scorn.

The way in which festive occasions were celebrated symbolized the overall importance of community. There were almost no family-centered celebrations. The *kibbutz* also changed the familistic pattern of most of the traditional Jewish festivals and adopted them to a new communal framework. Yonina Talman asserts that, "It should be noted that although *kibbutzim* limited the functions of the family drastically, they did not abolish it altogether, nor was the anti-familistic policy adopted in the *kibbutz* was based on a preconceived or fully worked out ideology. Most early formations of ideological position did not propose to do away with the family. The imposition of restrictive norms was justified as a means of liberating the family, not of eliminating it. The family was expected to come into its own, purged yet renewed and strengthened by its liberation from extraneous duties and cramping legal prohibitions. Pronouncements of strong anti-familistic view were quite rare. Ambivalence was much more prevalent than outright hostility".[13]

Some of the specific features that distinguish the *kibbutz* family life from the other forms of family life are as follows:

Firstly, unlike most other forms of family, the *kibbutz* family is not a self-centred economic unit. In its social structure, the *kibbutz* is not a federation of self-

[13] Ibid, p. 13.

contained family units. Hence, the economic standard of a family in the *kibbutz* is dependent on the economic achievement and social outlook of the *kibbutz* as a whole. Although certain inequalities are sometimes created as a result of gifts from relatives outside the *kibbutz* or by utilization of expense accounts attached to the managerial positions in work outside the *kibbutz*, which may cause some ill feelings, but still it does not affect the equal status of members in the main areas of life.

For the members of a *kibbutz*, the family is not the basic unit in the struggle for existence as every individual is directly affiliated to the *kibbutz* economy. This has important ramifications. In other family structures, the economic struggle constitutes a very close bond between all the members of the family, be it due to the shared misery of failure or the shared elation of success. In its absence, the emotional and sexual tie between the spouses and their joint responsibility towards the care of their children becomes the main guarantor of family stability.

There are two other important facts of the specific social structure of the *kibbutz* family. The wives are not economically dependent on their husbands nor are the children economically dependent on the parents. These two facts have brought about such a radical change in the structure of the *kibbutz* family that outside observers have sometimes called into question the very existence of family in *kibbutz*, and if they have not taken so extreme a stand, they have denied the family any vital function in the life of its members. Such a view about the *kibbutz* family ignores certain facts, as it stems from the inability of its profounder to recognize a type of family life different from the usual traditional forms of family life.[14]

[14] Menachem Gerson, op. cit., pp. 45-64.

Secondly, unlike the situation which is found in other countries where professional educators cooperate with parents mainly from the period of nursery school onward, in the *kibbutz* such cooperation exists from the very first day of infant's life. The mother's share varies according to the age of child. It is at its peak during the first year of child's birth and thereafter mother's role gradually begins to diminish. The father is a full partner in the upbringing of the child from infancy onwards. From the outset, children live in the children's house where everything is tailored according to the child's need and capacities. The children's house is regarded not as a depository for the children of working mothers but as a home in every sense as stated earlier.

Thirdly, the social framework of the *kibbutz* family is different from that of the other modern family units. In most of the societies the husband works outside the home while the wife attends to household duties. In such patriarchal families the social contact as exists is often limited to interest in the children and to narrow family matters. As a result the relationship between the spouses is impoverished.

But the situation in the *kibbutz* family is different. Both spouses live and work in the same social framework. The intensive and an all embracing character of the *kibbutz* life provides for a number of shared concerns and shared interests. However, this does not mean that there are no differences at all within the *kibbutz* between the individual families. A family may look upon *kibbutz* life as bound up too much with the great social and cultural changes of our time, while another family may regard *kibbutz* as a self-contained unit with its own problems. Some observers often forget that *kibbutz* members and families, too, differ individually just as people outside the *kibbutz* do.

It needs to be stressed that even during the earliest phase, when anti-familistic bias was at its highest, family remained an identifiable unit. Families were regarded by their own members as well as outsiders as distinct subgroups.

There were socially regulated patterns of mating, where children were recognized as offspring of particular parents. While premarital sexual relations were permitted, there was a clear-cut distinction between casual sexual experimentation and the more durable and publicly sanctioned unions. By asking for a room of their own, a couple would make their wish public to have a permanent relationship and eventually to have children. While children did not actually share a common domicile with their parents, they alternated between the nursery and their parent's room, and both were in a real sense home to them. Nor did the family relinquish its communal functions: parents contributed to the economic support of their children by working. Similarly, parents exercised a direct and continuous influence on the trained personnel who were in charge of their children. Since children's institutions were not segregated from the community either ecologically or socially, parents were able to supervise closely the way in which their children were being raised. While interaction among the members of the same family was in many cases less frequent than interaction with outsiders, internal ties remained more continuous, more meaningful and more intense. The emotional ties that bonded husband and wife and parents and children were much more intimate and more exclusive than ties with the other members of the community. The family combined physical and emotional intimacy and provided with close personal contacts that were partly independent of the community. By providing unconditional love and loyalty, the family helped to insulate its members from communal pressures and any sense of insecurity.[15]

The differentiation of functions, and the concomitant crystallization of the groups performing these functions, disrupted the original homogeneity of the bund. Though the various clusters of settlers, who joined the core of founders at different stages of a community's development, could not be assimilated fully but

[15] Yonina Talmon, 1972, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

they continued to maintain their internal solidarity. The community was gradually subdivided into overlapping subgroups that mediated between the individual and the collective. *Kibbutzim* gradually became more tolerant of internal differentiation. The family then came to be accorded a certain measure of autonomy and was assigned a place among the subgroups.

The appearance of the second generation was of crucial importance in this context because children are the main focus of semi segregated family life in *kibbutzim*. Marriage per se did not entail a redefinition of roles and a new division of labour, nor did it cause a perceptible cleavage between the couple and the rest of the community. The birth of the children, however, made manifest the partial independence of the family. In addition to it, the appearance of the second generation introduced a gradual shift of emphasis from the disruption of intergenerational ties to continuity between generations. Children were expected to settle in the *kibbutzim* founded by their parents. Family was no longer an external and an alien influence. Parents and children, members of the same *kibbutz*, lived in close proximity and to some extent shared the same ideals. Identification with one's family could thus reinforce identification with collective.[16]

Some of the structural changes that occurred in the *kibbutz* family through the90s are most crucial. The frequency of children per family was 4. The mean number was 3.6 in the year 1972[1]. In a society where the extended family is the main element in its structure, high birth rate guarantees its future. Before the present crisis the number of extended families was growing and the familistic discourse was central. A strong sense of commitment to the family was shared primarily among women, who preferred it above other options for the purpose of self-actualization. But, familism had an oppressive impact on women's life, as it played an important role in the occupational sphere for women.

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[16] See: Orcham, E. Hellbroon, Changes in the Fertility Rate in the Kibbutz Movement 1948-1988, The kibbutz Research Institute, University of Haifa, No 97.1990.

The main building stones of *kibbutz* society were the extended families of third or fourth generations: parents and their children and their children's children, married siblings and relatives by marriage living in the same community. The "*Hamula*" (the extended family) was studied as a source of power for its members and as a source of status for *kibbutz* women. But now the scene is very different as *kibbutz* families are shrinking. One of the main consequences of urbanization has been the departure of the young and unmarried. They emigrated from home and sometimes even from the country. Because of the economic crisis in *kibbutzim* many families left their *kibbutz*. Some 61% moved to the cities and some 60 % live at least 50 K.M. away from their *kibbutz* of origin.[17] Examining the structure of *kibbutz* society today one might think that it is built mostly around small families. The majority of families consist of one couple and dependent singles that are either their siblings or old parents.

Along with structural changes came an ideological reformulation. The achievement of independence weakened the strong emphasis on collectivism as well as the orientation towards the future which had been so prevalent in the pre-state period. This orientation towards long-term collective goals was superseded by a concern with short-term tasks and immediate satisfaction. A growing incongruity could be perceived between the values and mode of organization that gradually began to pervade in the Israeli society at large.

The limitation of advent grade functions and partial isolation from society at large had a corrosive affect on *kibbutzim*, undermining their confidence in the final outcome of their revolutionary venture. Collectivist values, eroded by alien influences, ceased to be self-evident and all pervasive. Members were assailed by self-doubt and insecurity. The revolutionary mission no longer evoked the same

[17] Ibid, p.18

wholehearted identification and an unconditional commitment that virtually made possible complete merger of personal and collective spheres. As external pressures reinforced the process of internal routinization, the dissociation between *kibbutzim* and society as a whole came to be mirrored in the dissociation between individual members and their *kibbutz*.

But since the last 15 years or so, that have passed since the beginning of the economic crisis (which has been dealt with earlier), almost all the *kibbutzim* have been facing economic hardships and demographic imbalances, with more members leaving than joining. Only recently a comprehensive financial recovery plan was implemented to deal with the large debts of many *kibbutzim*. However, a select few, a minority in any kibbutz, have continued to grow both economically and demographically. This has given way to larger inequalities than in the past between communities. These developments have also led to the weakening of the role and authority of the *kibbutz* federation, which in the past were a major factor in the development of communities.[18]

[18] See: Menachem Rosner, Future Trends of kibbutz-An Assessment of Recent Changes. University of Haifa, The Institute for Study and Research of the kibbutz, Pub No. 83, 2000.

Table 2.1

Kibbutz Population

Year	No. of kibbutzim	Kibbutz Population
1910	1	
1920	12	805
1930	29	3,900
1940	82	26,550
1950	214	67,550
1960	229	77,950
1970	229	85,100
1980	255	111,200
1990	270	125,100
2000	268	117,300

Source: Jon Fidler, "Kibbutz What, Why, When, Where", in The *Kibbutz* Directory, Website: www.mishkei.org.il/english/ekibutz/htm, Nov. 2002.

The above given table illustrates the number of *kibbutzim* and the total population of the *kibbutz* movement over a long span of nine decades. What we see here is that both the number and population of *kibbutzim* have increased throughout its history. There are enough evidences to suggest that the ideological as well as the physical structure of *kibbutzim* have undergone some fundamental changes, a change so great that talks about its failure and its probable demise in the near future have started. The very relevance of the *kibbutz* movement in today's changed conditions and its prospects in the coming future is being probed and questioned. However, according to Israel's Registrar of Cooperatives, only

five to seven percent of *kibbutzim* can be said to have failed even by the strict definition of *kibbutz* that it employs.[19]

[19] See: Parag Yael, "Organizational Death? The Failure of Kibbutzim", M.A. thesis, Department of Labour Studies, Tel Aviv University (Hebrew), 1999.

Chapter III

THE CHANGING ROLES AND ROLE CONFLICTS IN FAMILY IN ISRAELI *KIBBUTZIM*

Internally friendship and trust, externally the culture and ideology of the group has its especial significance in the *kibbutz*. With the extensive and comprehensive relations among *kibbutz* members, trust and friendship would characterize the work-group relations. Further, their common goals based on a shared ideology of collectivist, should create a work environment that is conducive to a group rather than an individual focus.

A study assessing collectivist versus individualist values of group performance supports the claim that collectivist values contribute to performance.[1] Collectivist values differ from individualist values in the way people perceive themselves vis-à-vis the group. People in collectivist cultures (or organizations) put the group's interest prior to their own; they place a higher valence on belonging to their group. Their self-definition is extended beyond the individual to include a particular group of others. Thus selfishness or social loafing does not exist in work groups that have collectivist values.

The key to community maintenance of the *kibbutz* was satisfying its members. In which, the socialization process that have molded member's expectation, the changing view on gender equality which fundamentally determines who gets what in the *kibbutz*, and the approach to consumption which directly satisfied member needs, are included.

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[1] Miriam Erz and Someeh Anit, "Is Group Productivity Loss the Rule or the Exception: Effects or Culture and Group Based Motivation". Academy of Management Journal, Vol.39, No.3, 1996, pp. 1513-1537.

Socialization

Socialization is particularly necessary in the *kibbutz* because there are differences in ideology of *kibbutz* and the wider community, from which it draws members and interacts. A capitalist organization in a capitalist society can rely on the forces of ideological hegemony - public schools, the media, and art etc.- to produce participants with the required values.[2] For the *kibbutz* this was never a possibility. So, *kibbutzim* were forced to rely over their own mechanisms of socialization. *Kibbutzim* socialization mechanism differs from those of capitalist economic organization in the sense that they operate on potential members from birth. But even in capitalist societies there are organizations that socialize children (schools, churches, clubs, etc). The design and outcomes of *kibbutz* socializing 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.[3] The *kibbutz* experience with socialization is also useful for understanding the process by which the assumptions of an economic system are taken for granted.

A core element of the *kibbutz* socialization process is the education and child rearing system. Until the 1970s, *kibbutz* children did not live with their parents but in "children's houses" with a cohort of age-mates and a dedicated caregiver, a *metapelet*. Despite the presence of the *metapelet*, the children operated with significant self-governance which is referred to as a "children's society". It represents a microcosm of the *kibbutz* with committees and a "general assembly", operated by the children themselves. 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, and devotion to work

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[2] Ralph Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society, Basic Books, New York, 1996.

[3] Reuven Kahane "The Committed: Preliminary Reflections on the Impact of the *Kibbutz* Socialization Pattern on Adolescents", British Journal of sociology, Vol. 26, No 3, 1975, pp-343-353.

and the need for selfless dedication to the goals of the collective".[4] 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) documented some of the outcomes of this system after a survey of 287 sixth-grade children from Tel Aviv and 314 from *kibbutzim* children's houses. The city children rated teachers, parents and peers for support and discipline but for the *kibbutz* children it was only the *metapelet*. The differences between city and *kibbutz* children indicate that the *kibbutz* child rearing system was achieving its espoused goals. The teachers of *kibbutz* appeared to have more significant influence over the children than their counterparts. They provided more support, discipline and encouragement of children's independence. There was a corresponding difference in the role of parents, providing less discipline, and more instrumental companionship. All together these differences reflect the traditional de-emphasis on the family, and the emphasis on the organization and its functionaries for socialization. There were also some significant differences in peer socialization. Peers were likely to exercise more discipline in the *kibbutz*, indicating the roots in "childhood socialization", a way of social control that we have argued to be a key determinant of performance in the *kibbutz*. The withdrawal of affection and physical punishment was never a possible mechanism for disciplining the child.

Shapira and Madsen's (1974) evidences are particularly informative about 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*.[5] In a series of experiments, they compared the behaviour of 9-11 years old from 17 *kibbutzim* with that to the children from the city of Haifa in a game that pre requisite cooperation for success. *Kibbutz* children were more

[4] Edwarde Devernux,Ron Shouval, Uric Brontenbrenner, Robert R. Rodgers, Sophie Kavvenaki, Elizabeth Kiely, Esther Darson, "Socialization Practices of Parents, Teachers and Peers in Israel: The *Kibbutz* versus the City." Child Development, Vol.45, No. 2, 1974, pp 269-281.

[5] Miriam Eriz, op. cit., pp. 1513-1537.

cooperative and achieved three times as many successful outcomes. Post-trial interviews indicated that the city children's cooperative intentions were frustrated by lack of organization and trust. In contrast, *kibbutz* children appeared to organize spontaneously, often utilizing an emergent, informal leader. In other experiments, *kibbutz* children appeared to be 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 forms with most impressive outputs. One third of the *kibbutz* youth volunteered to spend a year on public Service.[6] At times, averages of 15 per cent of parliament seats have been detained by *kibbutzim* members, they constituted one-third of cabinet ministers (about 4 per cent of the total). Three of ten Israeli prime ministers at some point in their life have been a *kibbutz* member, or were raised in a *kibbutz*.[7]

Kahane tried to explain the high commitments to universalistic values, adaptive 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 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 children was reinforced by the status structure, emerged from participation in a multi-dimensional pattern of activity. This allowed children to exhibit capabilities other than the usually emphasized intellectual ones, such as artistic skills or athletic abilities. This pattern of activities enabled a multi-dimensional (informal) scale of evaluation, which produced quasi-equality of status. The flexible and entrepreneurship capacity of individuals raised on the *kibbutz*,

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[6] Azra Abrahami and Dav Yechezkel, "Collectivistic and individualistic motives among youth volunteering for community service", Journal of Youth and Adolescence, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1993, pp 697-714.

[7] Daniel Katz and Naftali Golomb, "Integration, effectiveness and adaptation in social systems: A comparative analysis of *Kibbutzim* Communities", in Ernest Krause (ed.) The sociology of the *Kibbutz*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, 1983, pp. 51-74.

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 that puts parents, teachers, *mataplot* and other adults 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 nobleness which emerged form 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 the extreme competitiveness of education system kept children in constant contact[8].

Commitment to the *kibbutz* is another key output of the socialization system that Rosner *and* Leviation describes after the result of studies in 1969, 1971 and 1976 on member's attachment and retention by the *kibbutz*. Attachment was found to result from social and work satisfaction derived from the political centrality and professional level of work. More satisfaction for predicting attachment was adherence to utopian ideology. This adherence was found to result from the ideological emphasis in the member's education. At the same time, socialization may generate attachment, there is also an important effect of selection as the founders of a *kibbutz* have higher attachment than the "second generation", those born and raised on the *kibbutz*[9].

For a better understanding of roles and role conflicts within *kibbutzim* it is important to analyze the process of child rearing and socialization in the *kibbutzim*.

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[8] Reuven Kahane, op. cit., pp. 343-353.

[9] See: Tal Simons and Paul Ingram, The *Kibbutz* For Organizational Behaviour, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Mothering in the *kibbutz*: The division between biological and social mother, between family and nursery, is present from the earliest days. Despite of disrupted contacts, the child develops warm relations with his biological mother because he knows that she is the woman who gave him the life. For a child the first impression, nurture, warmth and love come from his biological mother. Whereas the *metapelete* is a less romantic figure and has more actual influence on the child. She has the affection with discipline, like the mother in a conventional family thus becomes an ambivalent figure in child's life because of the power of punishment and reward.[10]The communal nurses extract demands, can threaten and thwart, thereby creating dependencies and anxieties. The mothers by contrast, can play a highly positive role. Freed from economic worries for themselves and their children, not needed to discipline and being associated with warmth, nurturance and survival in early days, they can be extremely loving and supportive figure in their children's lives.[11]

The child considers his father as special, too, and sees him as the husband of his mother, as a worker in the *kibbutz* and as playmate and giver of gifts and represents the epitome of selfless, loving parenthood. The mother and father's role are relatively undifferentiated in their emphasis on affection, permissiveness and nurturance towards the child. Thus the biological family is a less complex system for the *kibbutz* child than for the children in general. The family is expressive rather than task oriented, and the child can use the family setting for reinforcement and support, since it remains an unconditional source of love and diffuse acceptance.

Sex differentiation in childhood: Despite the changes in family that have been brought about in the *kibbutz*, sex typing has not been abolished there. The couple continues to be distinctive social, sexual and emotional unit as well as a

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[10] Rivkah Bar-Yoseph, "Assisting *Kibbutz* parents the tasks of child-rearing", Comparative Perspective, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1994, p. 166.

[11] Suzanne Keller, "The family in the *kibbutz*: what lessons for us?" in Michael Curtis and Mordecai S. Chertoff (ed.), Israel: Social structure and change, Transaction Books, New Jersey, 1975, pp. 115-144.

cultural ideal. The *kibbutz* organized the development of appropriate sex identities, interests and male and female roles in the earliest years of life. The *kibbutz* children experiences differentiation by sex in two principal forms in their childhood years: by being classified as a member of an exclusive gender group, and by learning to differentiate the saxes by name, label, appearance, dress and speech. By high school age it becomes more explicit and extensive. Each sex here seems to prepare itself for the differentiated tasks that it will assume in the community later on.

Gender Equality: The nature of the effort to promote gender equality is apparent in Spiro's 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 common, 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. Spiro observed no promotion of sexual differences by the staff of the children's houses, whether by instruction or social reinforcement, except for differences in dress and in personal names. Parents, in their two-hour daily visit to their children presented an example of gender-neutral roles, displaying one parental role rather than differentiated "paternal" and "maternal" roles.

What resulted from the grand effort? Spiro argues that the most complete picture of the lives of *kibbutz* women raised in this environment comes from Tiger *and* Shepher[12]. Their findings are from the analysis of the census of two *kibbutz* federations in the early 1970s, and from a number of case studies and surveys. Their conclusions are devastating for the ideal of gender equality on the *kibbutz*. By 1975, the sexual division of labour had reached the maximum of eighty per cent, with women concentrated in education and

[12] See Lionel Tiger and Joseph Shepher, Women in the *kibbutz*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1975, pp. 262-263.

consumption services (laundry and food preparation) and men in production. Whereas the distribution of work within the family is more equal than that in the work sphere[13], but the responsibility for housework and child-care still remains the women's responsibility. Women are more occupied in the house cleaning and cooking than men. The female members get an hour off their work daily in order to do housework (Proposed Decisions, *kibbutz Artzi* 1966). The latest changes in *kibbutz* family structure transferred tasks from the communal sphere to the family. The children sleep in parent's house, families are now responsible for the up bringing of there children. With respect to work distribution in the *kibbutz*, women work close to the home, in education and consumption, their workday begins with bringing the children to children's house. The men work most of the days away from the *kibbutz* center, in agriculture and industry. As a result the women are the one who must wake up those children spending the night at parents home, and look after their cloths and health. Therefore, the main responsibilities fall on the mother's lap. Father is too far from the home to equally share these tasks.[14] What is here important to be noted is that against original ideology, the family has become the basic unit of *kibbutz* social structure, as indicated by the move to children sleeping in their parent's 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 familiazation. For example, they opposed collective housing for children more than men. Women also express lower attachment to the *kibbutz* and are more likely to leave[15].

Why did the *kibbutz* fail so miserably to achieve the goal of gender equality? There are two classes of explanation: The first, cultural or external

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[13] See: Orchan A, "Research on Equality between the Sexes and the Division of Housework in Today's *Kibbutz*", Seminar Paper, University of Tel Aviv, 1990.

[14] Ben Rafael, E.S. Weitman, "The Reconstruction of Family in the *Kibbutz*", European Journal of sociology, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1984, pp. 1-27.

[15] Uri Leviatan, "Second and Third Generations in *Kibbutzim*- Is the Survival of *Kibbutz* Society Threatened?" in Uri Leviatan, Hugh Oliver and Jack Quarters (eds.), Crisis in the Israeli *kibbutz*, Praeger, London, 1998, pp. 81-96.

class which is based on the view that sex role differentiation is a cultural artifact, too robust for the *kibbutzim* to abolish. Spiro 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 attitudes to provide the male support necessary for the feminist revolution to succeed". In support of this explanation Spiro cites *kibbutz* male's unwillingness to share traditionally defined "women's work" and their occasional expressions of these attitudes. Second is that women may have led familization as a mechanism to achieve status that was denied to them due to participation in service or occupations which were often monotonous or difficult. While ascending that cultural influences probably had some influence in the "counter-revolution" to re-establish traditional sex roles. Spiro concludes, "It is doubtful... that they were the primary determinants". He does so because returning to tradition was not the only possible response to persisting sexism. Women worked in services rather than production not due to social restrictions, but rather self-selection because men who worked in the services did not similarly supported familiazation.[16]

The second, socio-biological or internal class of explanation 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, 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 socio-biological explanation comes from Shepher *and* Tiger[17], who broadly apply socio-biology's foundational causal factor, parental investment, to suggest the inevitability of

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[16] See: Melford E. Spiro, Gender and Culture: *Kibbutz* Women Revisited, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1979.

[17] Joshep Shepher and Lionel Tiger, "*Kibbutz* and parental investment", in P.A. Hare et. al (eds), Small Groups: Social Psychological Process, Social Action and Living Together, Wiley, London, 1981.

the gender-inequality in the *kibbutz* and in other organizations. Simply summarizing the mammalian biology that, "females are the resource of reproduction, having a greater stake in it, therefore makes a great investment in child's maturation". The extra effort required making this investment causes females to favour work that does not keep them far from child. This is the basis of sexual division of labour in *kibbutz*, with women oriented towards the centrally located services, and particularly those directed at children. Indeed, even earlier when women did participate in *kibbutz* agriculture, they favoured vegetable gardens, orchards and poultry which were in close proximity to the children's houses.[18] The theory of inclusive fitness suggests that all mothering, 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* over came its initial stage of intense poverty, pressure rose against the children's houses, particularly from women side. The resistance to all mothering was apparent with the first two children born on the very first *kibbutz*. The mother of the first child 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 care only for her child.[19] Finally, socio-biologists interpret *kibbutz* women's support for stable marriage as an effort to extract greater parental investment from the father of their children.

It is probably unnecessary to say that the socio-biological explanation of gender-inequality in *kibbutz* sparked a heated debate. Culturalists have responded by refining their arguments and improving their evidences. Hertz and Baker[20], for example, conclude from their fieldwork on one *kibbutz* that women are forced against their will, into differentiated jobs by an opportunity

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[18] Rae Lesser Blumberg, "*Kibbutz* Women: From the Fields of Revolution to the Laundries of Discontent", in Michal Palagi, et. al (eds.), Sexual Equality: The Israeli *Kibbutz* Tests the Theories, P.A Norwood Edition, Norwood, 1983, pp. 130-150.

[19] Joseph A. Baratz, A Village by the Jordan: Story of Degania, Hawill, London, 1954.

[20] Rosanna Hertz and Wayne Baker, "Women and Men's Work in an Israeli *Kibbutz*: Gender and Allocation of Labour", in Michal Palgi et. al (eds.) Sexual Equality: The Israeli *kibbutz* Tests the Theories, PA: Norwood Edition, Norwood, 1983, pp154-173.

structure that develops from job practice placements in high school. Young women are initially placed in childcare, young men in production and later placements depend on the experience. Large-scale surveys on *kibbutz* women however revealed that rather than begrudging the gender-differentiation of *kibbutz* work, they overwhelmingly accept it as proper and legitimate.[21] Other evidences against the opportunity structure argument is that the women who work in a "men's job" for their first job, have the production experience that creates opportunity, are still likely to make a transition to services with subsequent jobs.[22]

Evidence for another cultural argument comes from Leviatan's finding that the accuracy of children's perception of the sex-composition of *kibbutz* jobs improves between the ages of three and ten. This is argued to show that socialization to gender role takes place despite of the efforts taken 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 the *kibbutz* children now learn gender roles through observation, there was a generation that observed undifferentiated gender roles, but implemented differently.

Another approach has been to recast the implications of gender differentiation and familisation. Rosner *and* Palgi[23] while recognizing the objective facts of job specialization and familisation asserted that the *kibbutz* has not recreated the roles of "breadwinner" and "housewife", allowing women more freedom to work outside home. They also claim that women's job on the *kibbutz* do not entail lower status or rewards. The first of these arguments may have been true before children moved into their parent's apartments, but now *kibbutz* women seem to be as burdened or as free as other working women.

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[21] See: Menachem Rosner, Research Summaries on Women-Members, Givat Chaviva: The Research Institute of *kibbutz* society (Hebrew), 1966.

[22] See: Lionel Tiger, op. cit.

[23] Menachem Rosner and Michal Palgi, "Equality between the Sexes: Retreat or New Significance", in Menachem Rosner (ed.), Democracy, Equality and Change: The *Kibbutz* and Social Theory, P.A: Norwood Edition, Norwood, 1982, pp.22-37.

Kibbutz mothers outside working hours were even cut by 12.5 per cent to 37.5 per cent considering the increased effort they would have to give for caring their children at home. There was no corresponding reduction for *kibbutz* fathers. The second argument is questionable against the evidence. Ben Rafael[24] asked 140 respondents from seven *kibbutzim* to rank ten "branches" (the *kibbutz* term for the 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 from 15 *kibbutzim*, with a coding, verified by *kibbutz* "judges" based on job-type and public activity. Men were more likely to be identified as a "notable person" than women by respondents. In a survey of 50 *Artzi kibbutzim*, in the late 1950s, 35 per cent of women thought that their increasing participation in consumer services was a route to make the work more satisfying.[25] 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 in the *kibbutz* than in other societies.[26] A study of 569 adolescents indicated that *kibbutz* females had lower self-esteem than *kibbutz*-males and the urban adolescents of either gender.[27]

Engels criticized the private families for condemning women to their house hold work and childcare activities. Instead, he proposed that such work be done communally. Here the *kibbutz* serves as a unique test case. In its early days for several decades, the small *kibbutz* family dwelling had no cooking or laundry facilities, and in most *kibbutzim* they had no beds for infants and children. No private processing and very little food-serving work were performed in the family dwelling. The childcare work were performed in the

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[24] See: Ben Rafael Eliezer, Status, Power and Conflict in the *kibbutz*. Alder shot, Aubury UK, 1988.

[25] See: Harry Viteles, A History of the Cooperative Movement in History. Book2: - The Evolution of the *Kibbutz* Movement, Vallentine Mitchell, London, 1967.

[26] Uri Leviatan, "Interpretations of Sex Differences in Work Centrality among *Kibbutz* Members", Sex Roles, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1985, pp. 287-310.

[27] Emda Orr and Batia Dinur, "Social Setting Effects on Gender Differences in Self Esteem: *Kibbutz* and Urban Adolescents", Journal of youth and Adolescents, 1995, pp. 3-27.

late afternoon and off days (usually Saturdays) were mainly supervision of play, putting young children to children's house, and common play and leisure activities, not the staple cleaning clothing, and feeding of children and the usual training work that accompanies these activities. Today foods may be prepared, and entire meals may be served and consumed at home, *kibbutz* dwellings have become larger, and in most of the *kibbutzim* children have bedrooms in their parent's homes. Thus, in the *kibbutz*, the socialization of housework and of childcare work has gone furthest over a considerable length of time. Yet women are not equal in the *kibbutz*. If we accept the *kibbutz* as a valid test case then we must conclude that the socialization of family work does not suffice to make women equal.

As to Engel's claim, the "monogamic" marriage was detrimental to women's equality among all but property less partners. As the *kibbutz* members are collective property (owners) holders the *ch*oice of partners and marriage does not involve any property consideration for women. However, the norms of monogamic marriage, namely of heterosexual liaison of one man and one woman, is accepted in *kibbutz*.[28] If we interpret Engles which mean that women's financial dependence on men in monogamic marriage is the root cause of gender inequality in society as well as within the relationship, then the *kibbutz* experience, where marriage does not involve women's economic dependence on their partners, would support the theory at the private level only if *kibbutz* women indeed had equal power in marriage, it clearly refutes it at public high proportion of them, definitely more than man outside the *kibbutz*. As to the *kibbutz Artzi* study, it uses answers given by women members to their federation to direct questions concerning their own evaluation of degree of gender equality in *kibbutz* families as compared to Israeli families outside. 75% of the women asked evaluated *kibbutz* families more egalitarian.[29]

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[28] See: Freidrich Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1972 (1884).

[29] Michal Palgi, op. cit., pp.255-296.

Unfortunately there is no record of any time budget study. Hence, we cannot compare the average time spouses spend on private household and childcare work. Nor is it reported that which partner is usually held responsible for which chore. Both items of information would be needed for the resolution of the question of gender division of private family work in the *kibbutz*.

A perfectly egalitarian division of residual private family work is precluded by the different time and space schedules of men and women's public work in *kibbutz*. If we examine the role division it will be clear that women, on an average, has somewhat shorter workday than men and their workplaces are nearer to home and children's house, consequently, in the afternoons, women, not men, pick up supplies and laundry and most importantly small children. Many more fathers than mothers are absent from home during weekdays and at times even for weeks on end; they work outside the *kibbutz* settlement or study or serve in the military reserves (this last item is of course due to the unequal role division in Israeli society: mothers are exempted from reserve duty). In addition, *kibbutz* norms put squarely on the mother the responsibility for care and physical and emotional well being of babies and to family and guests as women's work and obligation.[30] In short, as long as public work roles remain gender-segregated and gender-role stereotypes are not resolutely broken, a fully egalitarian division of private family work cannot be achieved... even when there is no financial dependence of wives on husbands.

Further many *kibbutzim* may be considered too large and their social structure too formalized, for genuine communal living. Nevertheless, as the *kibbutz* does not permit the private employment of one woman by another for the performance of household or childcare work, it thereby conforms to a feminist egalitarian communal image. It also confirms the integration of a considerable amount of housework and collective infant-care work into a daily

[30] Judith Buber Agassi, "Gender Equality: Theoretical lesson from the Israeli *Kibbutz*" Studies in Israeli Society, vol. 6, No. 1, Israeli Sociological Society and Transaction Books, 1991.

schedules of grade school and teenage children. As a group of adults who take a common responsibility for the maintenance, care, and education of all their children as well as the common maintenance and care of the old, the *kibbutz* appears to fulfill the central functions of a multi-adult communal household. As a test case, then, the *kibbutz* indicates that a small society that functions according to these communalistic principles can nevertheless practice a division of labor in which nearly women perform the entire collective childcare and personal service work. It is not necessarily easier in a multi-adult communal household than it is in a nuclear family household to achieve a gender-egalitarian division of family work (as studies of other communes have also indicated.).[31]

For occupational as well as for family roles, *kibbutz* experience corroborates the core thesis of the gendered work-role theory, according to which the equalization of social roles is the key to gender equality. Even in this rather egalitarian society the occupational roles are segregated by gender. Women's role tends to offer them less access to important material... which is intrinsically more satisfying and also allows their participation in major decisions. These decisions affect the community in the sphere of investment and labour allocating decisions that may operate even without the intervening factor of pay discrimination to women. Second, even in a society where there is no paid or unpaid work, as long as the routine personal service and childcare work, performed either within a private family household or in a communal kitchen or children's house, is allocated to women only, it depresses women's status.

Thus *kibbutz* experience supports the mainstream feminist demand for the radical desegregation of gendered social roles as necessary for the elimination of women's social inferiority. It also supports the hypothesis

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[31] See: Jon G. Wagner et.al. (eds.) Sex Roles in Contemporary American Communes, Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1982.

[32](recently sharply reformulated by Reskin) of the existence of short term interests common to men of all social strata in keeping the status quo of women performing less-liked activities, and of preventing women from equally competing with men for more valued and intrinsically more satisfying activities and roles, which not incidentally, also offer access to scarce privileges and greater influence on major social decisions.

The social structure of the *kibbutz* was never egalitarian as far as gender roles are concerned. Men never fully participated in domestic and childcare work.[33] The principle that all members were active outside the private household and none were paid was considered a sufficient expression of egalitarianism. It was the *kibbutz* social structure, not the *kibbutz* women who pushed forward the traditional polarization of work roles. The desire to increase the size of *kibbutz* population is held by men as well as by women, and the birth rate is significantly higher compared to the same Israeli socio-economic stratum. In principle, *kibbutz* children receive high level care for whole day, and, in many *kibbutzim*, day and night. Since child care is not deemed a position suitable for men to hold on a permanent basis in the *kibbutz*, as elsewhere in Israeli society. Since long the *kibbutz* movement opposed the hiring of outside labour for child care, the inescapable consequence is that most *kibbutz* women spends a large portion of their working hours in child care, i.e. in so called maternal activities. They did not prefer these roles and expressed dissatisfaction with their limited occupational roles. The demand of collective to familial sleeping arrangements for children was affected by a majority of vote in the *kibbutz* general meetings, where men were more active and largely represented. Women actively supported the broadening of private consumption

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[32] Barbara F. Reskin, "Bringing the Men Back in: Sex Differentiation and the Devaluation of Women's Work", Gender and Society, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1988, pp. 58-57.

[33] Judith Buder Agassi, "*Kibbutz* and Sex Roles", Crossroads: International Dynamics and Social Change, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1979, pp. 145-73.

and childcare patterns but their frustration with their communal work may well have been an important cause.

How much we criticize the matter of gender equality in the *kibbutz*, it may not be found in its real sense and it is difficult to test the degree of this equality on theoretical level. But certainly it is true that gender equality has been achieved to a great extent in the *kibbutz*, either the reason be it's ideological perception or the conditions of this particular community.

Marriage: Marriage brings about a rearrangement of the social structure by segregating and interlinking subgroup within it. It bears directly on the cohesion and continuity of the social system, so it is important to analyze the functional aspects of marriage within the *kibbutzim*.

Both sons and daughters are expected to stay in their *kibbutz* after marriage and to prevail on their spouses to join them. The *kibbutzim* have gained a considerable number of additional members through marriage – the ratio of gain to loss is about three to one[34]. Established *kibbutzim* suffer from a shortage of manpower, and the flow of new members drawn in by marriage is most welcome.

Thus membership and kinship are complementary. The *kibbutz* is based on the primacy of membership ties over kinship affiliations and it cannot afford to let kinship gain an upper hand. All established *kibbutzim* have the problem of gradual reemergence of wider kinship ties within them. Relatives often form united blocks and carries out a covert struggle for particular interests. Occasionally such blocks become quite powerful and exert a considerable influence on communal affairs. Predominance of kinship ties over the ties of membership undermines the primacy of collective considerations and endangers internecine strife. The established *kibbutzim* have devised many

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[34] Youina Talman, Family and Community in the *Kibbutz*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972, pp. 1-50.

mechanisms to limit the influence of kinship groups. One such mechanism is extra-second generation marriages that check the emergence and consolidation of large and powerful kinship groupings within the *kibbutz*. Extra-second generation is the marriage in which intermarriage occurs between a member of the second generation and a newcomer or an outsider. In this marriage only one spouse lives in the same community with his family or siblings' families. Marriage between the members of the second generation, on the other hand, would proliferate to kinship ties within the *kibbutz*.

Marriage outside the second generation also helps to bridge the generation gap. The children's society has its autonomous arrangements and children live within this semi separate framework uninterruptedly throughout the long process of socialization. They share with their age mates most of the formative experiences of infancy, childhood and adolescence. The educational system partly segregates the second generation from the rest of the *kibbutz*. Members of the second generation are highly conscious of their special position in the *kibbutz*. Marriage outside the group mitigates the intense solidarity after maturity. Marrying outside the *kibbutz* propels members of the second generation beyond their group and bolsters their external ties.[35]

Marriage outside the second generation bridges the gap between subgroups within the *kibbutz* in yet another way as it checks the consolidation of emergent stratification system. The founders of the *kibbutz* usually enjoyed a privileged position in terms of power and prestige. The kinship ties produced by any considerable number of "endogamous" marriages between their children would reinforce in-group solidarity among them.

However, spontaneous love is regarded as the most important basis of marriage. Mate selection is defined as a purely personal matter and it obscures its social functions on the private sphere. Most theories of mate selection in modern societies deal with it as a process of interpersonal negotiation and

[35] Ibid, pp. 1-50.

minimize its repercussions on the social structure. Great emphasis is put on the "fit" and compatibility between personalities, in terms of either complementary or similar characteristics.[36] Earlier the *kibbutz* was a non-familistic revolutionary society. Kinship affiliations were irrelevant in most institutional spheres and there was no institutionalized normative regulation of mate choice. Yet marriage patterns have a direct impact on the cohesion and continuity of the social system, they mesh closely with the overall institutional structure and serve as crucial integrating mechanism.[37]

An assessment regarding the family in the *kibbutz* depends on one's definition of the family. The family cannot be said to exist if it includes the economic interdependence of the spouses, or children's exclusive dependence on their parents. This was the *Spiro's* reason for considering the family to have been essentially eliminated in *kibbutzim.* The domestic unit in the *kibbutzim* included neither economic cooperation nor common residence of parents and children, not even exclusive parental responsibility for rearing them. Considering the pioneer's goal of destroying patriarchal family power, the father's role had been reduced; his power and authority had been negated. The *kibbutz* also made it possible for women to combine motherhood and outside work, with approval of community. The children were independent of their parents for subsistence, educational attainments and social standing. The main function of the family unit was reproduction. It contributed to make parenthood free from the burdens of child rearing and child support.

A number of observers disagree with the view that the family has been disbanded.[38] Talmon-Garber notes that the family always remained a distinct unit, with a line drawn between sexual and non-sexual relationships. Parents

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[36] See: Reuben Hill and Evelyn M. Duvall, Family Development, J.B. Lippincott, Chicago, 1975.

[37] Philip E. Slater, "On Social Regression", American Sociological Review, Vol. 12, No. 3, 1963, pp. 339-364.

[38] Uri Bronfenbrenner, "The Dream of the *Kibbutz*", in Saturday Review, Sept. 20, 1969, p. 84.

had definite responsibilities toward their children and watched their development with concern and pride. Children were closely attached to their parents. Though the family unit spent less time together compared to a conventional family unit, relations were less strained and less ambivalent. Children could be loved unconditionally without the sting of discipline. Thus the original division between family and community responsibilities is to free the family from usual tensions, thereby strengthening its emotional and symbolic hold.

In one sense the nuclear family has been eliminated in the *kibbutz*, but in another it has not. Is it a fact that the *kibbutz* set apart the two adults of opposite sex, living in a socially condoned sexual relationship and closely related to their children. Part of the confusion surrounding this question stems from some contradictory objectives entertained by the founders, who simultaneously believed both that the family could be dispensed with it and that it was "the basic cell of human society".[39]

Given the growing need of young, the original claims dispensing with the family were somewhat premature. The second generation makes it appearance and causes major social redefinition in the *kibbutz*. It promotes a care of specific family duties and loyalties and gives substance to marriage beyond the emotional feelings of the couple. With the grandparental generation a sense of social and biological continuity develops in it that has set entire lineage apart as distinct foci of interest and sentiments.

At times, the couple reemerges as an important collective focus. Its union is celebrated and its affection publicly demonstrated. Rituals symbolizing the union such as tea with the children, some regular meals taken separately with the family, developed. Gradually *kibbutz* architects take cognizance of the

[39] See: H. Drabki, "Collective Agricultural Settlement-*Kibbutz* Socio-Economic Structure", International Seminar on Rural Planning, Tel Aviv. Oct-Nov. 1961.

family separateness by designing semidetached dwellings as physical symbols of the change. Now the couple exists as a sexual, emotional and conjugal entity, sharing living quarters, memories and a destiny through its children.

There is also a growing division a labour within the household, although parental roles continue to be flexible and overlapping. Now, the mother tends to be more involved with household and childcare. The home is now a women's domain. But the *kibbutz* has achieved its major aims of destroying the patriarchal family, and of liberating the wife from the domestic confinement and total dependence on her husband. Practically none of the traditional functions of the nuclear family remain intact except the one, procreation of the next generation. For the rest, the family was neither a producing nor consuming unit. It did not socialize or educate its offspring except indirectly, and is not a source of security in old age.

Suzanne Keller in "The Family in the *Kibbutz*" (1972) notifies that "Increasingly tensions do develop between the family and the collective".[40] As the family claims more rights and a greater choice in the education of its children, there is a basic rivalry between the family and the community but the collective continues to be pre-eminent. If the family accepts the primacy of the collective, it is an ally and if disputes, becomes a danger. The collective still comes first.[41]

But now the situation is quite different. In today's *kibbutzim* family comes first and perhaps it is the biggest reason for the downfall of *kibbutz* as a community. Given its basic priorities and values, greater equality between the sexes, may not be realizable in the foreseeable future. Today the birth of a child makes all the difference in the *kibbutz,* as elsewhere in the world. For a number of reasons, overt and covert, subjective and collective, reality has fallen short of ideals.

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[40] Yonina Talmon, op. cit., pp. 1-50.

[41] Suzanne Keller, op. cit., pp. 115-144.

Chapter IV

CAUSES OF CHANGES AND PROSPECT OF FAMILY IN ISRAELI *KIBBUTZIM*

> "We are losing our identity. The *kibbutz* movement now a days is very heterogeneous; it is hard to say what the *kibbutz* movement consists of, what a *kibbutz* is." (Ahron Dagan, a Takam leader)[1]

Changes and crisis are the words that seem inseparable be it research or popular writing, in context of the *Kibbutz,* since the past 15 years. Since the financial crisis in the mid 1980's, there is a widespread sentiment that the old *kibbutz* is "dead", and active speculation is there on the new form that the *kibbutz* will take. Consultants, academicians and *kibbutz* leader talk of mass privatization, separation of community and business, differential wages and staffing committees with experts instead of *kibbutz* members.[2] The registrar of cooperatives, who is a government official in charge of all cooperatives, including *kibbutzim*, gave 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 changes 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 law, then it will be approved. However, it diverges from the letter of the law, the registrar has the

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[1] Ben-Rafael Eliezer, Crisis and Transformation: The Kibbutz at Century's End, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York, 1997, p. 139.

[2] Shlomo Getz, "Implementation of Changes in the *Kibbutz*", Journal of Rural Cooperation, Vol. 22, 1994, pp. 79-92.
See also: Shlomo Getz, "Winds of Change", in Uri Leviatan, Hugh Oliver and Jack Quarter (eds.), Crisis in Israeli *kibbutz*, Praeger, London, 1998, pp. 13-26.

authority to refuse the change, and if a *kibbutz* tries to implement a change without approval, to prosecute the *kibbutz*. According to the registrar, as of June 1999, only five to seven percent of the *kibbutzim* have implemented or are in the process of implementing changes that will result in changing 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 from *kibbutz* movement and the practical implications of Israeli society.

Ideology/ Practicality "battle" as a trigger to change.

All organizations and social systems either adapt to new circumstances by changing or ultimately fail.[3] It is also reasonable to assume that, because all organizations are infused with ideology, many confront an ideological conflict like that of the *kibbutz*.[4] 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. Ideology may also include a conception of organizational change, as in case of *kibbutz*, where there is a newer conception that it 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 technological imperative, are more silent 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.

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[3] See: Saniel Katz and Robent L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations, 2nd Edition, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1978.

[4] See: Menachem Rosner et. al (eds.), The Second Generation: Continuity and Change in the *Kibbutz*, Greenwood Press, New York, 1990.

Examples abound: the abolishment of the communal sleeping arrangements because parents wanted their children in the family home; accepting the use of hired labour because of chronic manpower shortage, allowing the matriculation university exams in *kibbutz* high schools; and changing the form of personal budgets to allow greater autonomy and individual choice for members.[5]

Most researchers seem to think that the fundamental issue is still the ideology / pragmatism conflict. The 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. The negative combination results in calls to strengthen the market approach both in the consumption and production spheres and to prevent intervention of "irrelevant" social and ideological constraints in the management of economic enterprises.[6] The second component has to do with the pace of changes and their origins.[7] In the past changes were diffused, and developed in an "evolutionary process". The changes were slow, communities treats each change independently and in many cases grassroots initiators started the change. At present *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 at home, implementing food budgets for families, establishing boards of directors for factories, broadcasting general assembly meetings via internal television, encouraging the members to work outside the *kibbutz*, and opening the *kibbutz* swimming pool to the public etc. The width of changes makes the careful consideration and evaluation less effective. An "ideology of change" is

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[5] Amir Helman, "Privatization and the Israeli *Kibbutz* Experience", Journal of Rural Cooperation, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1994, pp. 19-30.

[6] Menachem Rosner and Shlomo Getz, "Towards a Theory of Change in the *Kibbutz*", Journal of Rural Cooperation, Vol. 22, No.3, 1994, pp. 41-61.

[7] Ben-Rafael Eliezer, op.cit.,pp.140-145

developing; potentially leading to a wholesale acceptance of anything that is different and new.[8]

Source 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 ideology is likely to be rejected. In practice, *kibbutzim* have been pragmatic in their evolution of suggested changes. Nevertheless, the role of ideology as an inertial force should not be underemphasized. The inertial properties of ideology are reflected in individual's attitudes towards changes that are counter to their ideology.

Individuals vary in their interpretations of reality and their preferences for action to attain it. Thus, responding to *kibbutz* member's interests is not easy because there are multiple preferences and ideals 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 generational difference in attitude toward change particularly which involve a departure from the *kibbutz* ideological tenants.[9] As Ben-Rafael 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 collective identity.[10] It is a widely accepted

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[8] Menachem Rosner, 1994, op. cit., pp. 41-61.
[9] See: Menachem Rosner, 1990, op. cit.
[10] See: Ben-Rafael Eliezer, State Power and Conflict in the *Kibbutz* Aldershot, Aubury, United Kingdom, 1988.

assumption that the younger generation is more supportive to 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.*[11] Both Rosener and Ben-Rafael in their studies found evidences supporting the more conservative attitudes among the first generation or older *kibbutz* members.

Infact, the *kibbutz* is troubled by the tensions within itself between socialist ideology and the requirements of economic growth as well as by the seeming reduction of that socialist ideology and pioneering spirit in society as a whole. The *kibbutz* has struggled to accommodate itself to the increasing degree of industrialization that has been a logical development of the physical limits of land and irrigation, the increasing mechanization of agriculture, the need to provide less strenuous work, for an aging group, the desire to provide more technologically oriented work for third and fourth generation. The *kibbutz* principle of rotation of office runs counter the need for specialization of functions, especially in production and managerial matters and for technicians and engineers. In addition specialization has induced educational change, as people have been sent to training and vocational courses. Marx commented in 'The Communist Manifesto' itself that the *kibbutzim* are no longer agricultural communities, but are mixed occupational entities in a rural setting.

A rising standard of living, industrialization, efficient organization and regular agricultural surpluses constitute a situation far different from the days of dependence. Critics have speculated that the style of life of the *kibbutz* and the personality of its members would be adversely affected by growing affluence and security. Efficiency and better coordination of work have perhaps reduced the more exuberant behaviour of members. It would be absurd to argue that the improvement of living, private showers, meals at home, more colorful cloths and the general alleviation of austerity are automatically destructive of

[11] Menachem Rosner, 1994, op. cit., pp. 41-61.

the basic principles of the *kibbutz.* The basic values remain: communal ownership, collective consumption, communal organization of work, democratic participation in decision-making, elimination of personal budgets and money and noncompetitive education. But these values also seem to disappear in present environment in the *kibbutz.*[12]

A major continuing problem in the *kibbutz* is the tension between individual and communal values. The *kibbutz* is a very public place in which communal arrangements and activities have been preferred to solitude. Though opportunities are available for members to maintain distance from their fellows in many occasions, the limitation of privacy are still troublesome. The *kibbutz* has always had to balance individual autonomy with the requirements of collective well-being. Individuals' have agreed on the supremacy of group interests and living experiences, the acceptance of communal decisions and identification with the community but now the situation is changing, family interest has taken the place of group interest and living experiences, the acceptance of individual decisions and identification with the family instead of group is on raise. The troublesome problem of where children should sleep communally or with their parents has now been settled in favour of the latter. Now the role of family both in house – keeping and socialization of the children is most important and essential. This has been strained the extended family relationship of the whole community, there has been definitely strain caused by the changing composition of the *kibbutz,* the heterogeneity of members and four generation present in the family unit. Family relationship is also changing. Formerly work was assigned to husband and wife at different times, living little opportunity for family social life. Relationships have been affected by the greater division of labour between husband and wife, the increase in the number of children, the greater role of the family in the socialization of children and the existence of four generation. All this, while

[12] See: Michael Curtis, "Utopia and the *Kibbutz*", In Michael Curtis & Mordecai S. Chertoff (eds.), Israel: Social Structure and Change, Transaction Books, New Jersey, 1973, pp101-113

creating a greater family solidarity, has put a heavier domestic burden on women.

Kibbutz members were always aware of the problems encountered by alternative forms of life and organizations in the framework if capitalist economies and societies. Martin Buber presented the *kibbutz* fifty years ago as a "singular non-failure", in contrast to the failure of many attempts to develop communal societies in different parts of the world.[13] Recently several scholars tried to explain this non-failure by special circumstances that existed in the past, but do not exist today. Y. Don states that the communal constitution of the *kibbutz* leads to "intrinsically inefficient performance ".[14] This was not so in the past owing to the strong altruistic orientation of members. The weakening of this orientation is, in his opinion, the main reason for the decline of *Kibbutz* economy since the mid 1980s.

The partial privatization of the communal household through transition from direct supply of commodities and services to a system of allocation of monetary budgets to members, who can buy inside or outside the *kibbutz,* has effect the *kibbutz* community drastically. In almost all communities monetary budgets have replaced direct supply of commodities and services monetary budgets for clothing and furniture were already introduced at preliminary stage. In almost half of the communities' members receive money to pay for meals in the dining room.[15] This has affected and strengthened the family functions within the *kibbutz* to a great extent. A number of *kibbutzim* move toward a complete privatization of the communal household, abolishing mutual responsibility for health care, education and higher studies also. The others

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[13] See: Martin Buber, Paths in Utopia, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1949, pp. 104.

[14] Yehuda Don, "The Importance of Behavior Altruistically, Altruism as an Efficiency Boosting Factor in the *Kibbutz*", Journal of Rural Cooperation, Vol. 24 No.1. 1996.

[15] Menachem Rosner, Future Trends of the *kibbutz*: An Assessment of Recent Changes, The Institute for study and Research of the *kibbutz* university of Haifa, Publication no. 83, 2000, pp. 1-15.

allocate monetary budgets, taking into consideration individual needs, related to family status and to the number and age of children.[16]

The first direction of change leads from a communal household to members' economic independence and sovereignty. The second direction applies the communal principle of distribution according to needs in a new framework of partial monetary budgets, which increases individual autonomy but retains mutual responsibility. An important difference between this new framework and the previous one is that in the past the distribution according to needs was based on individual differences. The new conception is based on differences between categories of age, family size etc., and it better fits the social structure of multi-generational and more heterogeneous communities. The means for the satisfaction of other needs continue to be distributed according to individual needs.

The change that has taken place in the sphere of family in the *kibbutz* is greatly influenced by the process of privatization. There are also proposals for the privatization of the assets owned collectively by the *kibbutz*. The unique features of *kibbutz* ownership have been defined as "communal and social". The concept of communal ownership is based on the definition of the *kibbutz* as a communal society. Communal ownership is comprehensive, including both the means of production and the means needed for consumption. Ownership is by the community and is indivisible among the members. There are no shares in the *kibbutz* and members have no claim on *kibbutz* assets. According to the *kibbutz* by laws the property of a *kibbutz* cannot be divided among its members, either during the existence of a *kibbutz* or after its liquidation. The concept of communal ownership refers therefore only to the usufruct component of ownership rights; the community is almost autonomous in deciding on the use of assets, the *kibbutz* members can decide collectively how to divide the net income between investment and consumption. The right to sell or to transfer the assets belongs to *Nir*, the legal entity representing the

[16] Ibid, pp. 1-15.

Israeli working class organized in the *Histadrut*, in coordination with the *kibbutz* federation. In case of liquidation of property the *kibbutz* is transferred to "*Nir*" that shall use the assets in coordination with the *kibbutz* federation to which the *kibbutz* belongs to create, develop and consolidate other *kibbutzim*. This component of ownership rights has been defined as social ownership. A series of developments since the economic crisis of the 1980s, has led to several proposal of change in the conceptions of *kibbutz* ownership:

1. In some *kibbutzim*, which suffered from both huge debts and demographic depletion, the question arose of how to assure the economic future of older member in case of dismantling of the *kibbutz*. These communities were not able to pay for old-age pensions and the suggestions were to transfer to ownership of apartments to members.

2. Following the collapse of the *Histadrut* economic sector, formal ownership by "*Nir*" lost its meaning and its rights were practically transferred to the federations. On the other hand, a weakening in the role and authority of the federations led to demands to transfer all the ownership rights to the individual communities.

3. In the 1990s, the dismantling of some of *kibbutzim* became a real possibility and the *kibbutz* federation searched for ways to assure members rights in such situations. These developments ultimately led to two different directions of change.

One direction was to maintain the communal component of *kibbutz* ownership as long as the *kibbutz* is functioning normally but in case of liquidation to divide the assets-after payment of debts-equally among its members.

The second direction of change means the abolition of communal and social ownership through privatization of consumption assets such as housing, and transition towards cooperative ownership of economic enterprises, this

transition should implemented through distribution of shares among members according to seniority other agreed criteria. Such changes have been suggested since early 1990s, but up to now none have been implemented.[17] Serious legal difficulties do not obstruct execution of such changes, nor will it probably be easy to reach consensus about the criteria for distribution of shares. The issue of distribution of shares became relevant only after the implementation of the debt consolidation plan starting in 1997.

The following table presents an overall comparison among three institutional patterns:

A. The conventional pattern of almost all *kibbutzim* until the 1990s,
B. The attempt to preserve the communal identity of the *kibbutz*, through re-institutionalization, increasing personal choice and individual autonomy,
C. De-communalization, through the partial or complete abolition of communal institutions, maintaining only limited mutual aid and cooperative ownership of economic assets.

[17] Ibid, pp. 1-15.

TABLE 4.1

	The Conventional Kibbutz (Until the 1990s)	Communal Re-institutionalization	De-communalization
Consumption	Overall communal household, Mutual responsibility, Equal distribution of commodities and services, partly according to personal needs.	Co-existence of communal and private household. Mutual responsibility. Distribution of money considering needs, mainly based on categories of family size and age.	Privatization of communal household. Limited mutual aid. Economic independence of individuals.
Work	Work place allocation based on collective needs and individual preferences. Kibbutz work institutions have decision-making authority.	Individual autonomy of work place choice, also outside the kibbutz. Kibbutz work institutions have advisory role. Monetary sanctions for deviations.	Individual work place choice. Differential salaries based on labour-market value or partial differential component.
Ownership	Communal and social.	Communal ownership during normal functioning. Privatization in case of dismantling.	Privatization of ownership of consumption assets. Distribution of shares of economic assets.

Source: Menachem Rosner, Future Trends of the *kibbutz*: An Assessment of recent changes, The Institute for study and Research of the *kibbutz* university of Haifa, Publication no. 83, 2000.

Besides Industrialization and privatization, it is important to deal with some other factors that contributed to change in the structure and functions of

kibbutzim under the rapid modernization of Israeli society. Several *kibbutzim* have been forced to relinquish their original socialistic beliefs, and in some cases they have adopted capitalistic practices. Although Bettleheim revealed several strong ideological beliefs and values of early *kibbutzim* movement, the system as a whole was unable to defend itself against the rapid modernization of Israel. Specifically, the traditional *kibbutz* has declined primarily as a result of weak, religion free educational system and an unstable Israeli economy.

The complete solidarity and responsibility of the "extended family and kinship group", which characterized the original *kibbutz*, is now changing in favor of higher individual's freedom and responsibility for his own consumption and production. In the consumption sphere, increase in the personal budget (decreasing the collective expenditures); increasing the individual's freedom to choose, transferring of the responsibility for member's needs from the collective to the families and individuals. In the production sphere, separating the firms (production branches) form the community; building of 'responsibility (or profit) centers'; managing according to the rules of the free competitive market; introducing the new institutions of the board of directors; recognizing and legitimizing hired labor adding to outside partners, etc.[18]

All these moves have the same direction: decreasing the level of participation, togetherness and mutual guarantee and the full responsibility of the society for each member as a consumer and producer. What we call the main reforms of privatization or the privatization has effected and changed the following spheres in the *kibbutzim*:

1. Changing the method of distribution and allocation of consumer goods: The *kibbutz* was well known for its free distribution and quota (or 'norms'), which were the two unique methods supplying 85% of the goods and services. The office holders, the committees and the general assembly (the

[18] Amir Helman, op. cit., pp. 35-42.

collective) were the 'institutions' which decided what to buy and how much. During the last few years there has been a strong tendency to increase the private personnel budget and to let each member decide according to his own preferences. In some *kibbutzim* the personal budget is now over 30-40%, and in one *kibbutz* the new decision to increase it to almost 90%, which means that only 10% will be allocated according to the two special methods of old *kibbutzim.*[19] The justification for these changes is to increase the member's freedom.

2. Changes in the role of children houses: As already have been cited, after many years, during which time all the *kibbutz* children (aged 8-10) lived in their own houses (children houses), now live with their parents. The pressure of the families (which also meant huge investments in enlarging the living flats) is part of a broader tendency to emphasize the family as a basic and dominant unit in the *kibbutzim*

3. Decreasing the mutual guarantee: Earlier the *kibbutz* was characterized by its total mutual guarantee for all the members of *kibbutz.* Every member was assured that he would always get according to his needs and every *kibbutz* could keep the same standard of living. But the economic crisis cast doubts on the possibility of keeping the ideals of complete mutual guarantee. Several strong *kibbutzim* are now trying to rid themselves of their obligations to poorer *kibbutzim.* Their claim is that in order to force the weak *kibbutz* to increase its efficiency, it should not rely on the commitment of others.

4. Strong pressure to establish 'pension funds': The founders of the *kibbutz* took it for granted that the community would always take care of all its members. The veterans used to say, "now we work for our children and in the future they will work for us". But now, when these veterans are old, they are not so sure about their future. There are many young people who prefer to

[19] Ibid, pp. 19-30.

leave the *kibbutz* and old members feel they need to ensure their own future, like all other people in the country, by a formal contract. Individuals want to ensure that they don't have to depend on the good will of collective.

5. Legitimating for a long vacation: in the past, a full membership meant a permanent dependence on *kibbutz* arrangements and compliance with the work coordination. Formerly, every one could be transferred to every job, any time, and the allocation of the workforce was the prerogative of the collective. Today almost everyone has his own permanent job, and only from time to time one has to participate and contribute to the general effort by serving (in rotation) in the dining room, the kitchen or as the night guard. Much more important is the phenomenon of 'long vacation' from the *kibbutz*. An individual member can require time off from the *kibbutz*, usually for one year, with no obligation on either side: living and working outside the *kibbutz*, he earns his own money and he chooses his job. A member can ask the *kibbutz* to stay out even longer, and has the freedom to return to home any time. Many members, mainly young and single, are happy to take the opportunity to travel around the world, to earn private money, to become acquainted with other life styles and to introspect.

6. Tendency to legitimize private property: In order to keep to the *kibbutz* ideal of equality, a member is not allowed to have any private property or any outside resource of income. An important ideological test took place in the 1950s when hundreds of *kibbutz* members received restitution payments from Germany. There was a unanimous stand on member's duty to hand over all restitution money to *kibbutz*. In spite of the success in early test case, dissatisfaction increased during the 1970s. The ideal did not seem as strong any more and the younger *kibbutz* generation is not so keen to avoid the issue to private property.

Research about *kibbutz* members attitude to private property revealed a large gap between the 'ideological line' and member's attitude – only 25% still

believed in the pure principle of avoiding any private property, 70% have some private property and 84% predict that the *kibbutz* will gradually become even less equitable in the future. The conclusion from the research was that "the amount of money that members own privately is quite small and cannot change their life style, basic standard of living, which is still dependent on the *kibbutz* income. Thus perhaps it is the desire to have something of one's own that matters, rather than a real income need."[20]

All these changes are characterized by increasing individual member's independence; he has more money for his personal budget, more responsibility for his children, less participation in mutual guarantee programs and legitimation for a long vacation and private property. This shows a strong tendency to give up the unique rules of the *kibbutz* and to adopt standards of surrounding society. And this tendency is much more familistic than the early collective behaviour. Besides the role of privatization and globalization, Goode's concept of role bargaining is also being applied here in which the individual attempts to obtain the best possible 'bargain' in his relationship with others. In terms of family relationship this means that the individual will maintain relationships with the kin and submit to their control if he feels that he is getting a good return of his investment of time energy and emotions. Today in *kibbutzim* the extended family and kinship ties are not retained because the individual feel that they have more to lose then to gain by maintaining them and definitely this shift is towards the establishment of nuclear families that are 'fit' in the era of industrialization and modernization.

The first of such failures involved the overall educational system within the *kibbutz*. And the critical error in the overall teaching of the *kibbutz* lifestyle was that it lacked a strong religious infusion.[21] The original founders of the movement were adamant in preserving an atheistic society, mostly in an effort

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[20] Ibid, pp. 19-30.

[21] Daniel Gavron, The *Kibbutz*, Rowman & Littlefiels Publishers, Lanham, Maryland, 2000, p. 170.

to boost overall equality and maintain a communal atmosphere. Although these ends were met temporarily, the long-term effects of a religion free society were more deleterious. Yeheskel Dar, a member of one of the early *kibbutzim*, Degania, had the following to say when asked why four generations of education had failed to pass on communal values: they though that living it was enough... they did not really teach *kibbutz* life with texts about equality and community, in the way that religious educators instill religion with biblical and talmudic texts. They definitely overestimated the influence of the social structure.[22] By removing religion altogether, the *kibbutz* found it difficult to ensure the continuity of its own convictions. The Jewish religion has prevailed throughout thousands of years of adversity, mainly as a result of the way it has been taught and passed on to younger members. The *kibbutz*, unfortunately, made the conscious decision to discard this intense type of education, and therefore was unable to maintain a cohesive membership for a prolonged period of time.

Moreover, the overall massage of the *kibbutz* education is not one that stresses the pursuit of individual success. Danial Gavron describes Chen Vardi, a young man who spent a few months abroad before returning to live in Degania, "his biggest problem was with what he saw as the mediocrity and dependence of the members..., he concluded that the *kibbutz* education created mediocrity. Anyone striving for excellence was derided as a *shvitzer*, a boaster".[23] This is not to say that *kibbutz* children didn't grow up to become upstanding members of Israeli society; clearly they have. For the child who did happen to have extraordinary ambition, however, that child most likely found the *kibbutz* education repressive. As a result, *kibbutzim* began to lose the members that had the best chance of actually achieving significant prosperity on their own. A member of the newer *kibbutz* system commented, "You won't hear a *kibbutz* kid saying he wants to be the best or to earn the most... is that a

[22] Ibid, p. 172.
[23] Ibid, p. 137.

bad thing? I don't know".[24] Perhaps this would be a wrong perception considering that success has been rapidly leaking from the third and fourth generations of the *kibbutz* system.

Even during a thriving economy the *kibbutz* existence found itself threatened by the competitive nature of its surroundings. The Israeli economy also broke *kibbutz*niks from their faith by luring members away from a communal setting and into the world of high finance. The period between the 1950s and 1970s saw a substantial increase in the output of national economy. This growth led to an increase in both income and living conditions (standards) for the entire population. As Dan Horouitz and Mosh Lissak mention, "...from the standpoint of class consciousness, were the possibilities for upward economic mobility opened up by these processes...opportunities for upward mobility were found not only in larger wage differentials but also in the availability of new job opportunities".[25] As the gross national product begins to climb, *kibbutzim* did not suffer immediate adverse effects. As time progressed however, they did begin to lose some of their brightest members to the fruitful job market. Even when some of these carrier-oriented members returned to the *kibbutz*, they were generally unable to completely reassume the *kibbutz* philosophy. Gavron observes such individuals: "Their aim is to develop and improve their *kibbutz*, without too much regard for *kibbutz* principles."

As the national economic success later began to decline, the *kibbutz* only encountered the extended hardship. In the 1970s, *kibbutzim* began to take loans from banks but instead of investing this money in potentially profitable enterprises, such as factories or businesses, they used the funds to improve living conditions. In the early 1980's inflation in Israel surpassed 400% and by 1985 the government was forced to take drastic measures to bring the economy under control. The government achieved this by devaluating the Israeli

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[24] Ibid, p. 132.

[25] See: Dan Horowitz & Moshe Lissak, Trouble in Utopia, State University of New York Press, New York, 1989, p. 62.

currency by 15%, freezing wages and prices, and leaving interest rates extraordinary high. Although this method succeeded in causing the inflation rate to drop significantly, interest rates nevertheless remained high. As a result, the collective *kibbutz* debt climbed to between $5 and $6 billion, an amount that could never be repaid.[26] Such an immense debt caused *kibbutz* members to break from their traditional communal mentality. For one, several *kibbutz* members began to resort to the national stock market, a point which Gavron articulates: "The fact that the *kibbutz* money managers were speculating on the Tel Aviv stock exchange is in itself a sign of flaw in the *kibbutz* educational system. Means making the profit without necessary labor, the founders would have never dreamed of such behaviour. Even the most pragmatic among them would not have imagined making money without earning it.[27] Thus, we see that the *kibbutz* social structure has not remained static since its inception, change is a natural phenomena and *kibbutz* is no exception. The traditional structure and functions of *kibbutz* has changed to a considerable extent resulting the change in the structure and functions of family within it. This provide a strong support for the perspective that the family is a socially created unit and it is influenced by social factors, the cultural norms of society and the prevailing economic conditions. This is evident in the present study as at first the *kibbutz* society as a whole took precedence over the family unit. The *kibbutz* regarded the family as a potential rival and limits its independent activities, the family accepted its subordinate position and limits its size for the sake of *kibbutz*, and the institution of *kibbutz* had a traditional family structure with a group framework as its base. But with the passage of time, influenced by external as well as internal factors, a rapid change has taken place in the conventional structure and functions of the *kibbutz*. These factors have contributed a lot in the development of individualistic familistic tendencies in the communal institution of *kibbutzim*. The familistic tendencies has been greatly encouraged by the consumer orientations that is typical of present day capitalist societies,

[26] Daniel Gavron, op. cit., p 145.
[27] Ibid, pp. 159.

as attitude for raising the standard of living as a 'natural' trend of every family and as an aim worthy in itself.

The rapid change that is taking place in the structure and functions of family within the *kibbutzim* across the Israel has been analyzed in the present study. And as it is evident from the history of *kibbutzim* that earlier there was a debate 'whether family exists in the *kibbutzim*', now there are clear indications and evidences of the growing familistic tendencies in the *kibbutzim* and this tendency is towards the establishment of nuclear families. The fourth generation of the *kibbutzim* has become more family oriented and family has become the sole center of individual's life in the *kibbutzim*. And definitely, industrialization, privatization, urbanization and globalization are the most significant causes of change that is taking place in the structure and functions of family in the *kibbutzim*.

The rapid change that has taken place in the structure and function of family in the *kibbutzim* while changing itself from a rural agricultural communal settlement to a production based industrial settlement verifies the above-discussed conceptual functionalist framework and assures a bright future for nuclear family in this unique settlement.

Chapter V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As has already been mentioned, the basic purpose of this study has been to understand the family in the *kibbutz* setup, in all its known and varied dimensions, from a sociological point of view. The study explored its relation with the wider community, its socio-cultural and economic structure and functions, its evolution and history, and its dialectical survival amidst the larger community sentiments. The impact of external forces of modernization, industrialization, urbanization, and privatization, and also the influence of internal forces of nationalism and individualism, on the institution of family in, also formed an important aspect of the study. How within the quest for a new global order the *kibbutz* family presents itself with a continuum of promising options, clear limitations, many contradictions, several unanswered questions and crucial survival of much desired utopian values, too, constituted a crucial part of the study.

A detailed study of the origin, history and evolution of *kibbutzim*, made it easily discernible that the *kibbutz* movement did not erupt in isolation, but was a consequence of the play and inter-play of certain historical and socio-economic forces. The history of *kibbutz*, founded with the purpose of implementing a vision of society based on human's highest ideals of equality, justice, dignity and humanity, is quite long. Where most of other such utopian communities have been short-lived, coming to an end shortly after, if not during the life time of their founders, the *kibbutz* has not only survived but has preserved itself to the future. Presenting an over nine decade long saga of successful experimentation with an alternate form of communitarian life, in complete variance with modern notions of personal freedom, individualism and market driven crass consumerism, it still, despite

comprehensive changes in its structure and functions over the period, forms an integral part of the Israeli society.

Various factors have contributed to the emergence of the *kibbutzim* in Israel. The socialist-Zionist ideology, the Jewish tradition in Diaspora, the socio-economic compulsions of the time, the nature of socio-political developments in eastern Europe, Russia and other parts of the globe, and a universal human vision for utopia- together with other not so important factors- contributed to the emergence of this unique commune, called "*kibbutz*", in Israel.

Ever since its emergence, the *kibbutz* has had to face many challenges in the wake of various developments in the surrounding environment, the larger society. Despite all odds, approx. two percent (2000) population of Israel still live in these unique collective settlements called the *kibbutz*. The *kibbutz* has always encouraged decentralization of power, a sense of mutual interdependence and provided opportunity for individual creation.

The first *kibbutz*, which started of with a handful of members in 1910, was soon to be replicated across Israel. Today there are 269 *kibbutzim* comprising of 120,500 members. Although a minority of those born and brought up in the *kibbutz* have since made their lives in the outside world, the majority still owes its allegiance, in one form or another, to the *kibbutz* of their origin. However, in the last few decades the out-migration of *kibbutzniks* has drastically increased. Despite severe membership drain in recent years, the *kibbutzim* have shown tremendous resilience to survive against all odds. Comprising only around two percent of the Israeli population, its contribution to the economic, political, military and cultural life of the country has been exemplary.

The *kibbutz* is a socialist community guided by certain fundamental principles, whatever may be its size, age, location, membership composition

and political affiliations. A strong sense of responsibility and commitment of members to the values and ideals cherished in *kibbutz* philosophy, and the voluntary nature of the organization, are sufficient to ensure a high level of social order in the *kibbutz* without any strict internal rules, or a police force, or judicial courts to impose control from within or without.

In accordance with socialist principles, all forms of work are treated as of equal value, and the basic needs and facilities like food, housing, education, recreation, health and other services are provided in equal measures to all by the community. Children are educated and brought up communally by caregivers and educators, and the parental role of socialization is limited.

The family in the *kibbutz* maintains its unique character, remarkably different from the modern families outside. In its social structure, the *kibbutz* is not a federation of self- contained family units. For the members of the *kibbutz*, family is not indispensable in their struggle for existence. Every individual is directly affiliated to the *kibbutz* economy. The wives do not economically depend on their husbands and the children do not depend on their parents. The status of women, which is largely decided by their role in the family, is equal to their male counterparts. The *kibbutz* has sought to transfer many of the family's traditional functions to specialized communal institutions, thus freeing the family of its many self-involving tasks. The *kibbutz* ideology emphasized sexual equality and rejected the western pattern of parental roles, especially the mother's role. Thus, the various institutions of the *kibbutz* social structure have turned the *kibbutz* into an organic cell based on intimate relationship between the individual and the community as a whole, although the structure and functions of family within the *kibbutz* has been constantly subject to change.

Towards the fifties, amidst rising capitalism and rapid urbanization in Israel, *kibbutzim* too went for industrialization with remarkable success. But

industrialization brought its own problems, triggering notable changes in the structure and functions of family within the *kibbutzim* as well as in the *kibbutzim* as a whole. The young members of the *kibbutz* started displaying consumerist tendencies and an irresistible attraction for urban life. The ability of the *kibbutz* to attract new members from the rest of Israel and abroad shows a declining trend since 1960.

The family life within the *kibbutz* has undergone many significant changes since then. Children are now more attached to their parents as they spend more time together. The communal sleeping arrangement for children has disappeared in most of the *kibbutzim* as they now prefer sleeping with their parents in their separate apartments. Women push for more privacy, partly in response to increasing dissatisfaction at work in the wake of new socio-economic dynamics. The institution of marriage has also changed substantially. The couples now address each other as "husband" and "wife" in place of "young men" and "young women" or "comrades". Now the couples live in their separate apartments with their children and prepare their own food at home, in quite contravention of the basic principles of commune.

Clearly individualism is on the rise and so is the desire among *kibbutzniks* for greater individual freedom and satisfaction, over and above the basic collectivist philosophy of the *kibbutz*. The new strength of family ties reflects the sexual divisions of labour and the fact that while women have been "masculanized" men have not been "feminized".

In the educational sphere, the *kibbutz* still has its own elementary and high school systems. Educational philosophy, based on the basic principles of communal education, has remained fairly consistent. However, more and more youths are now willing to attend higher education outside the *kibbutz* jurisdiction. To meet the new challenges of growing professional careerism, many *kibbutzim* have modified their educational structure, introducing new courses and revising the syllabi. One may argue that if the *kibbutz* education

system is unable to keep pace by quickly adapting itself to the changing conditions, the consequences may not be favourable for the *kibbutz*. In the absence of any credible modern education system within the *kibbutz*, the younger and future generations would search for a place in educational institutions outside. They may not be imbibed with the same spirit of commitment to the cherished values and ideals of the *kibbutz*, which characterized the older generation so well. This is clearly reflected in the psychology and behaviour of the fourth generation *kibbutz* members, who are known for their lack of understanding and regards for the basic principles of the *kibbutzim* ideology.

With the changing scenario, the relationship between the individual member and the *kibbutz* community as a whole, exhibit elements of both, continuity and change. There is more and more of personal privacy, fewer communal activities, and less of an organic sense of togetherness. The sense of togetherness is now confined to the family sphere and that too among the husband, wife and children only. Still there is a sense of communal solidarity and rituals. The greatest threat to the continuance of collective patterns of interaction appears to be the emerging individualism as the result of materialist value system. This materialist value system is the product of modernization that includes industrialization, privatization, globalization and modern education system.

This shows that no ideological movement exists in isolation. They are developed in the context of social forces that shape them, mould them and move them towards the desired and undesired directions. *Kibbutzim* are no exceptions. Unmindful industrialization and modernization have undermined the communal sentiments, family values and kinship groups. The high rate of geographical and social mobility, importance of achieved status, role bargaining among the members of community and growing individualism has undermined and decreased "the frequency and intimacy of contact among

members of kin network", resulting in the establishment of 'nuclear family' as the sole center of individual's life in the *kibbutzim*.

From another point of view, the modernization has undoubtedly espoused prosperity in the society and the *kibbutzim* are not an exception. With the increasing prosperity of the social groups, the position of the family within the *kibbutzim* has been strengthened. The familistic tendencies have been greatly encouraged by the consumer orientation that is typical of present day capitalist societies, an attitude that looks at the raising of the standard of living as the 'natural' trend of every family and as an aim worthy in itself.

Goode, Parsons and other functionalists argue that the nuclear family unit is most suitable for an industrial society. This argument stands validated if we look at the changing structure and functions of the family in the Israeli *kibbutzim*. No doubt the *kibbutzim* have moved from an agricultural to an industrial mode of production and so has the family from large extended family groupings to the much smaller nuclear family unit. Goode in his concept of role bargaining argues that larger extended kinship ties are retained only if the individual feel that they have more to gain than to lose by maintaining them.

Thus, the present mode of modernization stands in opposition to the *kibbutzim* utopian ideology and its socialist-communal practices. Externally, as the state moves along the path of modernization, the impact was discernible on the *kibbutz*. Modernization weakened the *kibbutz* ideology in each and every sphere. Internally, as the *kibbutz* ideology weakened, so was the sense of socialist-communal principles in the *kibbutzim*. This finally led to an increase in demand for privatization, urbanization and modern techniques of communication. All these factors together contributed towards the growth of individualistic and familistic tendencies, creating a base for the nuclear family as the sole centre of *kibbutz* life.

Yet, seeds of change and the human vision for utopia in the *kibbutz* have remained alive. What are needed urgently are the new modes and directions of thinking to maintain a delicate balance between individuality and collectivity. Although sounding difficult, the *kibbutzim* do indicate possibilities of a new thinking and different modes of life as is evident from the history of the *kibbutzim*. The contribution of the *kibbutzim* is to be found not so much in how many people practice collectivism, but in indicating the possibilities of solution to some of the basic problems of humankind, especially in the sphere of inter-personal relations.

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