

Lessons from the Kibbutz as a Real Utopia

Proposer: Uriel Leviatan, Western Galilee College and University of Haifa, Israel

(leviatan@soc.haifa.ac.i)

Abstract

For many decades the kibbutzim in Israel aspired to embody principles of a Utopian community: members live in such community out of their free will with knowledge of other life options and the possibility to leave whenever they wish; all members of that community satisfy in a sustainable way (for the present, the near future, and for the distant future) all their needs; they maximize the expression of their human potential and live in a community of equality among the members according to their unique human needs and potentials, in solidarity, in collaboration and fraternity, and in cooperation; and the community actively uses its resources in spreading these values and characteristics into the larger society. However, starting at the end of the 80's, the kibbutzim experienced a deep economic and ideological crisis. Two major outcomes of that crisis signaled the beginning of the demise of the kibbutz phenomenon: (1) a large wave of emigration – leaving kibbutzim for other ways of life – by members, particularly the young; and, (2) abandonment by most kibbutzim (and their members – those who stayed) of the basic principles of conduct, that stemmed from the kibbutz values described earlier. In this session we will explore the causal processes that undermined the kibbutz model and draw lessons for real utopian intentional communities.

What should be the characteristics, and goals of a perfect Utopian Community?

There are no absolute definitions or views of how should a utopian community look like, what its defining characteristics should be, and what should be the goals it pursues. Since such characteristics express, to a large extent, the views of the person who writes about them, I should start by stating my personal convictions on the matter.

When I envision a perfect Utopian Community, I see a community with the following social characterizations: members live in such community out of their free will – they join it without coercion and with knowledge of other life options, and they have the possibility to leave whenever they wish; members expect their community to

relate to each of them as a unique person, and the community satisfies all needs of its members; the community offers its members opportunities for the realization of all their potentials; it presents them with opportunities to control and determine the fate and destination of their own and that of their community's life. Thus, a utopian community allows all its members to satisfy in a sustainable way (for the present, the near future, and for the distant future) all their needs, and to maximize the expression of their human potential. In addition, members live in a community of equality among themselves according to their unique human needs and potentials.

There is another important societal perspective central to a Utopian community of the kind I envision: its Utopian characteristics are enhanced when it actively implements these values outside its boundaries to include other parts of the larger society. This is done by creating opportunities and freedom of choice also for individuals that are not members of the community; by acting to bring about social justice, equality, solidarity, cooperation, and lack of conflict to the largest possible parts of the society that engulfs the community in focus. Lastly, two more important criteria for a Utopian community are:

(1) All the above listed characteristics (or ideals) are desired, aspired, and shared by all, or at least the majority, of its members. This last point – the sharing of values by members -- is very important. A community of partnership, solidarity, and fraternity among its members should have factors that “glue” them together. Giving this idea further thought, should immediately reveal that three different kinds of factors can hold together such a community of individuals. (a) The first factor is the existence of mutual love (or a feeling of strong emotional obligation) among the members, either because they are one family, or are close friends. This factor of mutual “love” or emotional “obligation” creates a very strong bond; it may last for a very long time (perhaps, forever); and it is unconditional. Its major drawback is the small number of individuals it can cover. There is a very low limit with how many individuals one can develop mutual bonds based on this factor. The second factor that bonds people together is when there exists a calculative consideration -- mutual benefits among members in that particular community. This factor also might develop a strong bond. Yet, its drawback is its instability. The bond among members

disappear when there are no more mutual benefits or mutual dependency, and this may happen after a short time – similar to the bond among business partners who would break the partnership once it is not beneficial to any one of them. Even this kind of bond cannot consist of too many individuals. The third potential factor that might bond individuals in a community is holding to the same values and believing in same goals. This factor of bonding people together has the advantage that it could apply to a community with a very large number of individuals; it does not require any dependency among the individuals; it does not require any mutual love or emotional obligation toward each other. This is why holding to a common denominator of ideology is so important for kibbutz communities.

(2) The very expression of the characteristics of perfect “Utopian Communities”, while important in themselves, should also bring about communities that are sustainable due to (not in spite of) their demonstration of the same characteristics. And not less important is that members of such communities are happy with their life and that their well being and health is not lower and even higher than those of other populations around them.

Kibbutz communities (pl. “kibbutzim”) as an approximation to a model of a perfect Utopian Community.

Of course, the combined list of characteristics and goals that I enumerated above is extreme in its “Utopian demands” and perhaps will never be found in the real world of human communities. However, some communities come closer than others to realize such social goals.

The Israeli kibbutzim (for most of them only until the 80s’ – things started to change at the end of the 1980s’ as will be explained later) could be viewed as excellent examples of communities that are successfully striving to achieve such social goals. Compared to other kinds of communities, they accomplished remarkable success in doing so by expressing most of the important goals and characteristics of “Utopian Communities” (as enumerated earlier).

The next paragraphs examine the basic characteristics of kibbutz communities against the characteristics of “perfect Utopian communities” from four angles: (1) The normative

angle – the extent to which kibbutz (normative) ideology is congruent with the characteristics I enumerated for utopian communities. (2) The concrete angle – extent to which kibbutz reality expresses those characteristics. (3) Sustainability angle – whether adherence to those characteristics contributes to the success and sustainability of kibbutz communities. (4) Reactions of individual members – whether they are committed to kibbutz life, happy with their life on a kibbutz; satisfied with it; and whether it contributes to their health and well being.

(1) **Normative ideology.** Kibbutz by-laws as is phrased in “Kibbutz By-laws” (1973), states the following in its “goals and assumptions”:

“Kibbutz is a free association of people for the purpose of the ... existence of a communal society based on principles of public ownership of property, ... equality and participation in all domains of production, consumption and education. The kibbutz ... sees itself as a leader of the [Israeli] national insurrection and aims at establishing in Israel a Socialist society based on principles of economic and social equality...

[In addition] --

...Kibbutz Goals are:...

- (5) ...To develop and promote friendship and fraternity among its members.
- (6) To develop and promote members’ personality, personal ability and collective ability in the spheres of economy, social, culture, science, and art.”

(2) **Concrete expression of ideology.** Adherence to the characteristics that closely define (in my view) utopian community was not only expressed in the normative way by the kibbutz by-laws, they were also very strongly realized in the daily life of kibbutz communities.

This has been manifested in many domains. For instance: equality in decision making was carried out in the institutions of “direct democracy” as expressed by several mechanisms: the “general assembly”, “managerial rotation”, “decentralization” of influence by elected committees for every societal function (Rosner, 1971; Leviatan 1982; Palgi 1998; Pavin, 1998). Equality in consumption was mostly established on the principle of “to each according to his/her needs” (that is, recognizing the legitimacy of uniqueness of each individual), and also by reference to the aged, and to needy members

according to the same principle of equality (e.g. Gluck, 1998; Leviatan, 1998; 1999); another example is manifested in how kibbutzim structured management in their industries on similar principles (e.g. Leviatan & Rosner, 1980). In addition, kibbutzim devoted sizeable parts of their own human and capital resources to the education of the needy in Israel, and in developing political and community action in the country (Rosner et al., 1990).

Two other examples: The 41st council of the kibbutz Artzi Movement (Industry in the Kibbutz, February 27-28, 1976, Kibbutz Gan Shmuel.) resolved in its Chapter of Goals of kibbutz industry:” ... (f) Contribution to the national economy. The national economy today requires the maximum exploitation of existing productive forces for the achievement of three goals: to increase exports, to replace imports, , defense production. These goals will be integrated into the planning of our industry “

Another example: In 1975 one of the movements formulated an “activity plan” which defined its detailed programs and the tasks laid upon the kibbutzim. These were the establishment of new kibbutzim, the financing of youth movement affiliated with the kibbutz movement, helping immigrant towns, financing political activities, and even political parties.

The goal of contribution to the general Israeli population – is supported by the majority of members even today (for instance, 75% of respondents in the last annual survey of members (Palgi & Orchan, 2011) supported a statement that the kibbutz movement should be involved in Israeli society.

(3) **Contribution to sustainability of kibbutzim due to adherence to these characteristics.** I will use three criteria as examples to test the sustainability of kibbutzim.

(a) The first criterion is longevity (of the communities). Kibbutzim celebrated few years ago their full century of existence. While not all kibbutzim continue to display the “Utopian” characteristics I listed earlier, the vast majority did so until the end of the last

millennium, and a quarter of them continue to hold to them even now. This is a longer period of survival than any other sizeable movement or federation of “utopian communities” in history; it even outlasts longevity of many of the major social systems that existed during the last century (like Socialism; or National Socialism).

(b) The second criterion is economic success and this in comparison with Israeli society. The best sphere for comparison is the kibbutz success in its industrial endeavors. This is so because of three main reasons: Firstly, kibbutzim started their industrial revolution only at the end of the 1960s (Leviatan & Rosner, 1980; Rosner, 1998, Palgi, 1998; Tannebaum et al., 1974). Thus, they were new in the field during the seventies and eighties. Any successful showing must be attributed to their activity at that time and not to accumulation of resources (such as capital, know-how, or technology) in previous times. Secondly, industrial activity has been responsible, during the last 30 years, for about two thirds of the sources of income for kibbutzim (even more for some kibbutzim). Thirdly, the objective characteristics of kibbutz industries are much more comparable to its counterparts outside the kibbutz than any other of kibbutz economic activities such as farming or services.

Indicators of economic success from the mid seventies (the beginning of the major drive of industrialization in kibbutzim) to the end of the eighties show kibbutz industry to excel over the industrial section in Israel (for instance, in labor productivity and rate of growth; see Tables 1 & 2). Labor productivity over the first 15 years, 1976-1990, was on average, higher by 17% than that of Israeli industry. Rate of growth in sales of kibbutz industry was about equal to that of Israeli industry during the first years of industrialization and then surpassed that of Israeli industry during the 1980s. Things changed for the worse (as is evidenced in Tables 1 & 2) in the '90s as will be explained later on.

Research that focused on industrial effectiveness demonstrated that kibbutz industrial success came about because of its adherence to the same principles that define it and not despite of it: those industrial plants that emphasized workers participation in decision making, equality, individual unique attributes, team work, and managerial rotation did better than those which did not follow in this direction (e.g. Leviatan &

Rosner, 1980; Rosner, 1998; Palgi, 1998; Tannebaum et al., 1974; Leviatan, 1982; Barkai, 1977; Melman, 1970).

Table 1: Sales per worker in kibbutz industry as percentage of the level of sales per worker in Israeli industry. Years 1976-2009. (Annual summaries of Kibbutz Industrial Association)

Year	Sale per worker compared to Israeli industry (Percentage -- Israel =100)
1976	127
1977	104
1978	112
1979	120
1980	103
1981	98
1982	123
1983	119
1984	125
1985	115
1986	122
1987	134
1988	115
1989	119
1990	119
1991	107
1992	107
1993	99
1994	84
1995	90
1996	85
1997	90
1998	93
1999	89
2000	79
2001	89
2002	92
2003	95
2004	99
2005	88
2006	85
2007	89
2008	88
2009	84

Table 2: Mean annual increase in sales for kibbutz and Israeli industries – 1976—2000.
(Annual summaries of Kibbutz Industrial Association)

years	Mean annual increase in sales (%)	
	Kibbutz industries	Israeli industries
1976-1980	3.01	3.63
1981-1985	3.98	1.26
1986-1990	4.03	2.66
1991-1995	5.24	5.82
1996-2000	2.33	5.04

(c) The third criterion is demographic growth. Demographic growth is, usually, a sign of success for communities, particularly for voluntary communities as are the kibbutzim. It is also a strong indicator for organizational commitment. During the years 1970-1985 the kibbutz population grew by an annual rate of more than 2.5%; it even surpassed the rate of growth of Israeli society. Growth of kibbutz population continued to the end of 1980s when it reached a peak of 129,000 in 1991. The trend changed its direction in the '90s. Table 3 shows the details of the deterioration in numbers of kibbutz population after 1990 but then it shows what seems to be an upsurge in number for the last five –six years. I will relate to this seeming re-surge later and show that reality is different from seems to be.

Research at the time showed commitment of kibbutz members to kibbutz life was primarily affected by the extent of their communities exercising and realizing their unique social values that I identified as characteristics of the “Utopian” community (e.g. Leviatan, 2003; Leviatan, 2006; Leviatan & Rosner, 2001).

Thus, we see that on all three criteria of sustainability, kibbutz communities fared quite well over the years of their existence. Moreover, the more kibbutzim adhered to principles and characteristics of Utopian communities the better was their standing on these three criteria.

Table 3: Kibbutz population in select years (Central Bureau of Statistics, different annual summaries).

Year	Size of Population (in 000)
1970	85
1972	90
...	...
1980	111
1981	114
1983	116
1984	123
1986	127
1987	127
1989	125
1991	129
1992	128
1994	125
1995	119
1997	117
1999	116
2001	116
2003	116
2005	118
2006	120
2007	123
2008	134
2009	137
2010	141

(4) **Reactions of individual members.** Research of the past (studies conducted in the 1960s to 1980s) had shown that satisfaction of kibbutz members with their life on kibbutz and their commitment to kibbutz life is very high. A study composed of a sample of founders (age 50-60, about 600) and second generation members (average age 27 about 900) conducted in the late 60s showed level of high commitment to run in the 90% for the veterans and about 70-80 percent for the second generation members (Rosner et al., 1990). Similarly, level of satisfaction with life, and satisfaction with life on a kibbutz was also very high (e.g. Leviatan et al.1981, Leviatan, 1999).

However, an acid test for this criterion would be level of life expectancy (LE) of kibbutz population compared to the rest of the Jewish population in Israel. This is so because LE as a characteristic of a society is an expression of the quality of life in that

society. A high level of LE results from high level of well being, satisfaction with life, and appropriate solutions for health problems. Table 4 shows the LE of kibbutz population to be higher than that of Israeli Jews. In another comparison, LE of the kibbutz population was shown to be among the highest in the world (Leviatan & Cohen, 1985).

Table 4: Life Expectancy (LE) at birth and at age 50 of kibbutz permanent population and Israeli Jews^a in three years – 1977, 1984, and 1995 (by gender)

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>LE at birth</u>		<u>LE at age 50</u>	
		<u>Kibbutz</u>	<u>Israeli Jews</u>	<u>Kibbutz</u>	<u>Israeli Jews</u>
<u>Males</u>	1977	74.4	71.9	28.3	25.7
	1984	76.7	73.5	29.6	26.5
	1995	78.1	75.9	30.8	28.3
<u>Females</u>	1977	79.0	75.4	31.0	28.0
	1984	81.3	77.1	33.4	29.2
	1995	82.5	79.8	33.8	31.2

^a Data for the Jewish population in Israel are taken from the Statistical Abstracts of Israel, (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1979; 1986; 1997).

Kibbutz LE surpassed that of the Jewish population of Israel, as the table shows, by three to four years in all three comparisons. A difference of three-four years in LE means that the Jewish population of Israel will reach the level of LE of the kibbutz population in about ten to twelve years hence (the average increase in LE is about three-four months per year). Important for our discussion is the fact that research shows higher LE in kibbutzim to result not because of any self-selection or genetic advantage this population has, but because of its social arrangements for the aged: The very social arrangements that stem from adherence to the same values and principles that define the kibbutz phenomenon: solidarity, equality according to needs and abilities, cooperation, and relating to each individual as a unique person (Leviatan, 1999). Another support for the importance of social arrangements as a reason for longevity among kibbutz members is

found in the fact that age and gender specific death rates in kibbutz population, in comparison to Jewish population in Israel, is smaller (to a ratio of 1:2 or 2:3) starting only at age fifty and not before – the age when risk of dying is greater and could be prevented by appropriate social arrangements.

In sum, we see that characteristics of kibbutzim corresponded quite well with the characteristics of Utopian communities as I suggested them at the beginning of this paper: kibbutz (normative) ideology is congruent with these characteristics; kibbutz reality expressed those characteristics; adherence to these characteristics contributed to the success and sustainability of kibbutz communities; individual members were committed to kibbutz life, happy with their life on a kibbutz; satisfied with it; and it contributed to their health and well being. All these were true until the end of the 1980s'.

Changes starting in late eighties

Starting at the end of the 80's, economic crisis struck the kibbutzim (and Israel as a whole). Due to length constraint, I do not intend to describe and analyze here the reasons for the economic crisis; this could be found elsewhere (e.g. the introductory chapter in Leviatan, Oliver, Quarter, 1998). However, important for the purpose of this paper is to note that two major outcomes of that crisis could be defined as no less as the beginning of the demise of the kibbutz phenomenon: (1) a large wave of members, particularly young ones – leaving kibbutzim for other ways of life; and, (2) abandonment by most kibbutzim (and by their members – those who stayed) of the basic principles of conduct, those based on kibbutz values described earlier. This resulted in voluntary (expressed in majority vote by at least two thirds of membership in each kibbutz) transformation of kibbutzim into communities much more similar to the outside world: with less equality, less solidarity, less democracy, less fraternity among members, less concern for the wellbeing of individual members, less caring for the outside society, and less homogeneity in ideology and in acceptance of kibbutz traditional characteristics as socially desirable (e.g. Leviatan, Oliver, Quarter, 1998; Palgi & Rheinart, 2011). An appropriate summary of the changes that occurred would be that those kibbutzim adopted the ideological principles of neo-liberalism as manifested in the following expressions. “Equality” was

defined as either “mechanical” (to each the same), or “equity” (to each according to one’s contribution), and not "qualitative" (to each according to needs) (Rosner & Getz, 1994). The markets are considered the best and most efficient allocators of resources in production and distribution. Communities were considered to be composed of autonomous individuals (producers and consumers) motivated chiefly or entirely by material or economic considerations. Competition was adopted as a major vehicle for selection of individuals into social and economic positions.

Of course, adoptions of these principles and their translation into day to day life of kibbutzim did not occur immediately and not in all kibbutzim at once. It has been a process still going on today. An important example of the major structural and ideological change that kibbutzim are going through, is demonstrated in the percentage of kibbutzim that opted (again, by majority vote) to transform so that their guiding principle of equality is based on the “equity principle” (rather than the earlier principle of “qualitative equality”). The adoption of the "equity" principle has two parts: (1) privatization of most public budgets (such as food, education, health, and housing) so that members get allotments of money (equal – in the mechanical sense) to satisfy those needs (rather than service according to needs); (2) individual members get differential salaries that are a function of position at work or in the community. Differential salaries are the strongest expression of inequality among members as the gap in net income (after state and community taxes are levied) may reach in those transformed kibbutzim a ratio of 1:4. To illustrate: In 1990 no kibbutz defined itself as being “differential”; in 1993 still not one kibbutz was “differential”; in 1996 – 6% of kibbutzim transformed into being "differential"; in 1999 – 21% of kibbutzim transformed; in 2002 – 52%; in 2005 – 71%, in 2008 – 75%, and in 2011 – 76%. Thus the majority of kibbutzim are structured now on a principle of differential salaries to their members.

This short summary of the history of kibbutzim to-date raises a major question for students of utopian communities:

Why did members choose to abandon kibbutz life and its basic social arrangements?
 Why did so many kibbutz communities decide to give up on a life that seemed to be

achieving so well both individual and community goals, and contributing so splendidly to general human goals?

I will present possible explanations (as suggested by various observers) for what happened (and is still happening) and try to come up with the most probable ones and how they teach us what should be done in order to preserve and sustain utopian communities. Here are some of the major explanations.

Possible reasons for the voluntary leave of members their kibbutz and for their voluntary giving up of kibbutz central social arrangements.

First, I want to take out of the way two very general questions about the kibbutz:

1. **Is it possible that kibbutz life, and the social principles that guide it, are in fact principles that stand against human nature so that kibbutz sustainability is marked by time – until the members get “weary” of these principles?**

My response here is simple: Who knows what is this “human nature” and how long should one wait to find out whether a social arrangement fits with human nature that is incongruent with it? The most veteran kibbutzim that are 90 and 100 year old have had by now four generations of adults experiencing the kibbutz way of life. I believe this is long enough to attest the irrelevancy of this argument. But then, later on in this paper I show that in fact there is some relevance to “human nature”. I will explain how, if there is no intentional effort put into intellectual education about the unique (utopian?) values kibbutz life, generation by generation the membership would be depleted.

2. **Was the traditional kibbutz Utopia or Reality?** Perhaps the achievement of the utopian goals was in fact not there, and appeared only in writings about kibbutzim but not in reality?

The material presented thus far should persuade any reader that reality and not only dreamlike writings represented kibbutz closeness to utopian goals. Evidence for the (objective) achievements such as years in existence, economic success, demographic growth, life expectancy, lower death rates of aged groups, positive wellbeing, exercising the aspired ideological goals – all these were evidenced in data of different kinds.

Thus, the task at hand is to analyze why the potential demise of this reality. I now move to more profound explanation for the changes in kibbutzim.

3. **Dire economic situation as cause for demographic deterioration and abandonment of kibbutz ideology.** A simple possible cause for members leaving the kibbutz is the economic hardship that occurred in many kibbutzim as a result of the economic crisis. This also brought a wish to transform their kibbutz (if they stayed in it) into a differential salary arrangement with the hope that one's personal material standing would improve if it could be based on one's individual effort and separated from that of the collective of the rest of the members in one's kibbutz. However economic hardship could not be the major cause for the transformation of kibbutzim; there must have been a deeper cause behind it. Consider the following:

- (1) Many kibbutzim which did not experience the economic crisis of the late eighties still experienced desertion by many of their members and also still opted for the structural change of giving up on kibbutz traditional principles of conduct.
- (2) On the other hand, many kibbutzim that experienced the crisis in its strongest manifestation decided, deliberately, to strengthen expression of their traditional values claiming that such re-emphasis on partnership values would take them out of their dire economic condition. Some of these kibbutzim are now among the strongest economically. As there is no comparative research available here we could get an impression of such process from anecdotes. For instance, "Mishmar HaEmek" is one of the largest kibbutzim and currently also one of the strongest both economically and demographically. In the late eighties the kibbutz was in a very dire economic situation but then, starting in 1990 it came out of it to become one of the leading kibbutzim in all senses. That period (the eighties) is described in a book by one of its members (Talmi, 1993) and also in an unpublished report by a group of MBA graduate students in 1995 (not published). They analyzed minutes of committee meetings and the general assembly of the kibbutz and interviewed all major office holders for those years. Both these documents came with the conclusion that kibbutz members were aware of their economic situation

- and decided about collectivistic ways (rather than individualistic ways such as privatization of public budgets) to combat the economic hardship (I should add – and splendidly succeeded in it).
- (3) Suggesting that the economic crisis was responsible for the deterioration in commitment to kibbutz ideals and in level of commitment to kibbutz life, assumes that external factors determine these outcomes. One other way to test for such an hypothesis is to compare the situation in the eighties to another period. This occurred in the late 50s. Kibbutzim experienced also an economic crisis (Rosolio, 1999) but came out of it without giving away their ideological principles of conduct and did not experience a major demographic crisis. The crisis did not translate into a social crisis in the kibbutzim and not into giving up of commitment to kibbutz basic values.
- (4) Another period in kibbutz history was during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Five major revolutions occurred concurrently in the kibbutz external and internal environments and tested the kibbutz endurance. (a) Kibbutzim went through an industrial revolution, turning within a few years from economies based solely on farming to mixed economies in which industry contributed (then) about half of their net income (Palgi, 1998; Leviatan & Rosner, 1980). (b) A revolution occurred in higher education. Within a few years, education that had formerly been restricted was offered to each member. To illustrate: in 1964 there were only one hundred kibbutz members studying in academic settings; this number grew to four hundred in 1968 and to seventeen hundred in 1972, while membership grew at that time at a rate of only 2 percent per year (Leviatan, 1982). (c) The first large age cohorts reached retirement age, thus forcing kibbutzim to deal with the needs of members from young to old (Leviatan, 1998; Leviatan, 1999). (d) For the first time, the kibbutzim experienced the intake of many new members without a background in kibbutz ideology — because of the marriage of kibbutz-born members to outsiders (both from Israel and from abroad). This change introduced the potential for the community to become less homogeneous in its basic values. (e) For the first time, large numbers of kibbutz-born members decided to leave the kibbutz (Rosner, Ben-David, et al., 1990).

These major changes in the external and internal environments could have had serious consequences for the kibbutzim. Some of these changes encouraged greater individualism (such as the diversification of knowledge and careers and the increased heterogeneity of members). The industrial revolution threatened kibbutz principles of managerial conduct. But in general the kibbutz movement reacted by viewing the transformations to its environments not as threats (which would have led, perhaps, to stonewalling their introduction as long as possible), but as opportunities to exercise its goals, principles, and values on a higher level. The way kibbutzim dealt with their industrial revolution illustrates this point.

The introduction of industry at first threatened the kibbutz values of equality and direct democracy in organization and management. Industrial managers demanded hierarchical authority, similar to that of their colleagues outside the kibbutz (which, had their demands been accepted, meant the surrender of the power rendered to institutions of direct democracy such as the workers' assembly and workers' committees). They also insisted on doing away with managerial rotation and argued for viewing the profit-making potential of the industrial branch as the sole goal to be pursued and for ignoring other goals such as offering appropriate jobs according to members' training, capabilities, and needs. In addition, the introduction of industry created much greater professional heterogeneity among members (due to its more diverse occupations), thereby threatening the social fabric of the kibbutz community, which was based on commonality of interests and knowledge concerning the public domain. Industrialization also led to demands to let go of the restrictions on the employment of hired workers. Although major debates ensued, these potential threats were treated as opportunities for strengthening both collectivism and individualism, while preserving the same balance between them and restating kibbutz values and principles in innovative ways that harmonize with the new conditions posed by industry.

Eventually, in the mid 1970s, the debate about changes from basic kibbutz values was decided in favor of keeping to the principles of kibbutz management and of

shaping industrial management along the lines of other work branches and community bodies. However, those kibbutz principles were now adapted to the features of industry and were detailed and articulated in formal resolutions (see Leviatan and Rosner, 1980 “resolutions” of Kibbutz Artzi convention about industry in 1976). Programs were developed in the kibbutz management training center. Capital-intensive and knowledge-intensive technologies were sought as the preferred ones for kibbutz industry (in contrast to the first industries which were labor intensive with low levels of needed knowledge). This direction was adopted so that industry could offer appropriate jobs to the large waves of graduates from the institutions of higher studies and so that the need for hired labor could be averted. It proved singularly successful, both economically and socially. Findings showed that kibbutz industry far surpassed comparable industry outside, as I have shown in the first part of this paper.

In view of the above points I suggest that the more profound reason for members leaving and for the kibbutzim transforming themselves according to neo-liberal principles is not the economic situation as such but rather ideological commitment to basic social values that characterize the kibbutz idea. A study from 2000 supports this suggestion (Leviatan & Rosner, 2001). In that study of 550 members from 20 kibbutzim showed that for those with strong commitment to general values of equality and solidarity (called “socialists”) the correlation of the kibbutz economic and social situation with commitment to kibbutz life was $r=.36$, while the same correlation for those who were low on these values was $r=.48$. Our interpretation to these outcomes was that outside factors have much less effect for individuals with strong commitment to these values. Similar to the outcomes of the economic crisis of the late 50s I described earlier.

Support for the conclusion that economic hardship was not the cause or the wish to transform kibbutzim is also evidenced in Palgi’s study (1994). While, so she argues, the economic hardship could have served as a trigger for the wish to transform one’s kibbutz, it was not the cause. She shows that (lack of) ideological commitment is a much stronger predictor of such attitude.

There is no research that compares on objective economic performance current transformed kibbutzim to those that are still traditional. However when members are

asked (a representative sample of kibbutz members across the country, Palgi & Orchan, 2011) about their own kibbutz economic situation, 61% of members in traditional kibbutzim state that “it is in a good economic situation” while only 24% of members in the differential kibbutzim hold to this opinion. Thus, the least we could conclude is that the economic situation per se could not be the major reason for the kibbutz transformation.

4. **Belief that structural (and ideological) transformation of kibbutz social structural arrangement (as privatization of public budgets and the introduction of differential salaries with abandonment of kibbutz managerial principles) is a panacea for the economic and demographic downslide.**

Perhaps the choice of members to transform their communities into the "differential" type came about because they believed it was a cure for the economic crisis? Indeed, many members and writers (e.g. Weber, 1992; Harel, 1993) believed in the adoption of the differential salary arrangement as the way to improve economic condition of their communities (See Palgi & Orchan annual surveys 2001-1991 where, across the years more than 50% of respondents state that the adoption of differential salaries would help the continued existence of their kibbutz, while only a third -- in earlier years and quarter in later years -- believe it to stand in the way of the continued existence of the kibbutz.

Indeed, a major argument sees the causes for the economic crisis (and later for the social and ideological crises) in the kibbutz system of management that was based on kibbutz ideological principles (as expressed in the use of “direct democracy” in the expression of the general assembly of workers, the election of officers and managers, either by workers or by the community at large, managerial rotation, semiautonomous teams, the allocation of managerial functions to committees). Even before the economic crisis, outside writers claimed that kibbutz values (as expressed in the above managerial arrangements) could not produce economic efficiency because these two are in apparent contradiction (e.g. Cohen, 1966; Vallier, 1962). Cohen, for instance, argued that [economic] “progress” cannot go together with [social] “communality”. In order to explain why economic functioning of kibbutzim (in this case – its industry) was so successful, some suggested the concept of “altruism” of members that overcame drawbacks of their system of

management (Don, 1988). But (so the argument) that this altruism cannot sustain kibbutz economy for long. However, as already mentioned earlier, economic accomplishments of kibbutz industry was in fact positively related to extent of exercise of these very ideological seeming “constraints”.

Economic and demographic evidence refutes the assumed “cure” that might be inherent in the transformation of kibbutz principles of conduct..This appears in the data shown in Tables 1& 2 and Table 3. Giving up on managerial principles based on kibbutz ideology certainly did not improve economic performance, In fact economic performance deteriorated. Also it certainly did not improve the demographic situation of kibbutz population. In fact, the population size decreased constantly the more kibbutzim changed their social structure and moved to adopt neo-liberal principles. Consider these details:

Industrial performance: If we hold to the performance of industrial activity in kibbutzim as an indicator of their economic performance, we learn in Tables 1 & 2 about deterioration in the two indices employed in those tables: starting at 1991 and for the next 19 years the average level of workers' productivity was 91% of that in Israeli Industry (while during the previous 15 years it was, on average, 117%); also (Table 2), starting in 1990 (to 2000) the percentage increase in sales dropped below that of the Israeli industry. The same negative trend from yet another angle: The added value of kibbutz industry to their kibbutzim (that is, the amount of money transferred to the kibbutz from the industrial activity – such as salaries of members, profits, allocation for depreciation, payment for services rendered). When the year 1992 is used as the anchor year (100% as it was the first year such data was reported) then the average annual added value for the following eight years (to the year 2000) was only about 95% (Leviatan, 2003).

The figures in the two tables are for the kibbutz industry as a whole (including both traditional and differential kibbutzim) which suggests that the deterioration could have been deeper in economic outcome were there more kibbutzim of the differential kind.

These sorry outcomes for kibbutz industry after adopting the managerial changes should not be of any surprise if one views them from a theoretical angle. Many of the new managerial principles gave up on intensive use of the quality of the kibbutz human

resources (its high level of education, which is more than 15 years of schooling for the age group 20-60; its high level of management skills due to the practice of managerial rotation; its proven skill as intensive team workers; its very high level of motivation). But this quality of human resource is the only advantage of kibbutzim in their economic activities (as it has drawbacks in numbers, in old age of workers, in physical ability, in distance from business centers, in inflexibility of geographic mobility, in inflexibility of human resources). Throwing out one's advantages and relying on one's drawbacks cannot be considered good business management.

Demographic trends in years after 1990. Just as the economic performance of kibbutzim did not improve with the adoption of the structural changes I enumerated, so did not improve their demographic situation. As seen in Table 3 the size of kibbutz population went down as the years progressed. This last statement needs more explanation as the figures of population size shown in Table 3 seem to refute it. Table 3 shows how starting in 2003 the size of kibbutz population started to grow again from 116,000 in 2003 to 141,000 in 2010. These figures, however, do not tell the whole story. Because, starting around the year 2000, kibbutzim allowed individuals and families from outside to rent or buy apartments or houses on kibbutz grounds without the condition of becoming members. The Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel counts these nonmember residents as part of kibbutz population. However, these residents form (in 2010) about 30% of kibbutz population. Table 5 shows the growth in number of residents (nonmembers) in the TAKATZ federation (which forms the majority of the total kibbutz movement) between the years 2002 to 2007 when it accounted for about 22% of the adult population of that movement. The annual statistical report of the kibbutz movement for 2010 was published in April, 2012 on line. It shows a total population of about 141,000 (the largest in history) but permanent and temporary (nonmember) residents consists about 30% of this number. A simple calculation brings kibbutz population of members and their dependents to about 99,000 individuals – no growth for the whole decade.

Table 5: Growth of the residents' population over the years 2002-2007 in TAKATZ kibbutzim

year	Members , candidates , dependents	Other residents	Other residents (% of adults)	children	Total
2002	63,361	13,216	17.3	23,882	100,459
2003	63,213	14,240	18.4	22,962	100,415
2004	62,528	15,040	19.4	21,741	99,309
2005	62,343	15,622	20.4	21,061	99,026
2006	61,555	16,240	20.9	20,154	97,949
2007	60,495	16,548	21.5	23,314	100,357
Change (%) 2007-2002	-4.5%	+ 25.2%		- 2.4%	- 0.1%

In sum, the structural changes should have made the kibbutz a better place for its members. It did not. Just one example: a summary question in the annual survey of a representative sample of members in kibbutzim (Palgi & Orchan, 2011) asked them to respond to the statement “how good is it to live in your kibbutz”. 40% of the respondents from the traditional kibbutz sample stated that “kibbutz is a very good place to live in”; only 26% of the respondents from the “differential kibbutzim answered in this way.

In another study (Leviatan & Adar, 2007) conducted in 2006, members from traditional kibbutzim (about 250 from eleven kibbutzim) were compared to members from “differential” kibbutzim (about 420 from 21 kibbutzim). Table 6 shows a comparison on two items expressing level of commitment to kibbutz life (extent to which respondent would recommend kibbutz life to a young person s/he loves; how sure the respondent is that he/she would have chosen (or not) kibbutz life again) and two questions summarizing level of well being (satisfaction with life on one’s kibbutz, and satisfaction with life in general). It is clear in the table that transformation into differential arrangements does not improve neither commitment to kibbutz life nor level of satisfaction with kibbutz life, or with life in general (and this is an understatement).

We also offered our respondents a choice of different life arrangements in Israel (city life of different kinds, Moshav (a cooperative village), rural life (not communal) etc.

and also kibbutz life. They were to choose one of the categories as a place they would like to live in when they do not take into consideration any practical problems. Fifty one percent of the members in traditional kibbutzim chose “Kibbutz” as the preferred place to live; while only 28.4% of the “differential” members chose “Kibbutz”. This study included kibbutzim that transformed into the “differential” arrangement within different number of years: Traditional kibbutzim, 1-2 years before the study, 3-4 years and 5-6 years. Percentages of those reporting satisfaction with life on kibbutz, differed as follows: traditional kibbutzim – 74.7%; 1-2 years into “differential” arrangements – 67.2%; 3-4 years – 61.5%; 5-6 year – 55.5%.

Table 6: Comparison of members from traditional and differential kibbutzim on items expressing commitment to life on kibbutz, satisfaction with life on a kibbutz, and satisfaction with life in general.

Question:	Traditional kibb. (about 250)		Differential kibb. (about 420)		Stud. <i>t</i> (<i>p</i><.000)
	Mean (SD)	Percent positive	Mean (SD)	Percent positive	
Would recommend kibbutz life to a young person	3.31 (1.06)	45.5	2.81 (1.18)	27.6	5.51
Would choose kibbutz life again	3.46 (1.14)	53.9	2.86 (1.21)	33.9	6.32
Would choose kibbutz life over other kinds of life	--	51.0	--	28.4	
Satisfaction with life on kibbutz	3.86 (.82)	74.7	3.55 (.89)	60.8	5.55
Satisfaction with life in general	3.91 (.75)	76.4	3.66 (.89)	62.8	3.89

It seems fair to summarize all the evidence brought up in this section with a very strong understatement: transformation into differential arrangements does not improve economic functioning of kibbutzim, it does not help in demographic growth, it does not bring about higher levels of commitment to kibbutz life, and it does not contribute to levels of personal wellbeing or satisfaction with kibbutz life, or with life in general.

Therefore, when people say that their support for the transformation comes because they

think it would improve the kibbutz lot and their own – such a claim has no support in data and not even in their personal views. I offer again my alternative explanation: It is the weakening of commitment to kibbutz values that stands behind the support for kibbutz transformation and adoption of neo-liberal values instead of kibbutz utopian-like values.

5. **Reactions to kibbutz life of the first and second generations of kibbutz-born adult members.**

One wonders how is it possible that large numbers of the first, and (much more) the second generations of kibbutz-born members decided to leave kibbutz life or to support its complete transformation. Is it not that the emotional experience of every child born and raised on kibbutzim, should have resulted in total commitment and dedication to kibbutz life? Should we not expect each of them to see one's own kibbutz as a home to cherish; a place to be committed to? Apparently not!

Research during the years shows that the commitment to kibbutz life of the first generation of kibbutz born was much lower than that of their parents (the founders) (Rosner et al., 1990), and the level of commitment to kibbutz life of the second generation (those whose parents were themselves kibbutz born) was lower than that of their parents (Leviatan, 1998). One thing is clear from these bare facts: commitment to kibbutz life does not transfer via genes. In addition, these studies show that an offer of need satisfaction or an offer of home feeling is not enough to induce commitment to kibbutz life. It is even not the most important contributor to it. These and other studies show that the most important factor in determining commitment to kibbutz life is the level of commitment to the kibbutz central values of equality, solidarity, partnership, and contribution to society.

However, as said before, these values not only do not transfer via genes from parents to their offspring; they even do not transfer by just breathing the “kibbutz air” of one's kibbutz. These values need to be internalized by each individual via intellectual (rather than emotional) acceptance of them, and through cognitive confrontation with alternative ideologies. Without a conscious commitment to these values backed by intellectual understanding and results from cognitive reflection, it is not easy to give up – throughout one's entire adult life – on part of one's personal resource (this is particularly

true for individuals with high level of personal resources) for the sake of others that are even not close family or close friends, and all because of an ideological commitment to equality, partnership and solidarity.

Yet, bringing young people to adopt (intellectually, cognitively) these kibbutz values calls for a system of education and socialization that emphasizes intellectual and philosophical dealings with these values and not relying on their life experience in functioning kibbutzim to bring about such commitment. Such educational effort has never been executed in a sincere way in kibbutzim. Kibbutz educational system relied on the (vulgar?) assumption, derived from Marxist thinking, that life experience determines consciousness and shapes one's world view. Given this assumption it was no wonder that the expectation was that young individuals grow in such a wonderful experience would the values that guide this life. It did not work.

A simple semi-statistical exercise illustrates why this is so. Let us assume that the founders of a particular kibbutz were all strongly ideologically committed (100% of them – unlikely, but useful for the sake of my example). Assuming that this kibbutz did not put any intentional efforts in education and socialization in intellectual internalization of kibbutz values, we should expect only some of the second generation youth to acquire commitment to kibbutz values (those who got it in their parents' home or acquired by themselves in various ways. Under these conditions we assume only 50% of the first generation of kibbutz-born members to grow up with a strong commitment to kibbutz life and its ideology; the other 50% (so we assume) would leave for other ways of life. In this (not so) hypothetical example we continue to assume that this kibbutz continues not to put any institutional efforts in education and socialization for the intellectual internalization of kibbutz values for the second generation of kibbutz born members. Applying the same principles as before, we should now expect only 50% of them, and only from the previous 50% of the parents, to become committed to kibbutz life and to its ideology. That means that we would have now only 25% of the potential second generation of kibbutz born on that kibbutz. With the same logic, we would have about 12.5% in the third generation of kibbutz born members who stay, and so further. In short without “infusion” of commitment for kibbutz values kibbutzim would disintegrate by a

“natural” process. (Of course, a further assumption is no infusion of new, ideologically committed, members from outside),

Thus, again, I stress values and ideology as the major cause for member’s commitment to kibbutz life. The next section directly deals with argument.

6. **Importance of unique kibbutz values (belief in, and degree of their realization in kibbutz life) in determining commitment to kibbutz life.**

In this section I argue that dedication to kibbutz ideology (both by individuals and by their kibbutz) is the most important determinant of commitment to kibbutz life. I first present Table 7 (a rework of Table 3 in Leviatan, 2003). This Table displays a multiple regression analysis where “commitment to kibbutz life” is the dependent variable and the independent variables express “belief in values” by respondents and “realization of values” by their kibbutz, together with level of satisfaction with several central needs. The study is based on surveys conducted in more than 50 kibbutzim during the late 90s’ and the beginning of the decade of 2000 (N about 5200). Here are the details of the variable included in the analysis:

1. “Commitment to kibbutz life”. An index composed of five items: satisfaction with kibbutz life, belief in kibbutz future; would decide again on kibbutz life if had to; would recommend kibbutz life to a young, loved person; would select kibbutz life over any other option when no practical concerns apply.
2. “Communal Values” (six items). How desirable is it to have in one’s most desired place of living... communal ownership of means of production; communal consumption; communal education; direct democracy; community principle of equality; no link between contribution and remuneration.
3. “Ideology Realization” (four items). Satisfaction with extent of one’s kibbutz... realizing the value of equality; expressing one’s values; contributing to Israeli society; realizing kibbutz basic values.
4. “Social Values” (four items). Importance of ... being active and influential in society; know that you contribute to formation of society; act for the realization of social ideals; ideological considerations in deciding about life in kibbutz.

5. “Individualistic Values” (four items). Importance of ... life of challenges; material standard of living; responsibility at work; being self in any role.
6. “Feeling belonging” (one item). Extent of satisfaction with feeling belonging and at home in kibbutz.
7. “Self realization” (one item). Extent of satisfaction with how kibbutz life fits one’s abilities and expectations.
8. “Material Standard of living” (five items). Satisfaction with... material standard of living; level of housing; consumption; economic situation of kibbutz; economic security.

Table 7: Stepwise multiple regression where “commitment to kibbutz life” serves as a dependent variable level of value commitment, level of values realization by kibbutz, level of satisfaction of several needs and demographic variables serve as predictors.

Predictors:	B	Beta	r	Beta *r	Contribution (%) to explained variance⁽¹⁾	R²
Communal Values	.346	.348	.573	.199	34.5	
Ideology Realization	.214	.169	.517	.087	15.1	
Social Values	.088	.087	.151	.013	2.3	
Individualistic Values	-	-.048	-	.006	1.0	
	.053		.130			
Feeling Belonging	.182	.195	.515	.100	17.4	
Self Realization	.173	.182	.545	.099	17.2	
Material Standard of living	.157	.131	.483	.063	10.9	
Gender	.136	.074	.123	.009	1.6	
Constant=-.178; R=.760; R ² _{adj.} =.577; SE of estimate=.600; N=5200						.578

⁽¹⁾R²= beta₁*r₁+ beta₂*r₂+...+ beta_n*r_n. Therefore, beta_n*r_n/ R²* 100 gives an estimate in % of the contribution of predictor n to the explained variance in the dependent variables. This would not apply for r that is very small.

Variables that are the most important contributors to “commitment to kibbutz life” are those expressing the domain of values (52.9% of the explained variance and about 30.5% of the total variance.) The indices contributing most are “communal values” (34.5% of explained variance); and “ideology realization” (15.1%). “Social values” has also a small independent contribution to level of commitment (2.3%). “Individualistic values” detract a little from level of commitment (1.0%).

The variable expressing satisfaction of needs contribute altogether about 45.5% of the explained variance and about 26.2% of the total variance. “Feeling belonging” and “self realization” contributes each about 17% of explained variance and satisfaction with “material standard of living” contributes another 11%.

Very similar findings were recorded in other studies (e.g. Leviatan and Rosner, 2001; Rosner et al, 1990; Leviatan, 2006; Rachmany, 2007).

It is clear from the findings in Table 7 and the other studies that while the level of need satisfaction is important in determining level of commitment to kibbutz life, commitment to kibbutz life is determined even in a stronger way by level of individuals’ adherence to communal values and to the more general social values. It is also dependent on the extent to which one’s kibbutz acts to realize the central values of kibbutz life. In fact, the very same values and goals announced by the kibbutz by-laws I cited and the beginning of this paper. It is important to emphasize that commitment to kibbutz life hinges on the individual’s particular beliefs and world-view. This means that if we want to preserve the kibbutz idea as a real place of living, we would need to institutionally and intentionally socialize and educate individuals to adopt kibbutz communal and social values as their own. But not less important is that one’s kibbutz realizes these very values in concrete actions.

Unfortunately, recent kibbutz history shows kibbutz communities to lack on both these directions and the result is deterioration both in the level and number of individuals committed to kibbutz values and the number of kibbutzim that express them in their social arrangements and in their priorities. So is also the deterioration of the strength of expressing those values by kibbutzim that still function in the "traditional" way.

This has been show through this paper in various ways and is again illustrated in the following two tables (Tables 8 & 9) with data derived from the 2011 annual survey of a representative sample of members across the country (Palgi & Orchan, 2011). In both Tables we see comparisons between members from “traditional “and “differential” kibbutzim.

In all comparisons members of traditional kibbutzim report their kibbutz to act closer to the desired kibbutz values. For instance evaluation of equality among members, participation in decision making, internal democracy on kibbutz, satisfaction with level of

influence, opposition to complete privatization of health and education, opposition to differential salary, etc. This is also true in members' reporting of their needs' satisfaction by their kibbutz and of their feeling of security in the future.

Table 9 also demonstrates differences in the same direction. Members of the traditional kibbutzim view equality among members, and the acting upon the principle of qualitative equality and opposition to differential salary in much higher percentages than members of the "differential" kibbutzim.

However, even among the members of the traditional kibbutzim the support for kibbutz values is not very strong. For instance, only 61% view "Strengthening equality among members" as beneficial for the survival of their kibbutz and only 60% view the "differential salary" arrangement as not beneficial while 33% view it as beneficial for the survival of their kibbutz.

Given these relative low levels of support for kibbutz values, and remembering the drift over the years among kibbutzim in adopting differential salary arrangement, does not leave too much hope and optimism for the rest of kibbutzim not to join the three quarters of kibbutzim which already opted for this transformation.

Table 8: Comparisons of members from traditional kibbutzim with members from differential kibbutzim on various attitudes and self reported evaluations about themselves and about their kibbutzim (taken from annual surveys of 2011, Palgi & Orchan, 2011) (Percentages, all differences are significant at .05 or lower)

Question:	Traditional kibbutzim		Differential kibbutzim	
	positive	negative	Positive	negative
Evaluation of equality among members	26	29	9	49
Participation of members in decision making	50	16	33	29
Internal democracy on kibbutz.	57	15	40	24
“Satisfied with influence about kibbutz matters”	38	20	28	32
“Opposes complete privatization of health and education	84	11	49	40
Opposes <u>limited</u> (as against full) mutual comprehensive responsibility	63	27	25	62
Opposes transfer of right of general assembly to kibbutz management	80	20	71	29
Supports the adoption of "differential salary”	34	55	75	16
Cultural and leisure activity on kibb.	62	9	42	23
Taking care of members rights at work	55	16	44	25
Attitudes towards kibbutz old members	87	5	72	10
Medical services (much more – positive) or (negative) compared to what is offered by state.	65	4	19	32
Education services (much more – positive) or (negative) compared to what is offered by state.	77	3	30	20
“My kibbutz will take care of me in dire economic times”	63	12	35	32
“My kibbutz will take care of me when I am old”	78	5	45	24
“There exist cases of poverty on my kibbutz”	85	3	53	9
“Satisfied with work”	86	4	79	8
“Satisfied with self realization”	66	9	53	16

Table 9: Evaluation whether the implementation of different principles into social arrangements on kibbutz would be "beneficial" or "unbeneficial" for the future existence of their kibbutz (percentages).

		Beneficial	Irrelevant	Not beneficial
Strengthening equality among members	Traditional kibbutz	61	23	16
	Differential kibbutz	38	33	19
Qualitative quality (to each according to needs from each according to ability)	Traditional kibbutz	44	22	34
	Differential kibbutz	21	19	60
Differential salary	Traditional kibbutz	33	7	60
	Differential kibbutz	70	16	14

Tables 8 and 9 display another problem for the kibbutzim. This is the growing heterogeneity among members in the values and attitudes as regards the central values of kibbutz life. It is clear that no common denominator in holding to basic values exists, when the distribution of members' attitudes is 2:1; 1:1; or 2:3 on matters such as support of equality, support or opposition to differential salary arrangement, level of desired solidarity and the like. Thus, as explained in the beginning of this paper, disappears the most important factor the bonds members together in a kibbutz community.

What for the future of the Utopian ideas in kibbutzim? What for the future of kibbutzim?

It is said that following the fall of the Temple (about two thousand years ago!) prophesy (at least in my country) has been given only to fools. I will not, therefore, dare offer a prophecy about the future of kibbutzim. Nevertheless, there exist few facts that allow for reasonable speculations about that future.

First, there are the kibbutzim that are still intentionally "traditional" in their social structure. These kibbutzim have organized themselves in a "sub" movement, called the "communal stream". Most of these kibbutzim are relatively well off economically. True, there exist not too many of these kibbutzim (about three dozen). But, if we remember that the kibbutz movement started with one kibbutz (in 1909) and with one dozen individuals

– everything is possible. Yet, the probability of a rebirth of a larger kibbutz movement out of this small number of kibbutzim, hangs on their young members’ commitment to kibbutz ideology. Such commitment, unfortunately, does not show at the moment. Thus the possibility of a rebirth is there but the probability of its realization is not very strong. Second, for the last decade we are witnessing a rebirth of a real ideological movement composed of young individuals past their military service (aged 22-35; most are past kibbutz-born of existing kibbutzim). These youngsters are graduates of the kibbutz affiliated youth movements; they live in (mostly) city communes of ten to twenty individuals each; call themselves “The educators Movement”; are very committed to kibbutz traditional ideology, and see their mission as educators in Israel and as a force to change society by education and political action. The “Educators Movement” consists now of about two thousand individuals. The problem with this movement is that while they oppose the notion of joining existing kibbutzim, they lack the means for economic survival on their own. Thus, the “educators” are ideologically fired up while the kibbutzim in the communal stream are strong economically but their young members lack strong commitment to kibbutz ideology. Therefore, in my view, none of these two movements has a potential for a sustainable future by itself. Only voluntary fusion of the two is the real chance for revival of the kibbutz ideas in concrete expressions of communal settlements. Will this be accomplished? As said, probability is not very high, but the possibility is there.

Lessons from the story of kibbutzim as Real Utopias.

- a. The kibbutz history thus far teaches that an approximation to the existence of Real Utopias is possible and we should never give up on the possibility of their appearance as actual human societies. Yet, such real utopia does not survive by itself. It needs constant “maintenance” first and foremost of its members’ ideological commitment.
- b. Ideological commitment of members to kibbutz central values, which I also defined as expressing the characteristics of Utopian communities, does not develop in individuals by itself. It does not transfer automatically from a previous generation unto their sons and daughters. It also does not take root in young people’s mind by sheer exposure to the life of such community. The internalization of these values is an

intellectual effort that cannot be overlooked. Such communities must constantly nourish the intellectual/cognitive base of ideological commitment.

- c. There remains the question of “why is it at all important for society at large to learn about utopian communities such as the kibbutzim?” Are they not so small in numbers that makes them totally insignificant and irrelevant for society at large? I suggest that such utopian communities should serve as models for what is possible for humanity. We could look at them like the way the business world views the most successful businesses. While most businesses will not reach that success level, they serve as models to aspire to. Similar is the notion of “successful aging” which describes the most successful aging experience. While most aged individuals in their real life are not close to the characteristics of successful aging, it still offers a model to aspire to. It is true that only a minority of human entities can follow all the principles of conduct of kibbutzim (even in Israel kibbutz population forms a very small minority), but many of kibbutz principles of conduct might be implemented within society at large without necessarily having to implement all of them together. For instance, society could learn from kibbutzim the importance of continued work of the aged with constant adaptation of their work to their changing abilities and needs. Another example, principles of management used by kibbutzim (in the past) could be emulated, at least in part, by other sections of society to the benefit of all. Kibbutz (traditional) educational system is another example worth emulation.
- d. Even if the kibbutz idea dies eventually, its lessons over a full one hundred years of its existence are worth learning.
- e. Finally, it is possible, given the kibbutz recent history, that one should not expect it to survive with the same families for more than two generations or at most three generations. Perhaps the kibbutz real utopia always has to be started anew with fresh founders. Perhaps this is what is happening with the “Educators’ Movement” – a fresh start!

References

-
- Barkai, H. (1977). *Growth Patterns of the Kibbutz Economy*. Amsterdam:North Holland
- Bartolke, K., Eschweiler, W., Flechsenberg., D., Palgi, M., Rosner, M. (1985).
Participation and Control. Spardof, Germany: Verlag Rene F. Wilfer
- Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel) *Annual Reports (selected years)*. Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics (Hebrew)
- Cohen, E. (1966). Progress and communality: Value dilemmas in the collective movement. *International Review of Community Development*, 15-16, 3-18.
- Don, Y. (1988). *Industrialization of Rural Collectives*. Aldershot: Gower Publishing Group.
- Gluck, Y. (1998) Individual needs and public distribution in the kibbutz, in Leviatan, U., Oliver, H. and J. Quarter, (1998) *Crisis in the Israeli Kibbutz: Meeting the Challenge of Changing Times*, Praeger Publishers, 119-130.
- Harel, Y. 1993. *The New Kibbutz*. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House (Hebrew)
- Kibbutz Artzi, (1973),*Kibbutz By-Laws* (Hebrew)
- Kibbutz Artzi (1976). Council resolution about industrial activity in Leviatan, U. and M. Rosner, (Eds.) (1980) *Work and Organization in Kibbutz Industry*, Norwood Editions, Derby, PA. 170-181
- Leviatan, U. (1978). Organizational Effects of Managerial Turnover in Kibbutz Production Branches. *Human Relations*, 31 (1), 1001- 1018.
- Leviatan, U. (1982). Higher Education in the Israeli Kibbutz: Revolution and Effect. *Interchange*13(1), 68-82.
- Leviatan, U. (1982).Counterbalancing the Ill Effect of Hierarchy--The Case of the Kibbutz Industrial Organization, *J. of Social and Biological Structures*, 5(2), 141-159.
- Leviatan, U. (1994). Leadership functioning in kibbutzim as determinant of conditions for members' commitment, *J. of Rural Cooperatives*, 22(1-2), 94-111.
- Leviatan, U. (1998). Second and Third Generations in -- Is the Survival of the Kibbutz Threatened? in Leviatan, U., Oliver, H. and J. Quarter (1998) *Crisis in the Israeli Kibbutz: Meeting the Challenge of Changing Times*, Praeger Publishers, 81-96.
- Leviatan, U. (1999). Contribution of social arrangements to the attainment of successful aging -- the experience of the Israeli kibbutz, *Journal of Gerontology: PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES* 1999, 54b, 205-213
- Leviatan, U. (2001). *Causal Relationship of Structural Changes in Kibbutzim with economic, Demographic and Social Outcomes, A longitudinal Study for the Years 1990-1999*, Ministry of Agriculture, Planning Authority. (Hebrew).
- Leviatan, U. (2003),*Is it the End of Utopia? The Israeli Kibbutz at the Twenty-First Century*. Center for Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan.
- Leviatan, U. (2003). Leadership, P-E Fit, and organizational commitment – a causal flow: The case of Israeli Kibbutzim, In Eckardstein, D. V. & Ridder, H-G. (Eds.) , *Pesonalmanagement in Non Profit Organisationen*, 141-162.
- Leviatan U. (2006). Importance of values in determining organizational commitment of kibbutz member to their kibbutz, *Social Issues in Israel*, 1, 128-151(Hebrew).
- Leviatan, U, & Adar, G. (2007). *Socio-Economic Inequality in Kibbutzim and Its Effect on Members' Health* , The Institute For Research Of The Kibbutz And The
-

 Cooperative Idea.

- Leviatan, U., Am-Ad, A., and Adar, G., (1981) Aging in the Kibbutz: Satisfaction with Life and its Determinants, *Hakibbutz*, 8, 16-60 (Hebrew).
- Leviatan, U. and Cohen, J., Gender Differences in Life Expectancy among Kibbutz Members, *Social Science and Medicine*, 1985, 21(5); 545-51.
- Leviatan, U., H. Oliver and J. Quarter (1998) Introduction: The Kibbutz in Crisis, in Leviatan, U., Oliver, H. and J. Quarter, (1998) *Crisis in the Israeli Kibbutz: Meeting the Challenge of Changing Times*, Praeger Publishers, I-XVII.
- Leviatan, U., Oliver, H. and J. Quarter (1998) *Crisis in the Israeli Kibbutz: Meeting the Challenge of Changing Times*, Praeger Publishers.
- Leviatan, U. and M. Rosner, (1980) *Work and Organization in Kibbutz Industry*, Norwood Editions, Derby, PA.
- Leviatan, U. & Rosner, M (2001). *Belief in Values and the Future of Kibbutzim*, Institute for Social Research of the Kibbutz, 174 (Hebrew).
- Palgi, M. (1994). Attitudes toward suggested changes in the kibbutz as predicted by perceived economic and ideological crisis. *Journal of Rural Cooperation*. 22(1-2): 94-113
- Palgi, M. (1998). Organization in kibbutz industry, in Leviatan, U., Oliver, H. and J. Quarter, (1998) *Crisis in the Israeli Kibbutz: Meeting the Challenge of Changing Times*, Praeger Publishers, 41-56
- Palgi, M. & E. Orchan, (2011). Annual survey of kibbutz members, Institute for Social Research of the Kibbutz, 196, (Hebrew).
- Palgi, M. & S. Reinhartz, (2011). *One hundred years of kibbutz life*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick
- Pavin, A.(1998). The governmental system of the kibbutz, in Leviatan, U., Oliver, H. and J. Quarter, (1998) *Crisis in the Israeli Kibbutz: Meeting the Challenge of Changing Times*, Praeger Publishers, 97-110.
- Rachmani, M. (2007) Different patterns of contributors to organizational commitment in the kibbutz population as a function of different conditions of socioeconomic inequality. M.A. Thesis , Dept. of Sociology, University of Haifa (Hebrew).
- Rosner, M. (1971). *Hierarchy and democracy in kibbutz industry*, Institute for social Research of the Kibbutz, Givat Haviva (Hebrew)
- Rosner, M. (1998). Work in the kibbutz, in Leviatan, U., Oliver, H. and J. Quarter, (1998) *Crisis in the Israeli Kibbutz: Meeting the Challenge of Changing Times*, Praeger Publishers, 27-40.
- Rosner, M., Ben-David, J., Ovnat, A., Cohen, N., Leviatan, U. (1990). *The Second Generation - The Kibbutz Between Continuity and Change*. New York: Greenwood Press
- Rosner, M., Getz, S. (1994). Towards a theory of changes in the kibbutz. *Journal of Rural Cooperation*. 22(1-2): 41-62
- Rosolio, D. (1999). The system and the crisis: Crises, settlements, and changes in kibbutz movement, Am-Oved, (Hebrew)
- Talmi, M. (1993). *Mishmar HaEmek during the eighties*, Mishmar HaEmek Edition (Hebrew)
- Tannenbaum, A., Rosner, M., Kavic, B., Vianello, M., Weiser, G. (1974). *Hierarchy in*
-

Organization. San-Francisco: Jossey Bass

Vallier, Y. (1962). Structural differentiation, production imperatives and communal norms. *Social Forces*. 40: 234-242

Weber, U. (1992). *Innovate – the kibbutz confronting its future*, HaKibbutz HaMeuchad (Hebrew).
