

***INTEGRATION, EFFECTIVENESS
AND ADAPTATION IN
SOCIAL SYSTEMS
A Comparative Analysis of
Kibbutzim Communities***

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KIBBUTZ VALUES AND THEIR MODIFICATION

Not all values of the kibbutzim have been uniformly affected by adaptive processes in the historical development of these communities. Some are no longer seen as basic goals, others have been creatively modified, still others remain substantially unchanged. Before elaborating on these changes, a brief description of the declared values of the kibbutzim is needed. These values originally served to define the unique social philosophy of the kibbutz and its way of life.

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VOLUNTARISM

The kibbutz is a voluntary socioeconomic community. People join the kibbutz as a way of life by their own free choice, rather than through compulsion of any kind. Kibbutz members are free to leave the kibbutz whenever they wish. There is no law enforcement mechanism in the conventional forms. Instead, social control of deviant behavior is exercised through public opinion and standards of self-discipline. Members obey the unwritten laws which embody the opinion of the majority. Moral compulsion and appeal to the force of conscience replace coercion. Solidarity and informality are the expected bases of member-to-member relationships. Nonformal public opinion plays the role of a social regulator.

EQUALITY

The kibbutz is an egalitarian micro-cosmic society that provides complete social, economic, and cultural services for its members. It is a community of real equality of opportunity, of sharing and enjoying the fruits of labor by members, unrelated to position, output, income, or profession. All people in the community are treated as basically equal. No formal privileges are given to members who hold key positions in the community, nor to special families. Consequently, there is no stratification in the kibbutz system—but this still cannot prevent status differentiation of people who are more or less influential. However, this is not related to wealth or family. It is a society with no social class distinctions, and it lacks individual differential material rewards. Since the kibbutz offers primarily intrinsic rewards to its members, and since these rewards are not cumulative, they cannot offer permanent advantages to some people. The creation of social strata which benefit from the “surplus” of the material rewards is thus prevented. Here the kibbutz operationalizes the value of equal sharing.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

The concept of direct democracy calls for the participation of system members in decision-making in their own right and not through formally chosen representatives. People make the critical decisions in their own subgroups on issues relevant to these groups, and in full town meetings on issues relevant to the whole community. In the kibbutz, this is implemented as follows. The kibbutz meeting is the supreme authority. Each member is free to argue and vote, and has equal rights. Unity of "powers" is manifested by the role of the kibbutz meeting, which embodies the legislative, executive, and judicial supreme powers of the community. There is overlapping among members who participate in the kibbutz meeting and those who implement its decisions. The kibbutz system completely lacks formal judicial power. The kibbutz meeting may act in certain rare cases as a judiciary body.

The daily life of the community is run by office holders elected for definite periods of time, after which they are rotated. Consequently, every key office holder who is involved in the decision-making of the kibbutz is rotated. A "manager" of a kibbutz at any level can neither promote, reward, nor fire. He can only influence, lead, or initiate a discussion on the relevant institutions of the kibbutz.

Direct democracy is manifested, too, through the maximum autonomy given to branch teams in problems relevant to their work situations, and by the rotation and election of the branch coordinator and the factory manager. The same situation prevails in the social subsystem with elected and rotated committees possessing maximum autonomy.

COMMUNAL FORMS FOR MAXIMIZING THE INTERACTION OF INDIVIDUALS AS WHOLE PERSONALITIES

Many founders rejected the established social system because of its fragmentation of the individual in its formal

role requirements on the one hand, and for its encouragement of self-oriented individualism on the other hand. They did not want people alienated from their work, or alienated from one another. They wanted integrated personalities capable of spontaneous expression, depth of feeling, and personal fulfillment, but personalities socially rather than egotistically oriented. The concept of the *total inclusion of personality* as opposed to *partial inclusion* in Allport's (1933) critique of institutional behavior expresses a similar concern. The founders saw a community in which people worked together in attaining their own goals as a means for achieving what Buber (1949) called the *I-Thou relationship*, rather than the *I-it relationship*, the former being expressive and cooperative, the latter exploitative. Asch (1952) has referred to the relationship of people interacting in this fashion as *shared psychological fields*. In implementing this value pattern, the kibbutzim have attempted to get away from formal role prescriptions and to bring up children in small groups in which they develop their own patterns of interdependent relations. Thus, privacy as a way of life is rejected as smacking of anti-social individualism. At the other extreme, superficial social interaction for purposes of political manipulation, gamesmanship, or personal or economic advantage is also condemned.

The early form of this belief in collective living emphasized the oneness of the individual and the community. All members were supposed to be completely identified with the collectivity. Differentiation of individuals in property, dress, and roles was to be avoided as expressions of egocentricity. And, this lack of differentiation, as Durkheim (1947) maintained, did produce a common collective conscience. To be part of a community and to behave as one of its similarly acting members was, and to some extent remains, a moral value. This, it is common for kibbutz members to speak of the youngsters in the community as "our children." The loss of a boy or girl is widely and deeply felt throughout the community as if in fact the group were a large family.

THE DIGNITY OF WORK

Among the basic moral ideas and values of the kibbutz way of life is the dignity of physical work. A member devoted to his physical work will gain community recognition. The kibbutz as a subculture has strong, positive built-in attitudes toward physical, manual work. This value is well internalized by members of the second generation, who were socialized on the dignity of work very early in their lives through the kibbutz method of education. It is reflected in the young child who may strongly criticize his father for working in a professional, nonphysical occupation in the kibbutz. The child asks many times over why he is not working in a "productive" (physical) job.

The kibbutzim try to perform all the needed work with their own members and to avoid employing hired workers. They perceive this as a value. With a shortage of manpower, however, internal mobilization of their own people, in many cases, does not solve the problem of an adequate labor force. Hence, workers outside the system have been employed for specific jobs. This practice is regarded as a departure from values and as a temporary expedient.

ASCETICISM AND SIMPLICITY

The first generation saw a decadent form of existence in the luxurious life of the privileged few in the societies in which they were reared. The utopia they envisioned would not be one of artificial embellishments of nature but of the fundamental, natural expression of mankind. This assumed two forms: one of an almost religious character of asceticism and deprivation, the other an emphasis upon the simple and natural gratifications in life. The ascetic would question any activities of a joyous, indulgent character. The advocate of simplicity would merely ask if they were direct and natural expressions rather than the outcomes of artificial, commercialized stimulation.

FARMING AS THE BASIC ECONOMIC WAY OF LIFE

Related to simplicity and the dignity of work was the belief in getting back to the land and to nature. The kibbutz was to be a farming community in which people cooperated in the primary task of conquering nature, of wresting from the land an honest existence. People, it was felt, should have roots in their natural environment. Interaction with the world of nature was conceived as organic and fundamental in contrast to an urban existence. If we were to update this philosophy, we would talk in terms of the pollution of air and water in our cities and the replacement of trees, grass, and flowers by an asphalt jungle.

These early values of the kibbutzim movements were not precisely defined nor systematically unified into a coherent ideology. Equality, for example, meant different things to different people. Hence the modification in value structure for the utopian communities over the years was partly a real change with respect to experience in meeting new situations and problems and partly a matter of semantics in the formulation and reformulation by different individuals. Nonetheless, the basic values can be profitably considered with reference to the amount and type of change they have undergone, specifically:

- (1) Values which have been neglected and replaced and no longer are of significance to the kibbutzim.
- (2) Values which have remained substantially unchanged.
- (3) Values which have been creatively modified.

Values Neglected and Replaced

Farming as a way of life. The kibbutzim are consciously and unconsciously becoming mixed patterns of farming and industry. Industry is on the rise and many kibbutzim are approaching the point where plants and factories will provide

50% of the output of the community. This progression away from farming is having, and will continue to have, a profound impact upon the social fabric of the community. The change is not as abrupt as might be anticipated in that farming itself has become specialized and mechanized. The poultry branch, common to most kibbutzim, is a highly specialized, mass-production type of farming which is considerably removed from the idyllic conception of the back-to-nature movement. In turn, most of the industrial plants introduced are small units with advanced technology which do not call for the backbreaking, highly routinized work of the old, large factory. Jobs are still routinized to a fair degree, but not necessarily much more so than in the poultry branch. The skill of the kibbutzim in the type of industry they select and in the social organizations they devise for the plant will be critical to the future of the kibbutz system.

Asceticism and simplicity. The economic success of the kibbutz and its gradual move towards affluence has swept away asceticism as a value in and of itself. Increasingly people, especially the younger generations, see asceticism as a value for survival and not as a goal. Even the older generation as a rule did not see asceticism as desirable for their children and were willing to sacrifice in order to give their children a better way of life.

The improved standard of living was made possible by economic success, but it was facilitated by the examples of affluence in the prospering Israeli society. The kibbutz family now has its own apartment and its own private shower and toilet. It has a small electric refrigerator and other modern electrical appliances. In almost all kibbutzim, each family has its own radio and its own record player. It is not a luxurious way of life, but it is a far cry from the heroic days of hardship of the founding fathers. Now when kibbutz members visit the city they are indistinguishable from city dwellers as far as dress is concerned. Though asceticism has

been replaced by a willingness to enjoy the good things of life, simplicity as a value is still not outmoded. Adequate provision for basic physical wants and good facilities for social, cultural, and intellectual needs are one thing, and luxury is another. This can be seen in the reactions to a kibbutz which is building a new and fairly luxurious communal dining hall and social center, equipped with air conditioning. There is some disapproval of this project by other kibbutzim because of the apparent extravagance involved. But it is difficult to draw the line between necessity and luxury. Common men today enjoy many things which were denied to royalty of the past. Hence, simplicity as a value is difficult to operationalize in a dynamic, progressive society.

Values Which Have Remained Unchanged

Voluntarism. The utopian community has retained its belief in a voluntary basis for the activities of its members. They are free to leave, if and when they wish, and they can receive some monetary compensation for their years of service. They accept assignments voluntarily. There is still no coercive law enforcement mechanism—no courts, no police, no jails—and crime is a rare event. All key office holders such as the economic coordinator and factory managers cannot fire, promote, or reward people. The major appeal is to the individual's conscience. The major control mechanism is public opinion.

Direct democracy. The concept of direct democracy remains both a declared value and an operational set of norms. The town meeting is still the supreme authority and the branch teams make appropriate decisions in their own sphere of competence. Leaders are directly elected and the principle of rotation of elected officers is still observed. Increases in size, complexity, and heterogeneity of the

kibbutz, however, pose problems for the future with respect to the town meeting and other aspects of direct democracy. The largest kibbutz in Israel, with a membership of 1,000 (Givat Brenner), has maintained its weekly town meeting, but it has added a form of representative democracy. A small assembly of 70 members elected by the community meets twice a week for discussion and solution of problems within the framework of policies accepted by the kibbutz. The principle of rotation is being tested by the growth of industry and increasing specialization and training of members. In some kibbutzim, the plant manager can remain in his post for a longer period than was permitted for the manager of the poultry branch. The kibbutz is committed to direct democracy, however, and is attacking the problem of insuring its operation at all levels of its activities as its structure grows more complex.

Erik Cohen (1969), in his research, *Comparative Study of the Political Institutions of Collective Settlement in Israel*, concludes:

Our most general and, indeed, crucial finding is that in the kibbutzim under study, growth and complexity did not essentially impair the working of kibbutz democracy. At least in the kibbutzim under study, the system generally functions well, and it continues to occupy a central place in the public life and the decision-making process of the kibbutzim, under conditions of broad participation of their members. Generally, the members themselves expressed their satisfactions with the working of the system in most of its respects.

But the study has nevertheless shown that direct democracy can remain viable under conditions of modern complexity in the large kibbutz, and does not inevitably undergo crucial and far-reaching changes, though the focus of political process is effectively transferred into more restricted institutions, dominated by a small group of active and powerful members.

Values Creatively Modified

The most interesting change in values is the reformulation which adapts to new situations but does not destroy the basic

ideological principle involved. There is no compromise in the literal sense of concession which violates the basic doctrine, as in the case of compromised virtue. Rather the spirit of the belief system is applied in taking into account changed circumstances. The Supreme Court of the United States, for example, in its famous 1954 decision that separate educational facilities for different racial groups were not psychologically equal, was creatively adapting older constitutional doctrines of egalitarianism.

Equality. The doctrine of egalitarianism is perhaps the most fundamental ideology of the kibbutz. In one sense, direct democracy and rotation of leaders is its political expression. We are concerned here with equality in the economic sphere, both of production and consumption. Public rather than private ownership is still the basic pattern, but there has been considerable change in the application of equality, with respect to both consumer and producer roles. Formerly, there was a mechanical egalitarianism in the distribution of rewards in that all members received equal amounts of strawberries and cream whether they liked it or not. Increasing allowance has been made for individual differences in need, taste, and aptitude. Women can use their allowance for clothing and can select dresses from the common supply made available by the kibbutz, or they can purchase clothes in the cities from private shops. Within the clothing allotment, the individual can decide the types of items he or she prefers, as well as the particular item. But individuals have only a limited cash allowance, and the community controls the relative consumption for different areas of life. Thus, the individual by himself cannot decide to spend less on the education of his children, or less for his cultural needs in order to dress better. The yearly budget is a community decision which allocates proportional amounts for given types of consumption. The individual influences the decision-making in that he is part of the process, but once

consensus has been reached, his consumption choices are within areas of products and services, not across areas.

The recognition of qualitative egalitarianism is in greater evidence in the opportunities provided for members with artistic and intellectual interests and talents. Individuals will be allowed to substitute, for primary productive or service labor, time spent in cultural pursuits or preparation for such pursuits—for example, a writer, painter or sculptor may be given half time off from his regular work to pursue his specialty. The exact amount of time from his work role and its distribution is worked out on the basis of community and individual needs. In one of the large movements, the Kibbutz Artzi, with 74 communities and 17,441 members (1968), some 3.6% of the people enjoy some release from regular employment in order to be involved in the various art fields. The numbers of these are as follows:

	116 sculptors and painters
	50 authors
	71 actors and other personnel in dramatics
	68 musicians and composers
	75 dancers
	132 photographic artists
	<u>117</u> other artisans
Total:	629

All of these people are members of the artistic associations in the Artzi movement. In many cases, the products of their work are public adornments of the kibbutz for all members to enjoy.

The special needs of members for advanced training and professional education are also recognized. Members will be sent to the training centers and educational institutions maintained by the movements of the federation. They may also be subsidized for study at Israeli or foreign universities. The kibbutz cannot afford to honor the request of every

applicant who wants university training. The community makes the decision based upon its own resources and its own priority of needs and the needs and abilities of the applicant. In general, most kibbutzim stretch their resources as much as they can to fill the request of a serious youngster who wants professional training. In short, the kibbutzim have moved a long way in recognizing that individual differences are a basic fact of life and, in one sense, their optimization is the goal of a utopian community. What they attempt to maintain is the essential equality of opportunity for the development of different human potentials. It is of interest in this connection that their high schools have been changing in the junior and senior years to provide more differentiation of studies to allow for the variety of interests and aptitudes of students.

The principle of rotation has been creatively modified over the years. The older notion was one of mechanical rotation in all roles. Now the concept of professionalization is recognized with corresponding changes to permit permanence in certain skilled jobs. What has been retained is the basic principle of rotation for elected officers in decision-making positions. Professional people such as nurses, teachers, engineers, and technicians, however, do not change their jobs, although they are expected, after several years in their professional work, to spend six months or a year in another role in the community—as if on sabbatical. Each high school teacher, in many communities, will give two weeks' time each year to whatever tasks are assigned him by the manpower allocation board. Special chores and assignments such as service in the dining room or kitchen are handled on a rotation basis, though women still do most of the work in the preparation of food. We have already mentioned the fact that artists are often given half-time release from their kibbutz jobs to apply themselves to their own interests.

The dignity of work. The original belief in the importance of toil emphasized physical work. As any society develops,

even a small society, the primary pursuits of farming and secondary pursuits of industrial production are no longer the only major sectors of employment. Tertiary activities of service, communication, education, culture and research assume growing importance. The kibbutzim have adapted to change by recognizing the significance of intellectual as well as physical work. Academic education, which had earlier been replaced by more pragmatic kibbutz education, is now perceived by some as relevant to the system. The creative adaptation has been to seek some balance in which intellectual activity and physical toil are both accepted and people are expected to achieve some combination of them in their lives.

Communal forms and personality expression. The original solution to the problem of the one and the many was community living of a noninstitutionalized type in which the natural interaction of personalities in a common way of life could prevent alienation, fragmentation, and exploitation. With no hierarchical differentiation, group rather than individual rewards, a real and immediate interdependence, there would be no dichotomy between cooperative relationships and individual expression, or so the theory went. Some informal institutionalization might develop, but this would be around a natural rather than an imposed norm. Allport (1934) years ago showed that institutionalization gives a steep J curve of restricted behavior, whereas without sanc-

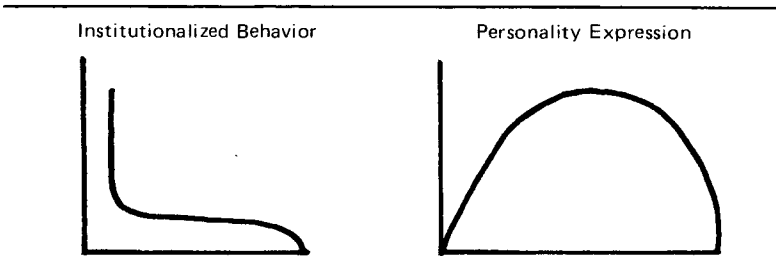


Figure 1.

tioned controls there is a wide distribution around a more natural mode of behavior.

Allport's suggestion then was to try, whenever feasible, to have the institutional norm coincide with the personality statistical norm. In this way there would be less external constraint necessary to maintain an expected pattern of behavior. The kibbutzim have in effect achieved this by allowing norms to develop from below. But there are two important objections which suggest that this is not a complete solution of the problem of the individual and the collectivity. First, though the norm may approximate personality expression for many people, there are still those who do not fall into the modal position on any given issue. The answer is that the norm is not based upon an averaging of opinions but upon group process which seeks to find a position acceptable to all through full exploration and discussion of the problem. This is possible, not only because of the relatively small size of the group but because of members' mutual identification and interdependence in a *Gemeinschaft* system in which their we-ness is stronger than the opposition of individual wills. In the absence of systematic research data, it is difficult to say how much this ideal is realized in practice, but observation would suggest a high level of morale and community feeling in the kibbutzim.

A second objection is more serious, calling attention to the number of areas or the amount of the individual's lifespace subject to the norms of the same community. In how many areas of life does a social system require J curves of conformity and in how many areas does it permit a wide distribution of personality expression? The conventional society, by institutionalizing in a formal way economic roles and conformity to laws, can conceivably permit a broad and free expression of individuality in other relationships. The kibbutz, on the other hand, does not require submission to authoritarian demands imposed from above, but, in effect, through utilizing self-developed norms, controls all areas of the individual's life. In the former case, there is a division between the public realm of life in which the individual

conforms and in the private sector where his individuality can assume various forms. In the case of the kibbutz, there is little separation and while the individual voluntarily accepts community decisions in which he participated, he is never really free to depart from such decisions and remain in the system. To insure this the individual is rarely alone. Children are socialized in good part through their own peer groups and togetherness is their way of life. Theoretically, the model should work, save that human nature is not that logical. Individuals still remain individuals in spite of shared fields with their fellows. The needs for self-identity, privacy, and self-development and actualization require a personal life-space which does not completely overlap with the group. Furthermore, kibbutzim values do take account of the whole personality and recognize the need for the development of the individual's own potential.

To these factors should be added one other: namely that the difficult years of physical survival are past so that there is more freedom to relax informal pressures toward unity on all fronts. As a result, the kibbutzim are less rigid about ideological standards of communal living; they are more discriminating in their beliefs about doing things together and more tolerant of individual deviation. Communal living with common showers and common toilets has been replaced by private apartments with private bathrooms. The communal dining hall is still basic, but people have their own kitchenettes where they may prepare meals for the family sabbath gathering, special occasions, or just when they want to get away and be by themselves. Children are still brought up in peer groups, but the tendency is to give each youngster more space for himself. The role of the family has grown in importance in comparison to the earlier days. This trend is seen clearly in the expansion of extended families in the old kibbutzim, with parents, married children and their offspring. The ties between children and parents have grown stronger and there is more individuality in family relationships than was once the case.

AN OPEN-SYSTEM MODEL OF THE KIBBUTZ

Kibbutzim can be characterized as falling into three basic types: (1) a failure model, (2) a survival model, and (3) a success model. The critical dimension for these types is net growth in membership in relation to the population growth of Israel over the years. Kibbutzim must hold a majority of their kibbutz-born population and attract some new members in order to maintain the system. A kibbutz as an open system is in a precarious position if its size decreases while the society increases. As a contra-culture, it loses its maneuverability and capacity to maintain adequate social exchange economically, politically, and socially with the larger society. Isolated, relatively closed, and static utopian communities have generally failed. It is small wonder, then, that the necessity for continuous growth has become practically an article of faith for kibbutz movements. Demographic stability in absolute terms is potentially dangerous, and in relative terms compared to Israel's population figures, psychologically threatening.

A failure model, then, is one in which membership does not keep pace with the growth of the larger society. Increasingly, it loses its potential as an effective system in the supersystem.

The survival model is represented by the community that grows at approximately the same rate as the larger system. It holds its own, not increasing its margin of power in relation to the environment. It has good prospects for continued survival but would be vulnerable to changes in its environment. The success model, by developing membership at a more rapid rate than the surrounding system, is in a more strategic position to be a leading subsystem in the total structure (see Table 1).

We have discussed three areas of kibbutz functioning: system integration, economic effectiveness, and creative adaptation. They correspond roughly to the social, economic,

TABLE 1
A MODEL FOR EVALUATING THE KIBBUTZ

Basic Values	A System Integration	B Effectiveness	C Creative Adaptation
Operational Measure	Net growth of members	Profitability	Degree of value differentiation: discriminating value system
Level			
I Low	Failure Growth lower than society	Failing	Value rigidity or value erosion
I Moderate	Survival Commensurate with society	Satisficing	Some creative modification
III High	Success Higher than societal growth rate	Optimizing	Much creative modification

and adaptive subsystems. We are taking net growth as the criterion measurement of system integration and making that the key variable in our model of failure, survival, and success. Our assumption is that system integration is more critical to the kibbutzim than economic effectiveness or creative adaptation for long-term system maintenance. Profitability is not difficult to achieve, even in a cooperative system. Effectiveness as measured by the profitability of various enterprises is important but more at the level of a satisficing standard than of affluence. Moreover, the interdependence of these two factors of integration and effectiveness is not necessarily more than that of a low positive correlation. And we assume that the relationship, though in part circular, has a dominant direction—namely that high integration leads to greater profitability more often than profitability leads to integration. Continuing economic failure does, however, have adverse effects upon integration. The third variable of creative adaptation can be measured by the differentiated value structure of the kibbutz in which undiscriminating

rigidity represents poor adaptation, as does a loose, diffuse conception of values. The latter reflects erosion of values and loss of system identity. The former reflects ritualism or a lack of differentiation between means and ends. Creative adaptation, on the other hand, is the discriminating analysis of essential goals and means for achieving them in a changing world. Some solution has to be found which will avoid the ritualistic approach reflecting the charisma of the movement of the founding fathers, and yet not be a simple, pragmatic, nonideological departure. It needs to be instrumentally oriented, influenced by empirical evidence, but ideologically concerned with system identity. We expect this variable of creative adaptation to be a causal factor with respect to both integration and effectiveness, and with low positive correlations with effectiveness and moderate positive correlations with integration.

Two examples of pairs of kibbutzim in the same geographical region and in command of similar resources illustrate the importance of giving high priority to system integration. In the one case, 2 communities founded some 33 years ago in the same movement and with the same number of founders now present different patterns. If we look only at profitability, we would have to say that community A is definitely more successful than community B because its standard of living is higher due to a profitable factory. But it is not as effective in holding people as community B, which has outdistanced it by 100 members. The latter community is not doing poorly economically, but it does not have the affluent way of life of its neighbor. In creative adaptation it would be higher according to the criterion of discriminating values, but not very much so. In spite of the economic success of community A, we would predict that it will have more difficulty in surviving and developing in the future than its neighbor because too much of the ingredient of system integration is lacking.

Another comparison can be made between kibbutzim C and D, again of the same age, having the same original population, located in the same area, and possessing similar resources, though they are members of different movements. They are approximately equal in profitability. Community C, however, has more than doubled its original population and now has 400 members, while community D has increased its membership only slightly and has about 175 members. Here there is a marked difference in creative adaptation with real erosion in values in community D. Again the prediction would be that the sustained growth of community C, in the same environment as community D, argues strongly for using net increase as the critical variable for predicting the future success of kibbutz communities.

We would not, however, rely wholly upon past and present membership growth in predicting the future. This would be tantamount to merely extrapolating the growth curves. Two additional considerations are necessary for predictive purposes—one dealing with the system level, the other with the individual level. At the system level, profitability needs to be given some minor weight because, though maximizing profits is not likely to be correlated with growth, meeting some satisficing standard of profit is a necessary condition. Creative adaptation would be given more weight since its correlation would be expected to be higher on theoretical grounds. In a dynamic environment, the kibbutz must have an adaptive subsystem in order to relate effectively to changing conditions and needs of its people. One manifestation of the operation of an adaptive subsystem is the allocation of resources, both physical and human, for the economic and social subsystems. Where there is a good balance in utilizing the human resources of key people for both economic and social roles, the community should grow. Where there is dominant assignment of all resources to economic functions, then the kibbutz may be profitable, but it will not necessarily flourish.

For adequate prediction, however, it is necessary to drop to the individual level. Growth as a function of additions and defections is a good summary measure of system attractiveness. Since conventional society may offer more materialistic rewards to people and more varied stimulation, the kibbutz which can outcompete the dominant society must possess a social subsystem of forceful attractions. This can be examined in detail if we look at the individuals in various kibbutzim and see how well they are tied into their communities. Functional integration can be examined with respect to the occupational distribution of roles, including technical, specialized, and professional callings for both men and women. With no spread of occupational opportunity, the chances for good functional integration are lessened. Similarly, we can examine the opportunities for training and higher education for kibbutz roles. This is on the objective side, but the satisfactions of the individuals with their tasks in relation to their aspirations can also be measured.

Social and individual gratifications are also of central importance in attracting people to the kibbutz and holding them there. In the older kibbutzim, extended families have developed so that leaving the kibbutz means breaking ties not only with parents but with many other members of the kinship group as well. For nonrelatives, there are the advantages of personal relationships in depth and stability difficult to attain in the mobility of large bureaucratic cultures. This is one reason why about 75% of those born in the kibbutz remain there. It is a critical problem for those joining from the outside in that some empirical evidence indicates that new members tend to leave or remain, not so much because of ideology as because of gaining acceptance in the group and forming satisfactory interpersonal relationships.

On the emotional side, there is also the factor of individual freedom of choice in a system emphasizing collective living. In some kibbutzim, there is an overpatterning of life in that

everyone is expected to do the same thing at the same time. Thus, where there is a cultural event such as a musical performance, the social club, which now includes a TV set, is closed. The kibbutz can do more to provide for individual choice within its own framework than it now does.

At the normative and ideological level, integration can be measured by the overlap of individual values and system values. We have already referred to the possibility of using the mode of the normal curve as the basis for institutionalization of some patterns rather than an arbitrary extreme, which means constraints for the majority. Moreover, the norm that is sanctioned by the group can be a wide band rather than a point on a curve.

These various measures of individual integration could supplement nicely the overall system figures on growth. When they are strongly supportive of net gains in membership, the prediction for the continuance of growth would be much firmer. Where there are discrepancies, one would suspect that the overall summary measure may reflect other factors than individual integration. Such factors can be accidental and transitory, though some of them can be more constant, such as geographical remoteness from family, as in the case of new members from the youth movement.

Essentially, then, we would expect that the condition for a flourishing community is the goodness of fit between individual aspirations and values and the norms and goals of the group. The more members there are who find the operating norms of the community an implementation of their own attitudes and beliefs, the more committed will they be to the system and the more eager to see their children perpetuate the community. More complex structures can grow on the basis of material returns and coercive sanctions, but the kibbutz, by its nature, cannot afford much slippage between group goals and individual objectives.

Basically, the issue for the future is the ability of the kibbutzim to hold their own younger generation since they

comprise the more stable part of new membership. They constitute, moreover, about two-thirds of the net growth of the kibbutzim. People of various ages who join from the outside are much poorer risks as permanent members of the communities.

In an older period, members selected themselves into the system on the basis of common values, so there was assurance of some overlap between individual values and group norms. Now, however, there is a genuine problem for the younger generation since there is no such built-in overlap between the individual and the group. Integration of the second and third generations into the system requires even more attention than it presently receives. It is important that their differences—in perceptions, ideas, and aspirations—from the older generation should not be polarized by their separation into economic roles with social and public roles being monopolized by the older generation. The various committees and even the leadership positions should be shared by all age groups who are full members.

Rigidity and erosion operate differentially for the younger and the older generations—and point to the central importance of creative adaptation for the second and third generations. Rigidity is the greater danger for older people, erosion for the younger ones. But erosion is more critical for system maintenance than is rigidity. With erosion, system values are lost; hence, there is little to hold people in the community as long as there are attractive alternatives on the outside. Younger people lack the fixation upon old system goals and need to be tied into the structure in ways which meet their needs. Rigidity does not make for growth, but it is conducive to system survival. Many of the older generation are rigid in some respects, but this has contributed to system maintenance.

Attracting new members from outside the kibbutz movements should not be ignored. In general, few systems are able to offer compelling attractions for all types of needs and

motives. What can be attempted is to meet some needs at a minimal level of satisfaction and then maximize other sources of gratification in terms of the strength of the system. Private industry cannot compete with universities for researchers in the area of providing a free intellectual climate. It needs to provide some minimum of freedom and then maximize research facilities and salary. Kibbutzim cannot provide economic affluence or maximum freedom of choice. They need, however, to increase their desirability on these counts to some minimum in relation to the improving levels in the larger society. Then their basic attractions of democratic values operationalized to provide meaningful participation and their opportunities for providing satisfactory interpersonal relations of support and acceptance need to be optimized.

We have discussed three outcomes of environmental inputs which affect the values of an on-going system: erosion, rigidity, and creative adaptation. The first two, over time, are dysfunctional. Erosion changes the nature of a system so that it loses its distinctive character and becomes part of its environment. Rigidity prevents adjustment and growth and, in a dynamic world, militates against long-term survival. Erecting a Chinese wall is no permanent solution for a subsystem in a growing society. Theoretically, the processes of erosion, creative adaptation, and rigidity need to be considered in relation to the open-system model of social structures. Inputs with potential for value change can often be blocked by rigorous coding procedures from penetration into the system, as in the case of the complete commitment of system members to the old values in a literal sense. Members act as if they had blinders with respect to new information of an ideological character. In effect, there is no adaptive subsystem for value inputs. The adaptive mechanisms operate only for economic inputs. Erosion also occurs where adaptive mechanisms are lacking. In this case, there are no filtering and restrictive devices to keep out new influ-

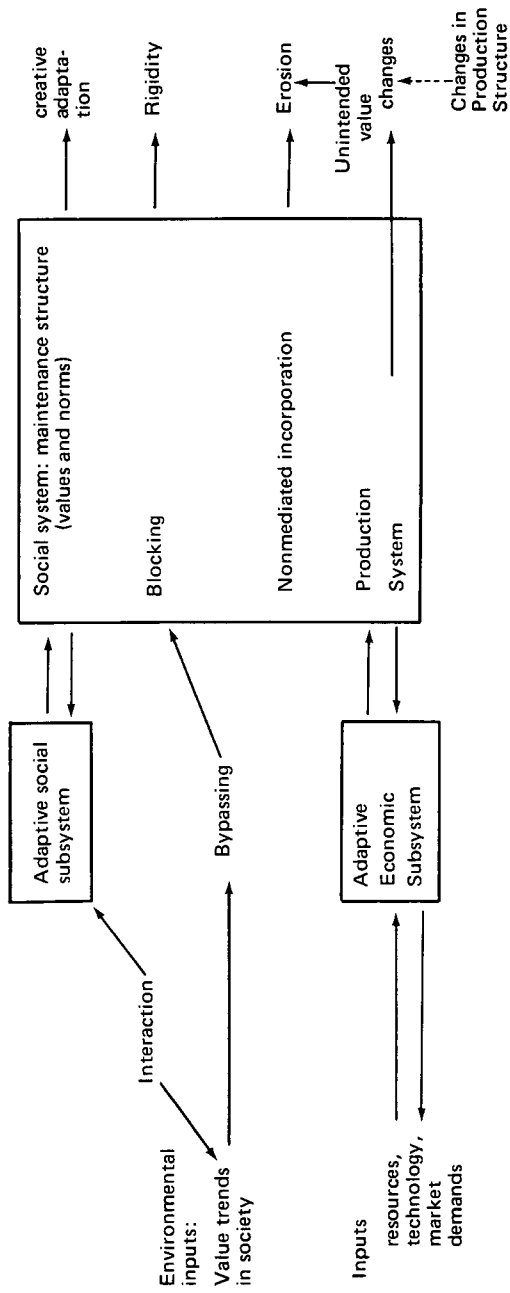


Figure 2. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

ences. Inputs act directly on people as if there were little in the way of system barriers. In the former case of rigidity, the external forces are never translated to become part of the system language. In the latter instance of erosion, there is also little translation, but now the external forces gradually take over the language of some of the subgroups in the system. In both cases, there is no mediation or translation by a boundary structure or adaptive subsystem. An adaptive subsystem, either institutionalized as such or in the form of accepted procedures for considering, analyzing, and working out the relationship between established goals and new ideas and problems, is necessary for a flourishing structure. The interaction of the adaptive subsystem with new value inputs can transform them so that resulting changes are consistent with basic system goals—in other words, creative adaptation takes place. Without such interaction, either rigidity or erosion will result (see Figure 2).

In speaking in all-or-none terms—i.e., the presence or absence of adaptive mechanisms—we have oversimplified the matter. In reality there are degrees of such processes which vary from weak and sporadic occurrences to strong and sustained adjustive procedures. Another complexity is that not all subgroups of a structure are affected equally by change influences. Rigidity can be the characteristic reaction of some subgroups—for example the older and more traditionally oriented people—whereas erosion may be going on for other subgroups such as the nonideological younger people. Specifically, something of this sort has been occurring in a number of kibbutzim. The older generation, thoroughly committed to traditional values, is often unresponsive to changes in the external environment related to their ideology. The second and third generations, without emotional attachment to the beliefs of their parents, are vulnerable to external influence. This is true partly because there is only a weak adaptive subsystem which can help them in interpreting new ideas within the framework of the

declared goals and operational norms of the system. Where adaptive mechanisms have little place in the scheme of things, there is no agency for confrontation between societal values and kibbutz values out of which could come a new synthesis based upon an examination of facts and consideration of logic and theory. There is no systematic, critical dialogue between the generations and the young people are left without guidance.

Thus far we have made specific reference only to direct value inputs. But there is also another source of system change affecting values in the acceptance of economic inputs of technology and profitability in the marketplace. These technical modifications can have the byproduct of systemic change in the value structure. A plant, to be profitable, may require more manpower than the kibbutz has available. Hence, it turns to hired labor. Over time, however, its values of nonexploitation and equality could be undermined. Another more cogent example, because its importance is less well recognized in kibbutz thinking, is the taking over of the usual managerial structure when industrial technology is introduced. Conventional managerial arrangements are hierarchical and authoritarian and a departure from kibbutz values. They need even more study than occurred when technical and scientific methods were introduced into agriculture. Then a creative adaptation was found in branch farming which utilized the new methods but still preserved democratic forms and procedures. To prevent indirect processes of erosion resulting from economic change requires adaptive mechanisms. These would make customary systematic investigation and consideration of the intended and unintended consequences of alternative courses of action. Most social structures are much stronger in their adaptive economic subsystems than in their adaptive social subsystems. The institutionalization of adaptive mechanisms pushes apart the economic from the social with a resulting weakening of social adaptation and an erosion of social

values. In the kibbutzim, however, with little formalization and with small numbers of people, economic changes can be scrutinized both socially and economically by the same sets of people. On the other hand, the lack of institutionalization means that the members have to be eternally vigilant with respect to plans for economic progress, lest the profitable overshadow the ideological.

VALUE DILEMMAS

We can summarize the value problems of the kibbutzim by recognizing that almost all values in social systems present dilemmas. As values, they tend to be idealistically stated and hence are never completely achieved. As ideologies, their consistency can cloak contradictions in their operation. The built-in dilemmas of the kibbutz system, suggested in the above account, are listed below.

(1) Voluntarism implies freedom of choice for the individual, but the range of choice in the cooperative community is in many ways more limited than in conventional society. The individual is free to leave the community, but the social and physical environment within the system does not provide an abundance of choice points. Moreover, the group makes many decisions for the individual which he would make for himself in other social settings.

(2) Just as voluntarism is a difficult principle to achieve in practice, so too are the related goals of self-realization and self-development. In fact, these goals depend upon freedom of choice for the individual. The primacy of kibbutz needs over individual needs can be a barrier to self-actualization. So too is the lack of privacy in the small community in which there is so much overlap between the public and private sectors of life. Living in a kibbutz means being dependent upon other members who share with the individual the power to shape his life in almost all of his daily activities.

(3) Equality in roles and in the sharing of group products is contradicted by the fact that not all roles are equal and allowances need to be made for different needs of people. Women are not much better off with respect to jobs than in conventional society. The rewards of special education and of time to devote to artistic pursuits are not available for all.

(4) The dignity of work in kibbutz thinking makes for a higher evaluation of direct productive effort than of intellectual activity or of cultural pursuits. Yet the small community cannot afford to become provincial and to ignore long-range planning, research, and development.

(5) Direct democracy implies full participation by all members, but those in key management roles and those in professional positions have greater opportunities to affect decision-making. With the growth of industrialization and its demands for managerial and technical skills, added strains are placed upon democratic decision-making.

MODERNIZATION AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE KIBBUTZIM

Some sociologists regard the kibbutzim as anachronisms in a modern society and predict their demise as Israel moves toward modernization. The argument, in somewhat exaggerated form, runs as follows. In the prestate period, the egalitarian ideology and the collective enterprises of the pioneering kibbutzim played a functional role in the motivation, morale, and effective struggle for achieving an independent state. The dedication of individuals to the community of interest in the absence of formalized structure was critical in the early days. With the establishment of the state, however, the movement is of questionable usefulness. In fact, the traditional collective of prestate history is a conservative and restricting factor in Israel's development and egalitarianism has become an ideological stereotype without real

meaning. Modernization in developing countries has a number of essential characteristics.

First, the growth of Weberian bureaucracy with elaborated role systems replaces traditional and personal relationships as the basis of social organization. Universalistic rules and roles become the reliable conditions for societal maintenance and growth, rather than particularistic relationships. The rule of law replaces the rule of men. Coordination and planning of societal activities and the meeting of the needs of all cannot be predicated upon the specific interpersonal relationships within the small groups. The *kibbutzim*, with their emphasis upon informal social structure, voluntarism, and direct democracy, are no longer in the mainstream of the universalistic trends of a large, developing industrial society. They will either decline in membership or lose their distinctive character as utopian communities.

Second, the growth of mass media and mass communication sounds the death knell for small groups in maintaining their distinctive values, modes of limited communication, and entertainment. Information relevant to the whole society is readily available to all citizens and provincial interests take second place. Values and ideals common to the society are directly and indirectly instilled through newspapers, the radio, and television.

Third, urban centers providing many types of services from medical care to theaters grow at the expense of the rural environment. The diversification of activity in employment is paralleled by greater opportunities for cultural and social stimulation in the urban setting. Increasingly, the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, as small rural communities, cannot compete with the cities in professional and job opportunities and in a culturally rich life.

Fourth, as modernization proceeds, it makes available certain types of freedom for many individuals in that they are not tied to a given set of people or a given geographical area. They are not confined to the work situation for

establishing friendships, they may join the political groups they wish, and they may find compatible associates for their hobbies. They can shift jobs and places of residence. In the first stages of industrial development, such opportunities may be relatively few, but with the development of a more affluent society, they are becoming more abundant. The rules of the bureaucratic game have their own restrictions, but they do not tie the individual inevitably to a single subsystem; nor does membership in one subsystem necessarily dictate membership in another system. Some individuals may feel lost in such an impersonal world, but many find freedom in escaping personal surveillance by an enclosing primary group around the clock. Since self-expression and self-realization depend upon the individual's ability to choose for himself, he may well prefer the freedom to manipulate an organizational environment to fitting himself into the more restricting mold of a small rural community.

There is merit in this contention that the kibbutzim represent too much of a contra-culture to survive the modern trends in a developing society. Basically, however, this view is a great oversimplification and fails to see the many aspects of modernization, dealing with past trends in large industrial societies rather than their present dilemmas. Modernization has not been the same for the United States, which lacked the traditional institutions, as for England with its historical and cultural traditions. Nor has it been the same in Sweden, with its compromises between socialism and capitalism, as in the United States. The factor of size alone is of significance. Small collective farms or industrial establishments might not be competitive in producing for a huge market in the United States. In Israel, the small market does not demand the economy of scale of the American scene. In fact, kibbutz farming and moshav farming have been more productive in Israel than has the farming of the private sector of the economy.

The major weakness in the doctrine of modernization as outmoding the kibbutzim, however, is the critical problem

now encountered by post-industrial bureaucratic society. There is a fictitious component in the assumption that universalistic rules and roles and a government of laws rather than of men supplants particularistic arrangements among people. The sociological abstraction covers over the working out of the system in terms of human interaction. The great question in the highly developed bureaucratic systems is how to reform the structure to break down its formalization and to involve people in its operation and management. Large-scale organizations are threatened by revolt from within and the changes under consideration are in the direction of the kibbutzim principles of egalitarianism, voluntarism, and democracy. Thus the kibbutzim, instead of being a conservative force holding over from a prestate period, may be ahead of the present trends of normalization and modernization. The question, then, may be whether or not a country necessarily has to go through a period of bureaucratic modernization before it is ready to achieve democratic decentralization. Leon Trotsky's law of leaping development would predict that not every society has to go through the same evolutionary stages, but may be able to skip a given stage. In other words, it may not be necessary for Israel to become a set of a few centralized bureaucracies before permitting decentralization and autonomy to its subsystems.

Large bureaucratic structures are confronted by the difficulties of centralization in their control processes. The *de jure* centralization is often *de facto* decentralization, with a rubber stamping of decisions made down the line. Industrial organizations often move toward decentralization in order to have their component units face the test of competing directly in the marketplace. One great advantage of the small unit like the kibbutz is the ready mobilization of resources to solve an urgent problem and the economy of this mobilization. A large structure has difficulty in responding to immediate challenges, and by the time it can make the necessary rearrangements, the opportunity for effective

action is gone. Hence, the large organization often fights the old war, not the present conflict. The expense, moreover, of making adjustments to meet changing demands is inordinately high for big structures, compared to the small unit.

Nor is there any compelling reason for assuming that a small country like Israel cannot continue to develop as a pluralistic society. There are genuine strengths in its pluralism which can have the advantage of both bureaucratic structures and voluntaristic subsystems. The advantage of the latter is the high degree of dedication and motivation of the members. This dynamic force has been directed at national goals of defense production, political leadership, and cultural activity. Such dedication is necessary in a small country where manpower is not expendable. It is as necessary now as in the prestate period. The growth of larger bureaucratic structures in Israel may make this need more rather than less salient.

Since a large system cannot operate through direct democracy, it is important to know what forms of indirect democracy are most functional for effectiveness and member satisfaction. We would suggest that the relationship between the kibbutzim and the Israeli nation furnishes a possible model. The kibbutzim, as subsystems of Israel, provide the psychological integration at the small-group level through direct democracy and maximum involvement of their people. They are, moreover, represented in the larger system through the election of their people to public office and the selection of their people for government posts. This mechanism ties them into the larger structure as does their identification with national goals. The representative democracy of the whole may have some of its vitality furnished by units which are not simple pieces of the larger bureaucracy but subsystems in their own right. Larger nations like the United States have problems in achieving such integration because the subunits, which could develop lives of their own and still be tied to the larger structure, are lacking. Individual states of

the union may have once presented such possibilities. They no longer do. Israel is not only small, but it is unified by immediate and common danger. Hence it needs to maintain its pluralism, vitality, and dynamism, and here its cooperative communities are highly functional.

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