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Structural Equality - The Case of the Kibbutz

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STRUCTURAL EQUALITY - THE CASE
OF THE KIBBUTZ (1)

The Israeli Kibbutz is often referred to in sociological literature as the best approximation of total equality (Tumin 1967), while others like Treiman (1977) following Rosenfeld, (1951) perceive in the developments which have occurred in the Kibbutzim an evidence of the unavoidability of social stratification.

We shall try to examine on the basis of the large quantity of material that has accumulated in research on the kibbutz whether it is possible to reach a firm conclusion on this question. However, we must first clarify the definitions of equality which we shall use in our discussions and the various meanings and interpretations this concept has born, during the different stages of the kibbutz movement's development since its establishment 76 years ago (in 1910).

A wealth of philosophical and sociological literature has dealt with the concept of equality and many definitions have been proposed. It seems to us that our point of departure should be two basic distinctions:

(1) *KIBBUTZ* - a communal rural community in Israel, founded on all-embracing communality of production and consumption (including the education of children). In Israel there are about 260 kibbutzim (plural of «Kibbutz») organized (until October 1979) in four kibbutz federations (Ichud, Artzi, Meuchad, Dati) with a population of nearly 115,000. (For more detailed information, see: S. Shur. *Kibbutz Bibliography*, 1972; and supplements of 1975, 1976 and 1978; Y. Talmon. *Family and Community in the Kibbutz*, Cambridge, Mass; Harvard Univ. Press, 1972; Barkai. *Growth Pattern of the Kibbutz Economy*. Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Comp. 1977, etc.).

A. The distinction between the *equality of opportunity* which refers to the possibility to reach positions whose rewards are different, and *equality of outcome* which refers to the manner in which the rewards themselves are distributed (Jencks, C. 1972; Coleman, J. 1974). B. The distinction between two basic forms of outcome equality that was made by Aristotle: 1) *numeric equality*, in which each member of society has the same rights to receive rewards and 2) *proportionate equality*, in which the rights are relative (rights in accordance to their deserts) to certain criteria (according to E. Barker, 1948).

Various investigators have tried to categorize the criteria of proportionate equality. The most suitable categories for our needs seem to be those suggested by Allardt (1968) after Runciman (1966) which distinguishes between equality by need, equality by social contribution and equality by merit. It seems to us that the criterion of equality by merit does not basically differ from the various versions of the principle of equity which stated that justice exists where there is a relationship between the effort invested in a given act and the reward one gets for the investment.

Even though the «Functionalistic» approach (Davis & Moore, 1948) has a different point of departure than the «equity» approach both share the assumption of a relationship between input and outcome. According to both conceptions the reward/outcome is contingent on a certain input by the person and the quantity of the reward are relative to the quantity of the input. In the equity version, the input is an investment of the actor.

However, the investigators differ on the definition of the concept of investment. Those who would limit the definition speak of a specific effort in the present, while those who would broaden the definition include past investment such as studies and job seniority. There are those who even include ascriptive qualities such as age, sex, origin etc. On the other hand, according to the functionalistic approach, the quantity and quality of the rewards are contingent on the importance of the action or function which the person performs in achieving

the goals of the organization or society which is distributing the rewards.

The criterion of equality by need does not contain a relationship between input and outcome/reward. The distribution of rewards is unrelated to the person's investment in performing an act or to the importance of his contribution to society. In other words, when there is an input-outcome relationship, the criterion of distribution is external to the process of distribution. In the case of distribution by need, the criterion is internal: The distribution of rewards is relative to the needs which are to be satisfied. The principle of numeric equality too is not external, that is, it is not dependent on input. In this case the rewards are not related to the *needs* which are to be satisfied, but to the *equal right* of the receiver of the reward. Thus, we may distinguish between the following four concepts of equality⁽²⁾.

TABLE 1

CONCEPTS OF EQUALITY

Type of Equality	Input-Outcome Relationship	
	existing	absent
1. Numeric		x
2. Proportionate: by need		x
by contribution to society	x	
by merit (equity)	x	

(2) We are aware of the fact that both the criteria of contribution to the common welfare and the criteria of merit or investment may be considered as bases for inequality. The functional theory of stratification sees in the unequal contribution the basis for stratification, while the theory of «equity» considers the difference in investment the basis for fair but unequal distribution of rewards. However, in the context of our discussion it seems preferable to use Runciman's and Allardt's conceptualization founded on the Aristotelian concept of «proportionate equality».

The Kibbutz Concept of Equality.

There is a certain difficulty in defining the concept of equality as it is understood today in the Kibbutz Movement. Unlike other collectivist movements in the world, the first Kibbutzim which were founded in the years 1910-1920 were not based upon a detailed blueprint or upon defined principles. The Kibbutzim formulated their principles of action and ways of life only after a long period of experimentation. Only when it became necessary to define the legal status of the Kibbutzim in the State of Israel, was a Kibbutz code formulated (with the participation of all the Kibbutz Movements). This code issued in the late sixties included the most complete definition of the Kibbutz concept of equality. We shall use this definition as a point of departure.

The article which opens the section on the principles of the Kibbutz states: « The Kibbutz is a free association of persons for the purposes of settlement, absorption and maintenance of a collective society organized on the principles of joint ownership of property, self labor, *equality* and cooperation in all areas of production, consumption and education ».

Here the principle of equality is mentioned in a general way. In another article (66) however, a more specific definition is given:

« The Kibbutz shall provide all the material, social and cultural needs of its members depending upon the capacity of the Kibbutz ».

« The satisfaction of these needs shall be implemented in an attempt of realizing the principle "to each-according to his needs", while maintaining the principles of communal consumption and equal rights under equal conditions ». The primary characteristic of the Kibbutz concept of equality is, therefore, the lack of contingency and the lack of relationship between input and outcome.

The second characteristic is that of proportionate equality, with needs as the basic criteria. The code does place a limitation on the distribution of rewards according to need: the economic capacity of the Kibbutz. This may be understood

to mean that in contrast to the absence of contingency on the individual level there exists some sort of contingency on the Kibbutz level, whereby the capacity of the Kibbutz to satisfy the needs of its members as a group is contingent upon the « investment » of its members as a group.

However, in addition to the principle of equality according to need, this article of the code also expresses the principle of « equal rights under equal conditions » which indicated numeric equality. Actually, throughout the entire period of the history of the Kibbutz a kind of co-existence has prevailed between these two principles in ever-changing proportions, with their common denominator being the dissociation between input and outcome on the individual level. From the beginning there existed in the Kibbutz Movement a number of basic mechanisms which protected this special concept of equality which was based on the separation between input and outcome.

What are these mechanisms and what are the underlying assumptions which formed them?

We can divide these mechanisms into 4 broad categories:

1. - *Mechanisms to assure equality in the distribution of rewards, by referring especially to material rewards, influence and esteem.*

The institutions of collective consumption were designed to assure both numeric equality and equality according to needs.

Direct democracy and rotation in offices were designed to assure an approximation of equality in the distribution of influence, excluding sharp hierarchy of authority. The Kibbutz ideology contended the equal worth of all offices and jobs. (No job should be either honorable or contemptible).

2. - *Mechanisms to avoid structural inequalities.*

Kibbutz leaders and members were aware that in spite of these mechanisms and values the fulfillment of certain roles and offices might create advantages and privileges intrinsic to the role-performance such as opportunities for self-realization

or by converting facilities needed for role-performance into rewards (3).

Several mechanisms were designed to avoid those possibilities of structural inequality.

(a) To avoid inequalities related to a hierarchical structure of organization the Kibbutz production and service units were of a small size with each member performing production or service operation and only a minimum of managerial administrative functions to be performed by the elected branch-manager.

By the same logic only a few inevitable full-time managerial functions were institutionalized in the Kibbutz community as a whole.

(b) Changes were introduced in the conventional division of occupational roles by creating new roles bridging the traditional gap between mental and physical labor.

E.g. The teacher performing together with the children physical work in the school-farm, the manager working in production etc.

(c) Various forms of social control were designed to prevent the conversion of facilities needed for role-performance into rewards. E.g. the use of a car by a branch-manager is limited to working hours. The amount of money for travel expenses is limited and equal for all types of travel by members.

(3) *Role-Structure* (organization) of the kibbutzim: the kibbutzim have two main role-spheres:

a. work-roles (in agriculture, industry, services, education and in work outside the kibbutz) which have to be fulfilled during the regular work hours:
b. voluntary public participation («political») roles (in committees, general assembly, etc.) to be fulfilled mainly after the work-hours-in leisure time. The work organization consists usually of small branches (with 5-15 workers), with the exception of the industrial plants (with 50-100 workers and more). Every branch elects its coordinator for a term of 3-4 years. In the industrial plants there are more management-roles and they have a more hierarchical organizational structure. The «political» roles are embodied in committees elected a new every year. They are led by a committee-chairman elected by the general assembly. «Full-time-jobs» are: economic coordinator, («merakez meshek»), treasurer («gizbar»), and in some kibbutzim also the secretary («mazkir»). The former are elected for a term of 2-3 years; the secretary-role usually «rotates» every year.

3. - *Mechanisms to avoid accumulation of rewards.*

Since certain inequalities in reward distribution cannot be avoided, no accumulation of such rewards should be possible. Rewards of one type cannot be converted in rewards of other type. Superior authority cannot create material privileges and people that get higher-esteem will not get by this also higher authority.

Inconvertibility should prevail also among different forms of the same type of reward. Distribution of consumption items was mainly direct and in kind to avoid the use of money as general means of exchange that can be accumulated.

4. - *Mechanisms to avoid status inheritance.*

While power, prestige and material rewards could not be accumulated and therefore not bequested, there was still the possibility of inheritance of human capital.

The institutions of collective education, by means of which children receive the type and level of education suitable to their needs and abilities without regard to the status of their parents, and the relative limited role of parents in the socialization of children, were designed to belittle also this danger for equality.

We could treat those mechanisms only analytically as there are almost no statements or documents which refer directly to this question. However, theoretical foundations of these mechanisms appear in the various streams of socialist theory. (Consider especially the negation and critique of money as general means of exchange).

It seems to us that this analysis enables a clearer understanding of the reasons for the existence on the Kibbutz of the various structural institutional arrangements geared to ensure equality.

In what manner have been the above mentioned mechanisms affected by the great changes the Kibbutz has undergone in the 70 years of its existence? What are the main processes and changes which are relevant to the functioning of these mechanisms?

Equality and Structural Changes in the Kibbutz.

(a) The growth of the Kibbutzim and their structural transformation. The first Kibbutzim consisted of small primary groups, often counting not more than twenty-thirty members.

Today about a third of the Kibbutzim have more than 300 adults members and a population of more than 600. The Kibbutzim have undergone also various stages of structural transformation (Cohen, 1976).

(b) The absorption of the younger generation which caused by itself a change in the social composition having an impact on the structure. Related to it were the growing structural importance of the nuclear family and the development of extended families.

(c) The functional differentiation in the occupational and economic structure which was caused first of all by the processes of industrialization, with the establishment of industrial plants in almost all of the Kibbutzim. This process was accompanied also by a growing « industrialization » of the agricultural branches caused by mechanization and professionalization.

(d) The rising living standard which was the result both of the economic development of the Kibbutzim (4) and of the diversification of the needs of a more heterogeneous population.

It seems to us that these changes may have affected the mechanisms in guard of Kibbutz equality in various ways.

(a) Social differentiation and the growing differentiation of needs may hinder the Kibbutz institutions to provide the needs directly and may lead to a transition to equal allocation

(4) The economic development and growth of the kibbutzim also finds its expression in the fact that they have a disproportionately greater part in the agricultural and industrial production in Israel — relatively to their rate in the population. While the population of the kibbutzim contribute only 3.3% of the Jewish population of Israel, they produce about 40 p.c. of the whole agricultural production, about 6 p.c. of the industrial production and about 11 p.c. of the G.N.P.

of money so that not criteria to define individual needs are necessary. This might introduce convertability and create opportunities for accumulation.

(b) The complexity of the economic system and the differences in the levels of knowledge needed to fill different jobs may strengthen, if not counterbalanced, trends towards hierarchization of the occupational system and therefore to « structural inequality » in authority and related developments.

(c) The growing importance of the family might create possibilities of « human capital » inheritance.

(d) The transition from a micro-sociological system, in which the decisive factor is interpersonal relationships, to a macro-sociological system based on institutionalization and formalization, may lead to the development of criteria linking input and outcome such as « equity » and functional contribution. While the differences between individuals in investment and in needs are generally clear in a macro system because of the social system's high visibility, it is not so in a micro system. It might be therefore conducive to institutionalize the reward system. The rewards could then crystallize into resources and bases of status, and groups with similar status could become social strata or social classes.

Are there signs of these tendencies in the Kibbutz? Are they relevant to all types of rewards or only to some? We shall examine 5 types of rewards which have been mentioned in various ways in discussions on equality and stratification in the Kibbutz.

1. Goods and services to satisfy material needs.
2. Emotional rewards and the feeling of belonging.
3. Esteem and prestige.
4. Influence and authority.
5. Opportunities for self-actualization.

(The typology of rewards is broadly based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs without committing ourselves to his specific theory) (Shur, 1979 b).

Types of reward and principles of distribution.

Is there a special relationship between the type of reward and the principles of distribution and have these relations changed during the evolution of the Kibbutz movement?

We will try to answer this question by discussing separately the different types of reward.

1) Material rewards: The major changes have been the transfer from egalitarian distribution of goods and services to egalitarian distribution of money and valuables and the extension of distribution by need. As long as a low standard of living prevailed and there was a high homogeneity in the social composition, the main means of consumption (clothing, shoes, furniture, etc.) were directly allocated by Kibbutz institutions. (The main meals are eaten in the common dining-room). Today in most of the Kibbutzim an « inclusive personal budget » was introduced and each individual receives an equal amount of money with which he can buy the needed merchandises according to his preferences — both through Kibbutz institutions or outside of the Kibbutz.

Usually the « inclusive budget » amounts to 25-30% of the overall Kibbutz consumption expenses. The main part of these expenses are managed by the Kibbutz institutions and distributed according to needs, or as in the case of housing, on the basis of seniority.

In the past, distribution by need was limited to a few areas such as food, healthcare and education. Of late, the rise in the standard of living, this principle has been extended to other areas. On the one hand, it applies to goods and services with low thresholds of saturation and on the other hand, to areas in which there is great differentiation in personal needs such as higher education, hobbies and other leisure activities. There is no connection between the fulfillment of occupational and managerial roles and the allocation of the material rewards. But some of the facilities allocated to office holders for the performance of their roles — such as cars, business trips abroad — might be perceived as rewards, although they are not to the free disposal of the office holder. (After the work

hours all the cars are at the disposal of the Kibbutz collective transportation service).

2) Emotional rewards and the feeling of belonging: these are less institutionalized. Personal rather than functional factors dominate in their distribution. The holding of the office may, in fact, be even contingent on social support, but the holding of office does not guarantee that such support exist. On the other hand, it seems that members who hold office feel more « at-home » even though this is a reward which should be equally divided among all kibbutz members.

3) Esteem and respect: numeric equality is dominant in the Kibbutz in regard to respect. The holding of office does not imbue a member with prestige which lasts beyond his term. There are, however, different degrees of esteem for different functions and the bases for esteem have changed in the course of time with the principles for allocation being mainly functional or normative. While in the past productive work received the highest esteem — as a result of the pioneering ideology — later on economic criteria such as profitability became more important.

Now it seems that the differentiation in esteem is more related to the knowledge needed to fulfill functions.

4) Influence: in the distribution of social influence in the Kibbutz there is always tension between the principle of approximated equality upon which direct and participatory democracy is based and the functional principle which leads to differential allocation of authority and influence. As a result, limitations have been imposed on the differential allocation of authority to role specific areas, reducing the number of levels of the hierarchy and by the rotation system. This tension has increased with the growth of the processes of professional and manager differentiation.

5) Rewards of self-actualization: These have grown in importance and their distribution is influenced by the functionalistic principle. Especially in industry those who hold higher positions (especially, professional positions) have greater possibilities for self-actualization. However, efforts are made to equalize the opportunities of those holding « lower » positions

in the hierarchy, by introducing job enlargement and enrichment and socio-technical innovations.

In addition, individual need is increasingly an important factor in the distribution of opportunities for self-development, and this is shown especially in the criteria used for sending members to study at universities and similar institutions. While in the past functional criteria based on « societal needs » were dominant, personal needs and preferences prevail now.

We see that there is a very diversified system with great flexibility which combines different types of rewards and principles of allocation, some only partly institutionalized. We arrived at this picture of the reward system through theoretical analysis based upon research data. To what degree are kibbutz members aware of it?

In a recent study (Shur 1982) interviewees were presented with four different approaches to equality (the types we have used in this article). They were asked to state which approach is prevalent in various areas in their kibbutz and which approach, according to their opinion, should be prevalent. The areas were related to four of the types of rewards discussed above, they were not asked about the affective rewards of approval and affiliation as the distribution of these are the least institutionalized. The majority (60%) claimed that there is numeric equality in material rewards in their kibbutzim. However, concerning their view of the ideal situation, equal percentages supported numeric equality and equality according to need. On the question of self-actualization, a plurality stated that the existing method of distribution is according to need (45%). This became absolute majority (53%) in support of this approach as the ideal method. In contrast, the functionalistic approach is clearly preferred for the other two types of reward: esteem and influence. That is, most favor the distribution of these rewards according to the contribution made to the achievement of the society's goals. (Esteem: 61% actual, 56% ideal; influence: 53% actual, 48% ideal).

In general, these findings correspond with our theoretical analysis. There is a clear tendency to increase the application of the principle of « according to need » in the satisfaction

of material needs and the needs of self-actualization. On the other hand, the dominance of the functionalistic principle is conspicuous in other areas. It is possible to perceive the functionalistic principle as a tendency in the direction of the equity principle, wherein those who contribute more to society are those who are more able or invest more effort than others. In any case, both the functionalistic and the equity principles deviate from one of the fundamental principles of the Kibbutz, the separation between input and outcome.

We already mentioned above the mechanisms that have been created to prevent the *accumulation* of a given reward and the possibility of exchanging surpluses for other rewards or for positions which provide privileges in reward allotment.

Is there really no possibility for accumulation?

The introduction of the « inclusive budget » system enables more convertibility than was possible in the past, but the relatively small portion of consumption expenses contained in these budgets limit to a great extent the possibility of accumulating significant economic means by the member.

Other rewards such as experience in office-holding or esteem on previous achievements can be seen as *resources* for being elected to office.

However, there is a prior question: are kibbutz members in general interested in holding office; which offices are they prepared to hold, and which not?

Role allocation, mobility and elite-formation.

Relevant to this question is the distinction between horizontal and vertical mobility. In general, there is a great horizontal mobility in the kibbutz from one occupational function to another. The transfer is easily accomplished as it does not raise problems of moving house, pension rights etc. The major limitation is the necessary professional knowledge and experience and with the growth of the processes of professionalization there has been a reduction of mobility to a certain extent. On the other hand, it seems that there is less desire in the kibbutz for vertical mobility than in other societies.

That is, there is less desire to accept jobs which are higher in the functional hierarchy. A comparative study of industrial plants showed that kibbutz members have less desire to advance to higher positions. On the other hand, more kibbutz interviewees than interviewees from other countries felt that the possibilities of mobility were open to them (Tannenbaum et al., 1974).

Other research data also reveal this unusual phenomenon of lack of desire to accept positions which are considered more « important » and which provide, as our analysis above showed, advantages in the distribution of the rewards of influence, esteem, and even the feeling of affiliation. Some of these positions, and especially those in the « higher » levels of the industrial hierarchies also have greater opportunities for self-actualization.

This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that although the holding of important positions may provide advantages in the allocation of certain positive rewards, there is also the possibility of losing other rewards.

We have already mentioned the possibility of losing approval and in fact, among the reasons given for not wishing to hold certain offices, the major one is that it will cause friction with other members. Other negative factors, in order of importance, are: too much worry, too many hours, lack of esteem, dependence on other, harm to family life. Some studies (Rosner, Avnat 1968; Rosner et al. 1978) point out the relationship between the interviewee's image of the « reward balance » involved in holding a certain position and his readiness to hold it.

The fact is that in different « élite » (e.g. managerial and leadership) positions there are more positive or more negative balances of rewards related to a series of ideological, economic and social factors that can explain differences in readiness to fulfill them. Economic leadership positions have a more positive balance than social and cultural ones. The balance of branch managers in production is more positive than that in the services. Positions in the kibbutz federations — and especially in the political and ideological fields — are less valued than the regional enterprises where kibbutz members fulfill mainly the

managerial functions and most of the production work is done by salaried workers. Those enterprises are also the most hierarchically organized: the managers have clear formal authority while the subordinates do not dispose of the « deterrent power » of kibbutz members.

It seems to us that the « negative balance of rewards » related to filling some of the central kibbutz positions is an important mechanism in ensuring the rotation of office holders and minimizing the danger of monopolization of leadership positions. Such a monopolization — following the « iron law of oligarchy » (R. Michels, 1959) — occurs frequently also in voluntary organizations, even those with egalitarian ideologies, such as cooperatives, which were at first based upon direct democracy (Meister, 1948).

In the research on the general assembly, data on rotation were collected in 13 kibbutzim of the Kibbutz Artzi with a total membership of almost 4,000. It was found that during the decade of 1966-1976, 200 people filled the four central positions in the Kibbutz: general secretary, economic coordinator, treasurer and general manager of the industrial plant. This amounts to 5% of the membership (Rosner and Cohen, 1979).

The average term of office was 2 years. Only a very small number of persons held more than one important office in the kibbutz during these 10 years. But a large number filled, before or after their office-holding in the kibbutz, similar roles outside the kibbutz — in the kibbutz federation or in the regional enterprises and organizations. The number of persons, who during the ten years filled such roles — in the kibbutz or outside — for more than 5 years, was 50 — or, in the average less than 4 per kibbutz.

In certain cases the office holder may be reluctant to return to his prior job; this can be explained as a rise in level of aspiration based on equity assumptions (Yuchtman, 1972). But according to our data a majority of the office-holders returned to physical labour. The findings of a special research conducted on the problem of rotation of managers in industrial plants and its effects — both on organizational efficiency and

personal satisfaction (Leviatan, 1978) — confirmed in general the above conclusion.

There is no evidence to show that the office-holders are recruited from special subgroups. What are the criteria for entrance into these « élite » positions? On the basis of several studies it can be established that demographic factors with the exception of sex have only a very limited impact on mobility towards these positions. The relationship with age is generally curvilinear but differs from one type of position to another. The usual life-cycle is that young members take their first responsibilities in the work branches, then they may become branch-manager. A further step of mobility in this line might be economic manager or treasurer. Many of the holders of these offices are now in their thirties. The channels of mobility for public offices in the kibbutz are different and the steps are — member of a committee, chairman of a committee and secretary of the Kibbutz.

Some of the office-holders in the kibbutzim might later be recruited for functions in the Kibbutz Federation, in regional enterprises or in political parties. Usually the holders of these positions are older than those of economic positions. Generally there are few central office-holders who are older than 60. The most intriguing variable is education. In spite of the large investments in professional training there is only small correlation between level of office and level of formal education. In a comparative study of industrial organizations performed in 1969 (Tannenbaum et al.) it was even found that the top managers of the 10 plants studied had on the average less formal education than the rank and file, contrary to the large gap in the opposite direction in all the other countries. In the meantime, more kibbutz members have had higher education but the process is still such that the members are elected to a position not on the basis of formal education. If necessary they will get specialized training after being elected and even part-time training while already serving in office.

Women are under-represented in some of the central public offices and « élite » positions of the Kibbutzim and the kibbutz movement. This under-representation is mainly in the important economic positions (economic coordinator and treasurer)

and is a result of the sex-role differentiation prevailing in the occupational area (Tiger and Shepher 1975; M. Palgi, 1980). The economic office-holders are usually elected from among experienced and successful managers of economic branches and there are almost no women in such roles. On the other hand, it is mainly women, who manage the large service branches and educational institutions. The structure of educational roles in the kibbutz makes it also more difficult to combine them with other public activities, since they are more time and energy consuming than usual work-role. Many women who otherwise could fulfill central offices cannot therefore, be elected to them or are elected only at an older age after finishing their educational careers. Data have been collected also on intergenerational mobility. Since there is no relationship between parental status and children's level of education, and as the level of education is only weakly related to elite-position, no elite intergenerational continuity has been found. However, there are some signs of intergenerational continuity based on informal processes in the choice of occupations that are not related to elite positions. The above cited data and analysis are relevant to the classical discussion on stratification and elite formation in the Kibbutz (Rosenfeld, 1951; Talmon, 1952).

Rosenfeld's attempt to distinguish between 2 distinct strata: an elite of veteran office-holders and a non elite of newcomers-cited recently by Treiman (1977) to sustain his thesis on the inevitability of stratification was already refuted by Y. Talmon-Gerber in the fifties on the basis of a large research project. She concluded: « attempts to analyse our material in terms of a division between elite and non-elite failed completely ». Our data collected 20 years later, on the eve of an intensive process of modernization and industrialization corroborated this conclusion. The danger of monopolization of leadership positions if viewed in relative terms seems therefore to have been generally avoided. But has also the opposite danger, mentioned by Davis and Moore, been prevented? What will happen if suitable people cannot be found who are willing to fill the jobs necessary for the orderly functioning of the kibbutz? Kibbutz experience does indicate that there is such a problem.

The kibbutz struggles with it and there are no clear-cut, simple solutions. The allocation of rewards cannot be fully institutionalized especially as most of the rewards are not quantifiable. Because the « image » of the rewards balance is subjective, personality and value factors in the member's perception of the various rewards are very important. These personal-subjective factors also determine the relative importance of the rewards.

The classic kibbutz solution to the question of ensuring willingness to hold office in spite of the negative reward balance was based upon ideological identification. The feeling of attachment to the kibbutz and the member's feeling of commitment toward the kibbutz were seen as balancing factors. Using A. Etzioni's (1961) terms, willingness to hold offices with negative reward balances was based upon normative compliance and not upon calculative compliance. However, what is the answer, when various developments have weakened the ideological ties upon which normative compliance was based and have strengthened the calculative factors?

To the best of our knowledge it seems that the kibbutzim are in general successful in filling important positions with the frequency needed to maintain the principle of rotation, although there are cases in which the selection process lasts for a long time as a result of refusals and appeals. But concern for this problem is expressed. Almost a third of respondents of the research on the general assembly (Rosner M. and Cohen N., 1979) are dissatisfied with the amount of activity of their fellow-members in the community and in the offices. The main reason cited by those respondents for this lack of activity is the unwillingness of members to invest their time in public activity. Are those expressions of a more general phenomenon of member's apathy?

Research data are not unequivocal regarding the readiness to fulfill public offices. The data of the second generation research (Rosner et al., 1978) show quite a high degree of willingness to participate in different areas of public activity. But most of the respondents are willing to be committees members only and the number of those expressing readiness to fill more

central offices was very limited (only 8% of the men and 1% of the women are ready to fill one of the two central full-time job positions). A high-degree of sex-role differentiation is shown as to the preferred areas of activity: men prefer economic activities (75%) and women educational one (71%), while social (60%) and cultural (50%) activities are not sex-typed. The differences in willingness between areas of activity can be explained particularly by sex-typing, the image of the prevailing balance of rewards and the degree of attachment to the kibbutz. But an additional, important factor is personal inclination. The most frequent explanation by the more active respondents was that they are more inclined towards such activities or that they can less withstand the pressures of the committee or the assembly that has nominated them to office. The ability to « withstand the pressure » might depend both on personality factors and the degree of attachment to the kibbutz while the « inclination » is probably determined both by the subjective perception of the reward-balance and the attraction or repulsion by specific positive or negative rewards.

The Kibbutz in the Class Structure of Israel.

Like the analysis of the degree of equality in the distribution of rewards within the kibbutz, the analysis of the status of the kibbutz in the stratified class structure of Israel raises special problems of concepts and definitions.

We shall not be concerned with the status of kibbutz members as individuals or the status of the individual kibbutz but with the Kibbutz Movement's collective position in the stratified hierarchy of Israel, as compared with other strata groups.

The Kibbutz Movement holds a special place in this complex stratification system. It is not part of the working class according to the usual definition which identifies workers with the class of wage earners. However, even though kibbutz members manage their collective means of production and are not hired laborers, they belong to the Histadut (which has a unique structure among the world's trade unions) and

their influence in the major worker's parties is much greater than their numbers alone justify. Kibbutz members have often hold leadership positions in these parties and have represented them in the government, the Knesset and in Histadrut institutions. The inconsistency between their « objective » status as owners of collective means of production (5) and their affiliation to the institutionalized organs of the working class deepened over the last 20 years with the increasing industrialization of the Kibbutzim and the establishment of regional organizations. The income and standard of living of the Kibbutzim increased and some of them employ hired workers in agriculture and industry. Most of the workers in the regional industries are hired while the ownership is in hands of a cooperative of Kibbutzim in the region. A subjective expression of this inconsistency is the fact that when asked to state their class affiliation kibbutz members have difficulty in answering. In one study (Rosner et al., 1978) the majority replied — in answer to an open question — that the Kibbutz Movement forms a special class. In another study, some identified themselves as « middle class » and the majority as « working class » (Antonovsky, 1968). The difficulty in class identity may also be related to the ethnic factor which has become increasingly important in Israel's class structure. Kibbutz members, the vast majority of whom Ashkenazi (of European origin), work mainly in agriculture and industry. The vast majority of those employed in these same occupations outside of the Kibbutz are of eastern origin or Arabs.

In recent years efforts have been made to increase the consistency between the objective status of the Kibbutzim and the subjective consciousness and organizational affiliation. The Kibbutzim have decreased the amount of hired labor, which was introduced in order to provide work for the masses of unemployed new immigrants; the hired workers in the regional

(5) Kibbutz collective ownership differs from cooperative ownership but resembles the Yugoslav system of « social ownership ». The individual Kibbutz member has no share or other form of property rights, and when he leaves the kibbutz he has no claim concerning « his part » out of the communal kibbutz property. However, as long as he is a kibbutz member, he has all the rights to decide in matters of management of the kibbutz and the allocation of its resources.

industries have been given participation in both management and profits; and efforts have been made to increase the contact between kibbutz members and wage earning Histadrut members in various areas. Now that the worker's parties are in parliamentary opposition for the first time in the 30 year history of the state (*), the Kibbutzim are no longer part of the ruling establishment and they have increased their activities for ideological revitalization of the worker's parties.

Since the establishment of the state there have also been significant changes in the position of the Kibbutz Movement in the hierarchy of the various dimensions of status. As we are concerned with the macro system, the 3 classic dimensions are relevant — property and income, power and prestige. There are no direct data which enable us to state the position of the kibbutzim in the hierarchy of property and income. The kibbutzim share of the national product (over 10%) is much greater than their share of the population (3.3% of the Jewish population), mainly as a result of their large agricultural production (about 40% of national production) and industrial production (about 6%). Owned capital is only a relatively small part of kibbutz property. The founders of the kibbutzim brought no property with them and anyone who joins a kibbutz becomes a « partner » without paying anything. As a result kibbutz property was accumulated by means of loans from public institutions and banks.

There are also no clear data on the place of kibbutzim in the hierarchy of income. Here too there are problems of definition. In addition, there are great differences in the property and income of different kibbutzim as a result of geographical and historical conditions (the composition of the kibbutz and the process of its social development) and as a result of economic success or failure. On the other hand, there is a much greater degree of equality in the living standards of different kibbutzim as a result of the norms which the kibbutz federations have determined. In 1968 the Lorenz index of inequality for consumption expenses among kibbutzim was much lower (.073) than the inequality index for net income (.204). The inequality index for income among kibbutzim was

(*) Neamwhile the political situation changed.

of course, much lower than among families in Israel (.379) (S. Shmueli and Y. Simhoni, 1975).

A comparison of consumption expenses between kibbutzim and families outside the kibbutz raises also problems of accounting and definition. According to Barkai (1977) the average living standard in the kibbutz at the beginning of the 70's was about 80% of the average expenditure outside the kibbutz. In terms of consumption expenses, the kibbutz was in the sixth decile. However, because consumption is collectively organized, kibbutzim possess communal consumption facilities which are not generally available to families of similar income levels in non-kibbutz settlements of the same size.

In general, both the living standards and the income of the kibbutzim have improved relatively to other groups in Israel since the establishment of the state, especially in the last two decades, since the beginning of the intensified process of industrialization.

The changes in the political status of the kibbutzim, in contrast, have had a tendency towards decline. In the early days of the state the political power of the kibbutz movements reached its zenith. They had great power in the major worker's party, Mapai, and were the main force of the second worker's party, Mapam, in which two Kibbutz movements formed the core. In the first Knesset (*) (1948) there were 26 kibbutzim members among the 120 members of the house, while in the eighth Knesset (1973) their numbers were reduced to 14. Even this number of members of Knesset was an over-representation when compared with the percentage of kibbutz members in the general population. In the elections of 1977 when the strength of the workers' parties declined and they were forced into the opposition, the number of Knesset members from kibbutzim also declined to 9. This process reflects both the relative decline of the kibbutzim as a percentage of the general population and the changes in the kibbutz movements influence within the political parties, especially in the major-workers' party. In the elections to the third Knesset in 1956 kibbutz members were 4% of the voters for Mapai and 17% of its

(*) The Israeli Parliament.

Knesset members; in 1977 they were 2.7% of the voters and 6.2% of the members of Knesset (Y. Ben-David, 1979).

However, the political power of the Kibbutz Movement is not limited only to the member of its M.P.'s and ministers. In a study of elites in Israel it was found that 22.2% of the political elite are kibbutz members (Weingrod-Gurewitsch, 1977). It seems that this special status derives from the valuation significance of membership in the kibbutz as an expression of the implementation of the ideology the various parties profess. Another factor is that kibbutz membership allows political activists greater freedom and independence because their livelihood is not dependent on politics.

The weak points in the political status of the kibbutzim is the fact that their members are usually to be found in the higher levels of party representation and organizational structure but kibbutz members do not represent the sectoral interest of most party members such as the trade unions, financial sectors, women's organizations etc. This finds expression also in the relatively low representation of kibbutz members in the country's administrative elite (4.4%).

We cannot quantitatively measure the changes in the prestige of the kibbutz. However, after the establishment of the state there was a strong feeling among kibbutz members of a decline in the centrality of the Kibbutz Movement and in the prestige it enjoyed before when it acted as a kind of vanguard for the social goals that symbolized its highest values. When the state and its apparatus took on the responsibilities of the tasks which previously kibbutz members had performed such as immigrant absorption settlement and defence of border areas, there were doubts about the future of the kibbutz movement's central role. In addition, internal divisions based on political differences contributed to the decline in prestige. Kibbutz prestige rose after the war of 1967 in which the role of kibbutz members in positions of command and in elite units was conspicuous. After the war, the kibbutz once again began to play an important role in settlement. The economic success, especially in industry also assisted. In a public opinion poll among the Israeli population taken after the defeat of the worker's parties in the 1977 elections most of those asked

replied that they thought it desirable that kibbutz influence in the Israel economy should be greater than its share of the population, and 43% thought the same concerning political influence (Leviatan, 1978). Nevertheless, notwithstanding the decline in the prestige of the kibbutz movement in comparison with the pre-state-period, it still holds a measure of « over-charisma » (Shur, 1979 a).

Generally, the position of the kibbutz on the different dimensions of status seems to be more balanced and consistent than in the past. In the past the status of the kibbutz was relatively higher in the hierarchy of prestige and partially in the hierarchy of power but relatively lower in the economic hierarchy. While there has been a relative decline in its place in the first two hierarchies — linear in political power and curvilinear in prestige — there has been a rise in its economic status. The relative balance also reflects a condition of greater stability in the status of the kibbutz in Israel's structure and its metamorphosis from a pioneer « vanguard » to a permanent way of life which provides for the needs of its members on the basis of unique collective and egalitarian principles.

The question remains to what degree the Kibbutz Movement will succeed in the future in achieving greater consistency between its status as a group which owns means of production (and is composed mainly of people of European origin and their offspring) and its aspirations to be an integral part of the working class (which is mainly composed of people of the eastern commities) with a political and ideological leadership role.

Conclusion.

It seems to us that the developments that have taken place during the 70 years of kibbutz life are very relevant to the theoretical discussion of the functional necessity of stratification (as synonymous with « structural inequality ») and to the analysis of the various principles of equality and inequality. The kibbutz experience indicates the possibility of preventing structural inequality by dissociating a person's input at work

and in public affairs from the rewards he intuitively receives from society. This dissociation is made possible in regard to material rewards by collective arrangements of consumption. The kibbutz experience at least demonstrates that a micro-society can function efficiently without relating the importance of a function (according to the functionalistic approach) or the investment (according to the equity approach) to the level of material reward.

The kibbutz experience also indicates the possibility of replacing material incentives by non-material incentives (according to Weselovski, Tumin and other critics of the functionalistic approach) and the problems involved in this « exchange ». If in a society a relative greater importance is attributed to non-material needs (which are considered « higher » both by Marx and by Maslow) then the problem of inequality in the satisfaction of these needs becomes at least as important as the problem of inequality in the satisfaction of material needs. The kibbutz attempts to deal with inequality of the opportunities for self-actualization and the authority related to the holding of various positions by means of restructuring the functions: by restricting authority, and by the system of rotation. The kibbutz experience shows that a more egalitarian distribution of these rewards is possible without causing damage to the social system and its efficiency. There is a certain price to pay, however, mainly the difficulties which arise in the process of finding candidates to hold office. The problem is not only that of finding candidates for the more important posts but there is the more general problem of coordination between the needs of society and personal preferences. The kibbutz experience indicates the possibility of solving this problem through a combination of calculative consideration (the balance of rewards) and normative consideration (the feeling of social duty and identification with the collective framework and goals).

In the common situation of a hierarchical structure of functions, those holding the highest position enjoy more privileges, more positive rewards and a more positive balance of rewards.

The number of high positions in this type of system are limited and there is competition for them. In contrast, the

kibbutz demonstrates an alternative structure. In many areas there is no defined hierarchy of functions and in areas where there are (particularly in industry) the hierarchy is relatively flat, and the fulfillment of leadership positions is based on rotation.

There may be certain non-material reward advantages in the higher position of the hierarchy but not everyone is interested in these rewards, especially in the reward of authority. In many cases, the importance of the negative rewards may balance or even outweigh the importance of the positive rewards.

In the kibbutz the concepts of mobility and achievement take a new meaning. Instead of competition for entry into a limited number of high level positions there is a general aspiration to achieve the satisfaction of higher needs. For members these are the needs for self-actualization, affiliation and affective rewards which are not necessarily related to the holding of high office or managerial position. These needs can be satisfied in a large number of work-roles, public offices and leisure activities.

The desires for achievement and advancement, therefore, are not generally expressed as a desire « to climb the ladder » of the hierarchy but as a desire to actualize and constantly develop existing personal abilities. This is accomplished by emphasis on the satisfaction which is derived from the intrinsic performance of the function itself rather than on the expectation of receiving external rewards, such as authority and prestige.

Under these conditions it does not seem that professional expertise is a cause for additional authority or for additional material advantages which could explain the universality of the hierarchy of occupational prestige, as Trieman (1977) claims. We have already mentioned that differentiation in occupational prestige, to whatever degree it exists in the kibbutz, was based in the past on functional considerations, i.e. on the contribution to the realization of collective values and goals. The present growth in the importance of professional considerations may be explained either by the importance of occupation as a mean to self-actualization or by the infiltration of the accepted stan-

dards of occupational prestige from Israeli society into the kibbutz.

Indeed, the major difficulty in drawing generalized, theoretical conclusions from the kibbutz experience stems from the fact, that this experience was not gained in the closed, controlled, experimental conditions of the laboratory. The kibbutz has always been an open system. It is a sub-system of a greater society with which it has constant reciprocal relations. This too creates the difficulty in answering the question of whether the kibbutz can be seen as a test case.

We doubt that the kibbutz can be used as a test case for the possibility of structural equality in developed macro-societies. On the other hand, the kibbutz experience certainly does not prove that structural inequality is necessarily universal. Most of the processes analysed in this paper contradict that assumption, although we have mentioned the processes and situations which indicate the strenght of the forces pushing in the opposite direction. The kibbutzim have so far dealt successfully with these forces. The high level of social consciousness and social planning have enabled the adaption of various mechanisms designed to preserve structural equality under changing conditions. There has been no weakening of the basic principle of dissociation between input and outcome in the area of material rewards, although there have been disagreements about whether various institutional changes will strenghten or weaken the application of this principle.

We believe that it is still too early to deduce from the kibbutzim experience a general model for overcoming the social forces which increase inequality. During most of the years of the Kibbutz Movement's development, the kibbutzim were small, socially homogeneous groups with a high level of ideological commitment. Under this conditions it was relatively easy to implement the norms of numerical equality in consumption. The low degree of managerial and occupational differentiation caused only small differences in outcome. Under the special conditions, which existed during the pioneering period of Israeli society, it is difficult to see the kibbutz experience as a test case.

The conditions of the contemporary period of industrialization and modernization enable greater generalization. However, we believe that the kibbutz is permanently in a period of transition. From the experience to date it seems that the kibbutzim are in a better position to successfully prevent the dangers predicted by the conflict theory of monopolization of positions of authority, formation of a permanent elite and stratification, than the dangers presented by the functionalistic approach: a decline in the motivation to fill socially necessary positions.

It is also still difficult on the basis of the kibbutz experience to answer the question of whether the dissociation between input and outcome can exist only in a communal micro-society, which is directly responsible for the satisfaction of its members' needs, or whether it can exist under other condition. Can the inheritance of human capital be limited only by inclusive collective education and limiting the influence of the family in education?

In spite of the limitation that exist on drawing generalized conclusions from the kibbutz experience, we believe that it is possible to indicate a number of points for which this experience is relevant to the efforts to increase equality in developed, industrialized countries.

(a) It is both possible and important to introduce changes in the definitions and structure of various functions in order to decrease the gap between important and less-important functions or high and low functions.

(b) It is possible to extend the pool of competent people by expanding both general education (especially adult education) and vocational training related directly to specific functions.

(c) The rise in the level of aspiration to satisfy non-material needs places increasing importance on the problem of inequality in the means to satisfy them even if there is increasing material equality.

(d) The kibbutz experience stresses therefore the connection between the efforts to expand equality in material reward and those to expand equality in influence — by participatory

democracy — and in opportunities of self-actualization, by improving the quality of working life.

The kibbutz experience indicates also that there is no necessary contradictions between equality and achievement. Instead of basing achievement on competition for a limited number of high positions, the kibbutz bases achievements on the equal right to actualize and develop personal ability while dissociating the productive and creative achievement from the material rewards.

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ABSTRACT

The discussion of the problem of equality in the kibbutz is based in this article on a bulk of research findings. After discussing the concept of equality, the perception of «equality» in the kibbutz movement, and the structural mechanism for implementing the value of equality, the authors examine the impact of structural changes in the kibbutz on institutional arrangements promoting equality, and on the allocation of consumption goods, opportunities for self-realisation, and the division of influence, esteem and feelings of affiliation. The discussion is based on the distinction between equality (or inequality) in single dimensions and overall «structural equality» in the kibbutz.

RÉSUMÉ

La discussion du problème de l'égalité dans le kibboutz est basé dans cet article sur des données des études dans différents domaines de la vie du kibboutz. Dans la première partie divers concepts de l'égalité sont discutés ainsi que son conceptualization dans le kibboutz et les mécanismes structurelles employés pour son réalisation. Dans la seconde partie l'influence des changements structurelles sur l'institutionnalization de principe d'égalité est analysé, particulièrement dans les domaines de distribution des biens de consommation et des possibilités de réalisation de soi, ainsi que de la division du pouvoir, du prestige, etc. L'analyse est basée sur une distinction entre un concept unidimensionnel d'égalité et un concept multidimensionnel d'égalité structurelle.