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CHARACTERISTICS OF A PRIMORDIAL SOCIETY IN MODERN AND POSTMODERN COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

A traditional Kibbutz constituted an ideological society that strove to fulfil all its members' aspects of life. The commitment this society created, whether at an organization level to its members or members' total devotion to the organization, resembled commitment existing in families especially in traditional primordial communities throughout human history.

The research took place at a Kibbutz that until 2000 was a traditional Kibbutz, and following a social and economic crisis was forced to become a renewed Kibbutz. The sharp transition from a homogenous and ideological society to a renewed Kibbutz emphasized the differences between modern communities, with an emphasis on an ideological community such as a traditional Kibbutz and postmodern communities characterized by many ideologies and the ability of its members to live in a state of conflict. In fact, lives in conflict constitute a type of consensus in today's life. The research is based on views about communities in general and in views dealing with communities in modern and postmodern eras and their characteristics. The discussion focuses in Communitarianism and Post-Communitarianism approaches and the connection to primordial communities.

The article is based on narrative research and the case study strategy conducted in a Kibbutz where the author is a member.

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Keywords: Kibbutz, Renewed Kibbutz, Traditional Communities, Modern Communities, Postmodern Communities.

1. Introduction

This research addressed the issue of constructing a new identity in a Kibbutz that is constantly changing, and has undergone an enormous change in the last 25 years, the situation called for a discussion. Changes had to do with the central role Kibbutzim have played in Israeli society, and were largely political and economic pertaining to Kibbutz values as well as ethical aspects of Kibbutz communities as an ideological structure.

The new circumstances called for a rapid response on the part of Kibbutzim, which needed to adapt their activities to the new reality, establish a new and form economic base so as to survive and develop. Then, it was found that there was a clash between the conditions required to lead the Kibbutz to economic growth and the basic principles on which the Kibbutz was founded.

The aim of the article is to show characteristics of traditional and primordial communities within modern and post-modern communities.

To focus the research and the collected information, the study relied on the following measures: (1) a qualitative research paradigm Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2001; Yosifon, 2001; (2) a narrative approach (Lieblich, 2006; Josselson, 2015); (3) case study strategy (Yin, 2014).

Interviews were conducted with 28 Kibbutz members and residents. In the interviews, participants were invited to tell about their personal experiences in their life at the Kibbutz.

For the sake of research transparency, and avoiding bias, it should be noted that the author is both a researcher and has been a member Kibbutz of the researched Kibbutz since 1977. Thus, she has been closely familiar with the research population for many years. This is of significance, because in many ways, Kibbutz relationships resemble those in a family.

2. The Importance of this Research and Gap in Knowledge

Social and economic crises led to the need for Kibbutzim to introduce radical changes to their ideological attitudes, thus making a transition to an individualized society, whereby each individual is responsible for his/her family and livelihood in all of life's areas, after years of a lifestyle that focused on caring for all members' lives.

Despite the changes undergone at the Kibbutz, and although common interests between members of renewed Kibbutzim are not acknowledged, the sense of commitment and family felt by Kibbutz members towards one another are still emphasized and the way in which residents in general view their lives in a community. The alienation of the post-modern world and despite the fact the individualism and personal interests dictate individuals' decision-making, the search for belonging and commitment makes people want to live in a community. The importance of this research is in understanding tensions that exist between individualism and prominence of each individual's uniqueness, life in a community requires partnership in varied aspects of life. It appears that there is a contradiction between these two concepts.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Historic and Ideology Kibbutz Perspective

Two basic axes have accompanied Kibbutz history and research. The first axis ranges between the approach explaining the "birth" of Kibbutzim and their development as a reflection of an ideology and the second regards the establishment of Kibbutzim and their development to be an outcome of historical circumstances, a response to national needs and difficulties emerging from circumstances of time and place. The poles of the second are on the one hand a Kibbutz being based on a communal lifestyle, a unique human and social existence that has its own values, a life form whose very existence is a goal and destination; on the other hand - a Kibbutz being a means of realizing national and social goals (Halamish & Tzameret, 2010)

A crisis at the end of the 1980's yielded demands for changes in Kibbutz structure and the relationship between the Kibbutz as a corporation and its members, in the attempt to increase individuals' rights of property within the collective. As a result, Kibbutzim had to fight for their survival on two main fronts: on the one hand the need to rehabilitate their economic infrastructure and adjust it to the new reality, and on the other hand, the need to guarantee the continued existence of the Kibbutz as a sustainable community system (Lapidot, Apelbaum & Yehudai, 2006). Accelerated processes of structural change in different domains would lead to the loss of Kibbutz identity as a unique way of life.

In the attempt to survive, Kibbutzim had to respond quickly to the changes and adjust their lives and conduct to the new reality, firstly in the economic filed, to ensure a firm economic base, as without one they would soon cease to exist. Soon Kibbutzim realized the clash between the conditions necessary for them to grow economically and the basic principles of Kibbutz life.

The Kibbutz Movement started implementing formal decisions pertaining to structural changes, and encountered some legal hurdles that required solutions. Far-reaching changes were introduced, and yet, despite conflict with Kibbutz principles, many Kibbutzim wished to continue being classified as such, maintaining they continued to protect the tenets of Kibbutz ethos, and that these changes reinforced them and guaranteed their continued existence.

Kibbutzim had to come up with legal solutions that would meet the changing needs of both corporation and members, and negotiate with government to get its approval for this change. Discussions were held leading to law revisions and regulations that were congruent with the new circumstances. A committee was set up in 2002 to examine possibilities, including updating legal definitions incorporating relationships between the Kibbutzim and its individual members, thus providing legal justification for the changes, as well as examining legal definitions, the issue of registration of rights to apartments in the names of members and more (Lapidot, Apelbaum & Yehudai, 2006).

The committee's main recommendation emphasized a change in the definition of a Kibbutz to include two possible Kibbutz types: "A communal Kibbutz" - a cooperative society that is a separate settlement, organized on the basis of collective ownership of assets, self-employment, and equality and cooperation in production, consumption and education.

A "Renewed Kibbutz" - maintains mutual guarantee among its members, and whose articles of association include some or all of the following: (1) Relative wages according to individual contribution or seniority; (2) Allocation of apartments; (3) Allocation of production means to its members, excluding land,

water and production quotas, provided that the cooperative society maintains control over the means of production and that its articles of association restrict the negotiability of allocated production means. (Manor, 2004).

The latter included Kibbutzim that included one or more of the following components in their lifestyle: differential remuneration, registering apartments and other property in the members' names. A "renewed Kibbutz" would remain a Kibbutz only if it met the set definitions, and in particular, if it retained a certain level of mutual responsibility, a "safety net" and institutionalized care for the needy members (Ben Rafael, 2002).

The researched Kibbutz resolved this issue in a relatively easy manner, with great respect and commitment to Kibbutz founders and pensioners and to the population in need of a "safety net" in its day-today life.

The communities that chose to move away from the conventional collective project became more like Faust-Syndrome (Goethe, 1988), which means willingness to "sell their soul" in exchange for renewed life - willingness to give up key aspects of the collective idea to get renewal, prosperity and power (Ben-Rafael, 2011). This situation led Kibbutzim, mostly weaker ones, to a crossroads where principles and values that were the pillars of the Kibbutz became unstable, and members had to reconsider the nature of each Kibbutz as both an independent community and an entity belonging to a uniquely defined ideological stream.

These change processes primarily reflected changes of the second order (Harel, 1993; Regev, 1996), meaning radical changes that express reinterpretation of a situation, which leads to original solutions that are often surprising and paradoxical, and do not express "more of the same" (Watzlawick et al., 1979; Bartunke & Moch, 1987).

Sociologists have emphasized that drastic changes in themselves do not constitute creation of an "empty slate" or construction of a new social order. A change may express continuity or lack thereof with regard to previously existing patterns (Eisenstadt, 1985). It is important to note Simmel's (1964) distinction between changes in a social system and changes of the system. This distinction draws a line between changes related to normative organizational aspects only and changes related to fundamental values as well.

According to the structuralist perspective as expressed by Levi-Strauss, 1958; Dumont, 1966), this issue calls for an examination whether we are dealing with a profound change that pertains to substantial cultural codes, or only change that pertains to surface organizational patterns or normative arrangements. Nevertheless, Weber (1992) emphasized that even when it comes to a genuine revolution, which shatters rules and regulations that have existed for years, there is a need to examine whether it emphasizes issues and perspectives that had existed in the pre-revolution social and cultural reality, meaning, can a new Kibbutz still be called a "Kibbutz"?

In social practice, dismantling and constructing are two aspects that constitute one whole, to which we refer as "collective reconstruction" (Ben-Rafael & Topel, 2009). This cluster of processes focuses on connecting subjective perceptions and behaviors that reflect them, and creating new facts from erasing or ignoring old ones. This concept is inspired by Bourdieu's concept "Habitus" (Bourdieu, 1987), which points to players' affinity to their social environment and their participation in its design, or the "program" as it is designed and realized in the Kibbutz sector.

Toffel (1995) and Palgi (2007) noted three major changes that have taken place in Kibbutzim:

Privatization, meaning reducing the collective's responsibility to its members' well-being and expanding members' and families' personal responsibility for managing their lives, including responsibility for making a living and consuming and paying for services.

3.2. Communitarianism and Post-Communitarianism approaches

Two leading concepts that help understand the differences these two approaches are: Gemeinschaft - community and Gesellschaft - society.

Gemeinschaft (community) is characterized by primary relationships: most members know one another and have close relationships. Connections between individuals are continuing and well-founded with an overall and comprehensive relationship among group members. Over time, mutual commitments and high levels of solidarity develop among members. Tonnies (1963) pointed out that community, unlike society, is a framework that enables individuals to develop intimate relationships, commitments and loyalty to a narrow stable social construct.

Gesellschaft (society) are essentially secondary unions created in order to reach a defined goal. Relationships among group members are specific, and intended to reach a goal for which they had come together. Relationships in this framework have an individualistic, not group or community orientation.

According to Tonnies (ibid), these types of union comprise expression of an individual's different desires:

Essential natural will - characterizes essential nature of people and includes their relationships with primary goals and original needs; this is will that refers to commitment and intrapersonal behaviors. This desire suits community social unity - gemeinschaft (Tonnies, 1963). This union characterizes traditional, primordial groups to which people have belonged from birth to death throughout history. This union also characterizes ideological communities such as traditional Kibbutzim with a hegemonic and homogeneous structure.

Buber's (1947) definition is more extensive as he argued that in contrast to a collective, gesellschaft, where individuals work side by side, a community, gemeinschaft is a group of friends - a life union - in which individuals are directed to one another. This group of friends is a life union, where people who belong to it, are committed to it with all their being, a union of essential life, not just parts of it, not just spirit or emotion, but things that require and verify body and soul. Hence, such full circles of friends are that, which are based on four components: common land, common work, common lifestyle, and common belief.

Traditional Kibbutzim meet these four aforementioned conditions. Traditional Kibbutzim, unlike renewed Kibbutzim, had ideological homogeneity and all life issues were shared. Gemeinschaft, community life was an eminent part of Kibbutz life and any deviation from an agreed lifestyle, required unique consideration at members' gatherings.

Arbitrary free will refers to our free will that arbitrarily chooses goals and strives to reach them consciously and purposefully. Unions of broad organizational structures suit this type of will - gesellschaft. This type of union suits postmodernist life, where social unions do not derive from traditional, tribal, religious, native belonging, but from people's rational choice to belong to a group or idea of some kind. These terms were intended to describe the uniqueness of types of organizations of social life in the modern

era (Tonnies, 1963). Using them is in line with orientations of enlightenment that place clear boundaries between modern and traditional and see modernity as a huge advancement compared to what preceded it.

According to Etzioni (1995), at the center of the communitarian approach, stands the challenge to construct a community with moral measures that reflect the basic human needs of all its members as social creatures. Members realize collective and human values of reciprocity and solidarity. Community members participate together in discussions and decision-making processes, share practices through which they define the community and are supported by it. Realizing this ability is expressed in a community's transition into a community of memory. A community of memory is characterized by public discourse of behavioral norms whose goal is the continued strengthening of the narrative story that molds the group (Bellah et al., 1985). Existence of a designer narrative comprises an important mechanism to guarantee a community's stability and has meaning beyond its members' life cycles.

The communitarian approach is similar to that of traditional Kibbutzim - a community with a unified social and moral infrastructure. Individuals are part of a community and have a right to influence community life and decision-making processes, in the case of a Kibbutz, through general assemblies. Kibbutz members have a shared narrative and any change is decided upon as a participative democracy in a general assembly.

Post-communitarianism strives to integrate social unity and openness, which enables to cope with anxieties stemming from closing communities geographically or biologically. The post-communitarian approach requires openness. An open community with impregnable borders provides space for individuals to form united communities of choice and allows for the development of specific relationships between group members, so as to reach the goals that caused them to unite to begin with. Relationships in this framework are individual rather than group oriented, and are characterized by a profound lack of trust. Gemeinschaft or communities of circumstances are characterized by deep trust, based on monolithic links between homogeneous groups. In an open community, there is a balance between trust through thick and thin (Smith, 2004).

On the Kibbutz where the research was conducted, a tension exists as a result of building two types of new collective identities:

The changes that the Kibbutz movement has undergone generally and the one at which the research was carried out in particular, changed the Kibbutz's core. As Ben-Rafael and Topel (2009) pointed out, community property, alongside mutual guarantees and quality of life represent "updated" Kibbutzim ideologically, versus sharing and equality in traditional Kibbutzim. This situation requires redefinition of communitarian and collective identity in renewed Kibbutzim.

Both perspectives presented in this chapter represent individuals' and groups' lives together. Communitarianism places the community - with unified values and common practices - at the center, in contrast to the post communitarian approach, which places society, characterized by individual and unique groups, in the center, managing in an atmosphere of conflict, differences and ongoing dialogue around them.

4. Findings

4.1. Community as family

When describing the role of community, members use the concept of family: "*Community in my opinion is a nest like a bird's nest, it is something that embraces you, it embraces and envelops you. It envelops and provides a sense of belonging to a wider **family**. Mainly, in today's world when our wider **families** have broken down and my parents live far away, and grandparents in general live far away, that type of breakdown. There is community maintenance that supports, guards and provides many people with what they need when the ask for it, they ask within the community*." "*Common desire that means the desire of a great many people, a great many people wanted this extended **family**, and thus it turned into an extended **family**.*"

And another interviewee: "*Like the possibility of finding a communal life as an adult that interests him and adds to my life. I think we would have gotten divorced if we weren't living a communal life, it's like a completion of the family unit, if one goes in the direction of husband and children…then a community that envelops you, helps you, opens the door to you and there's someone to help you, to absorb you*".

Personal relationships towards members remain prominent as do interpersonal relationships between Kibbutz members and are even defined as a local tradition. Attitudes toward the Kibbutz remain as to home and primordial family. "*I don't see home to be anywhere else. I cannot think of where to live, despite the fact that my children are all over the place, to go and live near my children, no. If they want this, they should come and live next to me because I think that I could help them here*." "*It belongs to home. I care about what happens on the Kibbutz.*" Members view HK as a sort of family. Not only a place to which they belong, but a place that helps them when needed. The Kibbutz, despite being a renewed Kibbutz, continues to care for its members, when needed. The commitment value remains in the background, especially for people, who after the change require social and economic assistance.

Despite their being individualistic Kibbutz members, as a consequence of the transition to personal responsibility for livelihood and all other life aspects, (in the past, cared for by traditional Kibbutzim), interviewed Kibbutz members noted reciprocity and good interpersonal relations between Kibbutz members: "*And there is also reciprocal help. When I know it is here because I work with the management. We help people who need financial help. The Kibbutz helps. This doesn't happen anywhere else. I know. I always said, this is a warm home. When people are in trouble, everyone helps ... but I think that is a characteristic of HK. Any member who encounters troubles, will not remain alone*." "*And the true tradition of the Kibbutz will remain and it doesn't matter ... and regarding tradition I am talking about ... first and foremost about interpersonal relations that have always characterized Kibbutz HK. That the community here is a relatively warm and pleasant community, and not estranged, and not like so many other Kibbutzim, who run to the outside world with every little peep. Here, we take care of resolving matters relatively pleasantly, and to keep in inside, in the best meaning of the word, not its bad meaning*."

This finding shows that community has the role of family. The community provides its group members with protection, belonging and fills the place of family on a daily basis. It is expressed in interpersonal relations between members and reciprocal concern. It constitutes a local tradition that has been assimilated over years.

A community of individuals - heterogenic community

"*I feel that this community, that is made up of a collection of **individuals**. ...there are those in the community with whom the differences between them and me is much greater than between me and others who let's say, maybe from the Kibbutz or ... from GH (*another community neighborhood on the Kibbutz*). As if, that means that people from whom I am distanced in so many things. And still I feel that this, that this desire to ... as if to succeed in meeting, meeting one another, to speak in a manner that others listen. Not that there is one who tells others what to do, and they don't try to make everyone the same. This place allows me to feel, to feel a part of, or a type of closeness to these people. Even if, as if maybe in our thoughts or world view, we could live very far away. And I feel this less with people from other communities at the settlement*." And another interviewee: "*This **perception that everyone has a place** and has a ..., there is place for their uniqueness. Of course, one must pay attention that it doesn't harm others*." "***And in general I think that what constitutes the nucleus that came here, is people, very, very individualistic families***." "***Me in my home, and when it is suitable I and...it was always clearly accepted** as if this place of, this is what everyone wants, both the privacy and... today my life, our life is here, hugely based on friends*."

Summarizing this finding - Sometimes there is no ideological proximity between people. What is common to them is their search for a community life that contributes to personal development.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The findings support the literature relating to modern communities characterized by creating a connection between: (1) Realizing the needs of individuals and their social commitment. (2) Individuals' freedom and their responsibility to the collective (Frazer & Lacey, 1993; Scott, 1995). (3) Connection between community's needs and subjective needs of individuals. (4) Power of community to protect individuals and prevent them from being lonely.

Consequently, collective identity in a postmodern community is similar to primordial-traditional membership, the needs of individuals and the needs of community constitute a whole.

The renewed Kibbutz is a collection of individuals, sometimes without any ideological proximity between them. What is common to them is their search for a community life that contributes to their personal development. This union suits postmodern life, which does not derive from traditional, innate tribal and religious belonging, but a rational choice to belong to a group or idea. People's free will to choose their aims and strive to realize them consciously and intentionally, stands at the base of postmodern perception (Anderson, 1991; Tonnies, 1963).

This finding supports the literature clarifying that community is more than a union, but a unit in which individuals are members. Membership is neither artificial nor instrumental, but constitutes an essential value in itself (Borgmann, 1992). Basic collective identity is built on values and attitudes towards the collective, which were formulated as a consequence of unique historical, cultural experience. It is likely to survive in the collective even beyond the time frame in which its founders lived (Ben Rafael & Ben Haim, 2006, Levi-Strauss, 1958).

Although the Kibbutz underwent fundamental changes to its social values, and its lifestyle, Kibbutz members feel a sense of belonging, family relationships and mutual commitment. Consequently, collective

identity is based on community members' relationships and maintaining links, and on the basis of shared experiences in the past, which survive time, crises and changes.

Both the traditional and renewed Kibbutz belong to modern communities. The traditional Kibbutz has a combination of characteristics of a traditional society (totality, homogeny, holistic), and the renewed Kibbutz has characteristics of a modern community, but is has no unique definition of community identity linked to a common vision.

From the discussion of findings, one can conclude that collective identity is forged by a place's past and a sense of pride in it. The meaningful feeling deriving from social doing and influence, conducting day to day life cooperatively and managing a unique local educational system, guarantees a community's continuity and deepens the collective identity of its members. Common experiences from the past maintain connections that survive time, crisis and change, but do not maintain members' common interest without ideological re-clarification, which must consider new and different needs of members.

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