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Kibbutz Identity

The Reality of Utopia

In 1985, eight years after a dramatic political setback,[1] a sudden economic crisis shook the entire kibbutz movement to its foundations. Seventy-five years after the first kibbutz was established, it seemed that all efforts had failed to create communities based on sharing and equality and able to flourish economically as a powerful and prestigious sector of society. This crisis marked a new period of hectic change and reshaping throughout the kibbutz movement.

Members, requestioning every arrangement, spared no aspect of kibbutz life. Some kibbutzim now charged members for meals in the collective dining-room, or alternately, closed down the dining room and transferred the meals to the private apartment. Others instituted financial rewards to gratify extra work or public functions, and in some cases, introduced differential rewarding as a general practice. While working together on the kibbutz has long been a dominant value, kibbutzim might now encourage members to find jobs outside the kibbutz. The number of hired workers was increasing. Members who had personal resources were bringing in private cars that created substantial gaps of standards of living among members of a same kibbutz. The family was given all the responsibility over children, while kibbutz nurseries and schools opened their gates to non-kibbutz children. Many kibbutzim abolished the General Assembly, the heart of kibbutz life for decades, and replaced it by a restricted elected Council.

The debates are still raging after more than a decade. Beyond these debates, the questions which arise are: Should the idea of the kibbutz be preserved? Should something new be created? Should the kibbutz depart from its exceptionalism and assimilate into the "normal" society? These questions take all their importance in the context of the recent collapse of state-socialism in Eastern Europe and the Far East, where competitive markets and privatization are becoming predominant. This dying state-socialism, which had presented itself as the only alternative to Western capitalism, had, in fact, also been the source of inspiration for a majority of kibbutzim.

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The above can by no means justify assimilating the kibbutz experiment with state-socialism. This experiment best concretizes the historical rival of state-socialism, i.e., the anarchist utopia which has always competed with state-socialism, as an alternate to a 'better society'. In this respect, the contemporary kibbutz transformation rather asks if this type of socialism has lost any relevance. This bears directly on current intellectual perspectives with their renewed interest in utopias drawing on analyses of the Western contemporary social reality.

Smart (1992), who surveys this intellectual development, underlines the emphasis of these analyses on discontinuity between the present time and the past. This discontinuity is primarily signalled by a profusion of works speaking in terms of the end of an era—Fukuyama's (1989) end of history, Baudrillard's (1989) end of the social or Tourraine's (1971) end of industrial society. Others, like Toffler (1983), describe the emergence of a new civilization through new forms of change which "add up to nothing less than a complete transformation (Toffler, 1983: 359)."

The features of the new era which account for this search for utopia are the increased individualization of life in the Western society, its fragmentation into communities, the proliferation of subcultures which it witnesses, and its patterns of evanescent life styles (Toffler, 1971). Bell (1973; 1976; 1980) views contemporary society as a disjunctive amalgam of social structure, culture and polity; Gorz (1980) speaks of a new technocratic society; Baudrillard (1981) describes a decadence characterized by the obsession with material wealth and a deterioration of the quality of life (Smart, 1992). Lyotard (1986) speaks of a 'post-modern' society as an episode of the modern, when the metanarratives which had been characteristic of the emergence of capitalism have become outdated by the proliferation of performance criteria. For Habermas (1987), on the contrary, postmodernism is nothing less than the end of the era which started with the Enlightenment; it is anti-modernity. Beyond these divergences of perspectives, all analyses concur to view contemporary society as chaotic and unpredictable, and invite to look for new notions of social organization and to elaborate on utopia (Young, 1991).

The new utopians have a better idea of what they criticize than of what they aspire to. In very general terms, Gorz (1980; 1985) favors cooperatives whose members are provided with services in exchange for work hours, and Frankel (1987) speaks of guaranteeing a minimum income for all. Bahro (1986) speaks of basic communes (with thousands of members) sharing simple lifestyles where individuals are provided with all services necessary for a decent life. Preoccupied with production, Toffler (1971; 1983) and Jones (1982) advocate a regime of interrelated industrial cooperative plants. These suggestions show clear traces of the old anarchist texts, and especially of

Kropotkin's ideas (see Oved, 1992) which put the principle of mutual aid at the basis of a society of equal producers. Society, in Kropotkin's utopia, will consist of federated communal associations grounded in both agriculture and industry and able to make do without central government.

Moreover, in a manner which reminds Proudhon, a large party of these new utopians sustain forms of cooperation within a society structured by competitive markets. Frankel (1987) elaborates, in this vein, on what he calls socialist pluralism and which should combine, in addition to direct-democratic cooperatives, national state institutions and regional frameworks. Masuda (1990) conceives of the community as a solidarity group unified by the same creed and the communal ownership of means of production.

In the 1990s, however, while critiques of the Western society are formulating new models, this society has literally beaten its principal challenger of about 75 years, i.e., state-socialism. Despite the cultural, historical, and political diversity of today's world, it is this kind of society which is the sovereign source of influence everywhere. This does not mean that Western society is free of dilemmas and contradictions. The universalization of Western modernity may well signify a universalization of its fundamental and endemic cruxes, which still account for the search for utopia that has always been one of its most permanent features.

The new utopians are indeed but an episode of a long history of debates about the essence of Western society, the contradictory character of which was already accounted for by Boulding (1962), more than three decades ago. This contradictory character resides, according to this theory, in the fact that modernity draws its legitimization from two divergent principles, merit and equality, the concomitant preponderance of which engender basic inconsistencies.

Widening the scope of Boulding's theory, one may say that, on the one hand, there is modernity's credo of progress which means an orientation to achievement and entrepreneurship, and calls for the contribution of the individual to society. This code stems from both a religious worldview, as understood by Weber (1930) in relation to Protestantism, and in a philosophic-scientific paradigm, positivism, as understood by Comte (see Aron, 1968). On the other hand, there is the reference to society as embodying social solidarity and equality among men as both members of nations and citizens of states (Tocqueville, 1955). Progress primarily concerns the socioeconomic sphere, and solidarity the political, but they confront each other as codes of one social reality. From Adam Smith (see Abrams, 1968) to Rawls (1973), the 'progressists' have elaborated on the requirements of social markets, while their programs are attacked by 'egalitarianists'—from Babeuf (1969) to the Frankfurt School—who denounce markets as exploitation, and support welfarism. Inequality justified by arguments of fairness and equity by progressists

are decried as deprivation by egalitarianists (see Deutsch, 1975; Yuchtman-Yaar, 1983).

It is in this context that, ever since the beginning of modernity, an ample discourse of utopias has been produced by those who criticize and de-legitimize the social order for the limits it sets on equality on behalf of progress. Competing schools have appeared and one of the earliest and most famous controversies has been the mid-nineteenth century Marx-Proudhon argument (see Cole, 1964; 1965). Both Marx and Proudhon took for granted that the capitalistic class should be suppressed. Proudhon, a father of anarchism, supported the principle of associative organizations participating in competitive markets. Marx accused him of aspiring to replace individual capitalists with collective capitalists, and thus perpetuating the civilization of profit which was the very target of the struggle against capitalism. The polemics between Marxists and anarchists reached new peaks over time on a series of topics, but it came to be overshadowed by the rise of Marxist state-socialism on the fringes of the Western world. The inconsistent socio-cultural texture of Western modernity has, however, continued to nourish the reference to utopia and utopianism.

For the Marxists (Marx, 1978; Althusser, 1971; Poulantzas, 1975) who shared a no-salvation-within-this-world perspective, socialism (their wording for utopia) is a post-capitalism phase of history. Up to a point, this position was also endorsed by Weber (1977) and his follower Schumpeter (1954); the Weberians, however, shared a no-salvation-in-any-world perspective, and in their view, socialism is not utopia but the—unfortunately unavoidable—victory of bureaucracy over entrepreneurship. Against both the Marxist and Weberian perspectives, Proudhon defended a salvation-in-this-world approach; this outlook found echoes in Comte's (1875) and Durkheim's (1973) works which advocate forms of socialization reconciling achievements and progress with equality and solidarity, as ingredients of the existing society. This society has effectively continued to evolve under the impulse of both progress and equality, which has probably contributed to the diffusion of a perception of society made of incoherence, fragmentation, even chaos. This indirectly and permanently, maintained the intellectual interest for utopia, as a search for consistency.

The idea itself of utopia (Sakwa 1989), which is as old as Western civilization[2], entered modernity in the writings of Rousseau where it proclaims a society beyond the estates. In the 19th century, utopia became a world beyond the bourgeoisie and writers of today envisage a utopia beyond technocracy, when it not only fulfils its traditional tenets, like equality, tolerance and peacefulness, but also represents the antithesis of contemporary ecological ills.

This constant interest in utopia has directly inspired practical endeavors like the kibbutz, the American communes or cooperative structures in Wes-

tern countries, which have often taken considerable dimensions[3]. Regrettably enough, the new utopians, like Bahro, Gorz, or Jones, willingly ignore what these endeavors may signify for their own visions. Though, at first glance, these endeavors at least confirm the very feasability of utopia as social reality, in terms of an ideological project that tackles the dilemmas of society (Kniss, 1988).

As social reality, utopia may be related to a notion which is of major importance in current intellectual debates, i.e., civil society. This notion has been inherited from the founding fathers of modern Western thought (see for reviews: Taylor, 1991; Honneth, 1993)[4]. It has been revived in Eastern Europe when intellectuals (Honneth, 1993) used it to de-legitimize the encompassing social control exerted by the totalitarian state. Today in the West, the concept is often used to laud direct democracy and community power (Luke, 1989). Following Eisenstadt (1992), one may see in this notion a type of organization or collective which enrols a specific category of individuals who articulate their claims in terms of a general cause, but raise very specific political interests; at the same time, they aspire to autonomy from the political scene, thus representing a velleity to restrict the center's authority.

It is in this vein that analysts (see for a review: Cohen, J., 1985) depict recent movements—from ecological organizations to women's movements— as a drive toward the pluralization of society. They struggle for power to construct their identities and to create autonomous spaces for social action (see also Touraine, 1985). This notion of civil society relates to utopia's worldly preoccupation with the perfect society, justice, and moral purity (Servier, 1967). It is on behalf of these universal values that it demands the means to sustain—independently from the control of the political center— forms of life which implement them.

As social reality, utopia is concretized as a community of limited size, smaller than society as a whole, and circumscribed by physical boundaries warranting a degree of geographical isolation from the environment. Within these boundaries, utopia gives expression to its quest for simplicity and equality, and develops a concept of mother-community that takes over collective educational responsibility. Above all, utopia's affinity with civil society resides in its fundamental opposition to millenarianism which—like in the revolutionary movements of the modern past—strives to transform society and man in the name of a transcendental truth. Utopia as social reality is concerned, in contrast, by those men and women who have already been 'saved' in this world (Servier, 1967). While, from the point of view of society as a whole, millenarianism is an aspiration to societal systematization, utopia is a factor of pluralism and segmentation in the existing society, which does not gainsay that the members of the utopian community believe that the social experience which they pursue is also in the interest of the rest of

humanity (Levitas, 1990). Their motive is the desire for a better way of being, and in this resides their general relevance—their limited actual audience notwithstanding.

All these show that the essential subject-matter of utopia made reality does not reside in its structural aspects but its value choices and symbolic expressions, that is, its cultural identity. It is Levitas' (1990) contention that the utopian culture taps on the culture of the society wherein it evolves and harbors utopian undertones. In our own language, utopia as social reality is firstly a kind of collective identity, in itself the expression of the essential contradiction of modernity. We mean that strong references to the solidaristic and egalitarian values which are conveyed by the culture of the society necessarily lead to deviant models vis-à-vis the dominant patterns of behavior which are also influenced by progress and competitive orientations. On the other hand, as a concretization of central societal values on behalf of a general cause, utopia cannot but aspire to be a reference for others, and thus to represent an exigency for recognition and status, which may not be taken for granted by the rest of society and the center. This makes utopia, as an identity, a focus of tension and a potential factor of conflict with non-utopia; it occasions the involvement of utopia in the dynamics of the society's contradictions and dilemmas. This inevitably draws utopia astray from its original utopiansim.

Conflicts and tensions emerge from the inside as well. Oved's (1992) survey of American communes emphasizes that while equality is always a central value, it is rarely fully implemented. It applies more easily to material goods than to social relations where prestige and authority tend to create differences—and as a result, tensions and conflicts—among members. In actual fact, research has shown that, like society at large though at different degrees, divergence may exist between equality and progress, or solidarity and freedom (Shur, 1992). Moreover, Van den Berghe (1992) who has followed the American Huterites, found that the commune's pragmatic readiness to deviate from original premises and accept new goals and norms, correlates positively with its capability to survive. This, notwithstanding the fact that only people deeply dedicated to their convictions are able to attach themselves to such collectivistic endeavors.

In brief, where utopia is social reality, it always draws on the societal culture and represents a general cause which confronts, in its own ways, the very dilemmas of the non-utopian society. Hence, utopia as collective identity is 'special' mainly by the aspirations that it expresses. The concretization of those aspirations betrays the original utopianism. An illustration of the anarchist project, utopia is a natural reference for theories which propose cooperation and equality, as their response to the problems of a divided society. Yet, on behalf of the very identity for which it stands, utopia also

constitutes a factor of fragmentation and a scene of inner conflicts and tensions.

These contradictory considerations explain our interest in the kibbutz. Evolving in a society that has acquired all attributes of (post)modernity, Israel, the kibbutz has for almost one century effectively been 'utopia made reality'. It is this reality which has, for the last decade, been experiencing a far-reaching transformation. To discuss systematically the changes which the contemporary kibbutz experiences, we now turn to the approaches to change which the social sciences suggest. According to the above discussion of the kibbutz's relation to the notion of utopia, we will pay special attention to these outlooks which center on problems pertaining to collective identity.

Social Change and Transformation

The approaches of the social sciences toward change and transformation which will guide our investigation propose a set of questions and a framework of discussion under four headings: (1) background or contextual aspects, (2) the nature of the changes and transformation, (3) their agency, and (4) the general characterization of the new reality.

The Background of Change

We find in the literature a profusion of hypotheses which focus on the contextual aspects of social change. This is, above all, the legacy of Marx (1978) who related market crises (overproduction) to the inherent contradictions of the social system and class conflicts. More nuanced, social movement theory (Tourraine, 1985) looks at the circumstances under which actors become aware of their location and difficulties in society. Social movements do not emerge exclusively or necessarily from exploited classes; they may spring from any direct reaction of groups of individuals, against the state and its control over society. As far as the crisis of the contemporary kibbutz is concerned, these approaches seem of little relevance. One can hardly retain the Marxist or Tourainian schemes for studying a setting where there is no internal economic market, no private ownership of means of production and, subsequently, relatively feeble internal social differentiation.

The prolongation of social movement theory in Tiryakian's elaboration (1991) may however be of greater interest for our purpose. Social movements, it is argued by Tiryakian, determine the course of history when they emerge, simultaneously but distinctively, in a variety of situations characterized by similar problems, and thus take on the form of a cluster of movements. Tiryakian reminds the post-World War II social movements which

brought about the early 1960s decolonization of Africa and Asia, the world-wide tide of student revolutions in the mid- and late-1960s which destabilized existing regimes, and the 1989 events throughout Eastern Europe which des-troyed the Soviet empire. This perspective is interesting with respect to the kibbutz when one knows that the crisis has taken the form, here, of an expan-sion of difficulties to distinct and autonomous collectives, the kibbutzim, where they were reacted to by the membership, in each particular case, according to specific objective and subjective circumstances. Following this theoretical in-sight, one may then draw from this clustering aspect that the contemporary crisis of the kibbutz may indeed represent a historical turning point.

The traditional structural-functionalist position (Parsons, 1962, 1970; Merton, 1968; Almond, 1973) is of restricted significance for the study of the kibbutz, as long as it discusses change in terms of modernization, and empha-sizes a concept of social evolution which pays minor attention to crises. It has also been the object of much criticism deploring its centering on West-ern society and its dichotomization of cultures between tradition and moder-nity (see Eisenstadt, 1985). The kibbutz does undergo a crisis and this crisis is the direct context of far-reaching changes thus going beyond the old functionalist paradigm the sensitivity of which to this kind of issue is limited. Other sociologists (see Masannat, 1987; Li Lulu, 1989), however, reformu-late the notion of modernization by focusing on the transformation of tradi-tion. They insist on the eventual disengagement from tradition of modernizing elites, which may not necessarily imply the eradication of traditionalism. Modernization and modernity may thus vary from one society to another. From this angle, one might keep in mind that the contemporary crisis of the kibbutz might also represent difficulties stemming from a discrepancy be-tween its original—one might say 'traditional'—cultural-ideological premises, and the imperatives—articulated by the kibbutz's elite or segments of it—of the collective's adjustment to the development of society[5.]

Social change which is fraught with social crises is also understood by Habermas (1973) as unresolved steering problems pushing people to opt for courses of action that threaten their identity. This view is close to Turner's (1969) notion of liminality which focuses on situations where individuals leave one status, but have not yet reached another. This hypothesis then depicts the eventual impact of crises in terms of a confusion of categories. By extension, this notion may apply to any situation where conventional obli-gations have become irrelevant, and where the prevailing feeling is that every social pattern is replayed and redefined.

According to these latter approaches, the context of changes, the crisis, is primarily questioned according to the potential threat it represents for the collective identity. This kind of approach seems of special relevance to the study of the kibbutz which, as a utopian segment of a wider society, is per-

manently faced—in any circumstance but especially in times of crisis and change—with the significance of events, both internal and external, for its collective identity.

The Nature of Change

As for the changes themselves, Marx speaks of significant changes, i.e. revolutions, only when they concern societies' mode of production which, in his approach, identifies the essential of their structure (Marx, 1978). From a point of view which gives more importance to culture, Simmel (1966) distinguishes changes 'within' the system which involve only normative-organizational aspects, from changes 'of' the system which also concern values. This position has been characteristic of contemporary structuralism (see Levi-Strauss, 1958; 1961; Dumont, 1966; 1977) which depicts fundamental principles of action conveyed by socialization in terms of deep structures, and organizational patterns or normative arrangements, as surface structures.

Weber (1977) stands close to this latter approach, but he emphasizes that even the most radical changes are, to a degree, accounted for by given aspects of the existing culture itself, and, thereby, also imply social and cultural continuity. This approach is illustrated by Weber (1968; see also Eisenstadt, 1982) in his analyses of historical cultures. In any society, he shows, culture answers fundamental existential questions which relate to the way basic aspects of the social order are practically organized. On the other hand, Weber also acknowledges that internal and external circumstances may lead to changes of mind and to the re-molding of social arrangements that may both influence the definitions and orientations of the culture, and be influenced by it.

We may extend this approach to the study of groups evolving within society—which the kibbutzim are—by using the notion of collective identity. This notion, we propose, describes the interests, goals and values which members of a group attach to their particular collective condition. This identity is both diachronic by its emphasizing continuity over time, and synchronic by its distinguishing, at any particular moment, members from non-members who belong to the same society. We propose more specifically (see Ben-Rafael, 1994; Ben-Rafael & Sharot, 1991) that a collective identity consists of (1) the way individuals, who see themselves as members of a group, perceive their relation to their group—that is, their commitment— (2) the active aspect of this allegiance—that is, the practical outcome inherent to the collective endeavor—and (3) what the group represents vis-à-vis others—that is, their status in society at large.

From a structuralist point of view, aspects of identity revolve around basic dilemmas rather than definite assertions. Hence, Levi-Strauss (1961)

talks of collective identity in terms of a set of structures necessarily made of interacting binary oppositions, e.g. pairs of contradictory principles. Regarding each of those pairs, we suggest, and according to objective or subjective circumstances, either pole may eventually achieve another degree of relative predominance versus minorization vis-à-vis the other pole pertaining to the same pair. Hence, profiles made up by the various pairs may vary according to both intra-pair and inter-pole variation. A structuralist perspective may thus see in this diversity of configurations of intra- and inter-binary interactions the range of potential variance of the versions of the collective identity which members of the group may convey. In turn, this variety of versions makes up a space where social change can be evaluated in terms of change of identity.

This approach focuses on the manner people practically confront the dilemmas implied by their collective identities. Structuralism concurs, in this respect, with methodological individualism (Boudon 1993) which emphasizes the importance of individual behavior in the 'making of social facts'. The key notion is here what Boudon calls the actors' 'good reasons' which include their descriptions and understandings of, as well as their self-positioning vis-à-vis, the social environment. These good reasons include strong references to actors' identities as perspectives which structure reality.

More closely, Boudon distinguishes between kinds of rewards attached to the objectives pursued, and the kind of interest which guide the choice of goals. On the first count, purposive-instrumental actions are differentiated from non-purposive ones which are self-rewarding. On the second count, Boudon makes the difference between subjective-rational behaviors which express actors' individual preferences, and normative-rational behaviors which draw their cost or benefit considerations from their relation to the normative order. This issue is most significant, for evaluating social change, in a utopian collective like the kibbutz, where behavior in major spheres of life is, ideally, expected to respond to the non-purposive normative syndrome.

The Agency of Change

Another major level of the discussion of social change concerns the identification of its agents—individuals, social categories or organizations. Social change signifies a departure from the status quo, and thus calls attention on those who might be interested in a new reality. According to classic conflict theory (Marx, 1975; Dahrendorf, 1959), it is the deprived groups which always initiate conflict in view of changing the status quo. Touraine (1985), in more nuanced terms, speaks of any category of actors who by reacting similarily to their position in the social system may become a conflict group by specifying adversaries. We know, on the other hand, with

structuration theory (Giddens, 1980; 1987), that not every potential conflict group necessarily evolves into an active one. Scholars, like Pareto (1966) or Ben-David (1955), are even ready to disregard the notion of deprived class as a factor of social change and, instead, focus on elites, contending that the strongest groups may well be the ones to go for change in order to retain power, in circumstances which threaten their control.

In the context of these divergences about who the carriers of social change are, Olsen's (1989) typology elaborates on possible relations between social position and conflict agency. Olsen speaks of social mobilization when conflict involves influence downward through organizational, community, societal, or other leaders who initiate social change from power positions. Social involvement refers to reciprocal influences between leaders and citizens in their joint attempt to implement change. The notion of social confrontation, finally, indicates the bottom-up exercise of influence by deprived categories of people.

On the basis of our structuralist theory of identity, we suggest that in collectives where, like in the kibbutz, social identities insist on solidarity rather than on social differentiation, there exists a weak ground for the development of clearly structured conflict groups. Social changes should here be widely anchored in consensus. Yet, like everywhere else, different interests may still oppose each other through the process of change. Of special interest should then be the question of whether the weaker or the stronger appear to be, in times of difficulties, the more eager factors of social change in a utopian setting.

From Weber's (1972) sociology of culture, one may draw some expectations in that respect. This approach assesses that the principles of legitimization embedded in the dominant culture widely determine what social categories might find a relative legitimization for anti-status quo claims and what categories would not, a factor which, in itself, may be influential, among other circumstances. Hence, in a modern society, we may state in this vein, where both progress and equality are central legitimate values, one expects class struggles to develop both from upper and lower social ranks. Upper-rank individuals may raise claims on behalf of their contribution to society and require more 'equitable' rewarding. Lower-rank individuals may raise claims on behalf of equality, defining their condition in terms of 'deprivation'.

On the other hand, in a utopian collective, where equality is generally granted the strongest legitimacy and is assumed to be radically implemented—at least regarding material rewarding—lower-rank members, in terms of prestige and/or authority, should rather be discouraged from raising anti-status quo claims, as the very definition of their situation in such terms is socially unacceptable. Actually, it may be said that where the weaker categories

receive materially the same as upper-rank members, whose contributions grant prestige and authority, this is in itself a basis for claims on the side of the stronger and/or more prestigious.

The holders of stronger positions may, indeed, easily view themselves deprived in comparison with both their fellow-members and their counterparts outside the kibbutz. Perceiving their fellow-members as contributing less than them to the collective while receiving the same material rewards, may awaken feelings of injustice among the kibbutz's more active personnel. The same is true when they compare their lot with directors of factories, managers of plantations or treasurers employed in the private sector who for an approximately identical job receive much greater rewards. In fact, these higher-ranking kibbutz members might find justification for such claims in the very same codes of their collective identity, which valorize their contribution to the collective in terms of prestige and power. Hence, we may expect, at least in minimalist terms and in a sense that concurs with elite theory, that the identity structure of the members of a utopian collective like the kibbutz discourages class struggles initiated from below more than from above.

Characterizing the New Reality

The notion of identity may also serve as a tool to evaluate the outcome of change for society and the groups involved. Any change, expected or unexpected, may be considered from the point of view of its significance in terms of alterations not only of the societal distribution of resources, but also for the extent that it affects collective codes.

This typology rephrases the dichotomy of Simmel (1966) and Coser (1956) which differentiates of-the-system from in-the-system changes. This categorization, we can now enounce in more structuralist terms, defines of-the-system or revolutionary changes as those changes which alter the identity of the society—that is, its deep structures—and represent the emergence of new values, or codifiers of culture. On the other hand, in-the-system changes refer to changes whose importance is limited to the relative location of actors or to an alteration of secondary social arrangements—that is, surface structures. From the point of view of the approach which we propose, there may be additional in-between possibilities which can be grouped, in a Weberian vein, under the label of 'transformation' and which should apply when

1. A drastic shift takes place in the constellation of the system's binary identitional contradictions,

2. The existing identity structure is as such not transcended, however, and

3. The binary oppositions themselves which make up this identity structure are retained.

This model is defined in very broad terms and thus leaves wide room for variations. These variations constitute, under the label of transformation, variants which exhibit, at the same time, continuity and discontinuity in deep structures. On the one hand, they all refer to the same identity dilemmas outlined by the binary pairs (or facets) which constitute the collective identity. On the other hand, these variants indicate shifts of emphasis and predominance within the identity facets and thereby represent drastic changes of goals and ambitions. We cannot speak of a revolution of identity despite the shifts in the binary oppositions as far as they themselves are not bypassed and erased. We may however speak of transformation as long as changes concern the identity structures and not just the distribution of goods or minor social arrangements, that is, surface structures.

These definitions do not assume that social action is unvariably determined by conscious schemes and intentions, nor that the social reality which results from change is necessarily coherent and systematic. Ever since Merton (1936; see also Boudon, 1977), we know that social actions may interact and affect each other beyond actors' conscious control, and may have unintended outcomes. Change may take on diverse forms in different areas of the changing social reality, and thus be a factor of incoherence and inconsistency, nay even of chaotic processes (see Apter, 1987). The extent to which social change develops at the same pace and in the same direction, throughout the social reality under study, and thus tends to create a new uniform reality, is itself an issue that can hardly have any a priori answer. Alternately, change may be a factor of heterogeneization and fragmentation of the social reality. These considerations reorients, at this point, this discussion of social change toward the preoccupations of contemporary analyses of society.

In conclusion, our theoretical discussion of social change brings us to focus on the collective identity as the key concept of our four-level approach:

- This concept of identity throws light on what a social crisis means. We suggest that this notion is particularly relevant to describe situations where the collective identity is threatened and solutions to difficulties challenge its longstanding definitions.

- Social crises entail change in social life. The question is then whether such shifts express and implement alterations of deep identitional aspects.

- Our notion of identity is defined as a set of binary contradictions which refer to three essential facets:

    (a) the individuals' commitment to the collective,

    (b) individual's image of the collective's practical outcome, and

    (c) individual's perception of the status attached to the collective allegiance.

- Where social change emerges from the crisis, we speak of:

    (a) 'surface change' which does not alter the binary identitional contradictions

    (b) 'transformation' which interferes with the intra-binary relations of poles

    (c) 'revolution' which outdates some or all binary contradictions.

- Our notion of identity is also relevant for considering the agency of change, in terms of whether it is spoken of

    (a) a consensual readiness to undergo a reformulation of the collective identity,

    (b) initiatives of upper versus lower categories drawing their legitimacy from identitional parameters.

- Our notion of identity also provides the criteria to evaluate the new reality in terms of the possible versions of the collective identity.

- The impact of change may then be considered according to the extent that it forwards a new uniform and coherent reality or, rather, a diversified, pluralistic and fragmented one.

The Identity Dilemmas of the Kibbutznik

In accordance with the above, we shall study the kibbutz by focusing on the context of its contemporary evolution, the nature of the changes themselves which it experiences, the agency of these changes, and the broad lines of the new kibbutz reality. Following our theoretical discussion, the notion of kibbutz identity should integrate those various levels of the analysis into one scheme.

The concept of collective identity was defined by us, in a structuralist vein, as the set of binary contradictions embedded in its three basic facets, namely, the members' notion of commitment to the collective, their perception of the practical output of the collective endeavor, and of the status in society attached to the collective allegiance. The collective-commitment facet of the kibbutzniks' identity, we contend, refers to their awareness of realizing a community which is grounded in sharing egalitarianism, and, on the other hand, to their relating to this community principle in terms of no less fundamental individualistic aspirations. The collective-output facet of the kibbutz identity, we also allege, is bound to the view of the kibbutz as an enterprise motivated by the pursuit of efficiency and profit, and challenged by a no less important principle of solidaristic collective partnership. The social-status facet relates, in the kibbutzniks' identity, to their self-image as an active and dedicated segment of society entitled to a privileged status,

which may, however, be contradicted by a no weaker drive to accumulate power on behalf of collective egoistic interests.

This view of the kibbutz identity is sustained by the scholarly literature when it describes the kibbutz as it existed until the dramatic changes that have been taken place ever since the mid-1980s.

A Type of Community

The notion of community (Hillery, 1968; 1982) generally designates a group of individuals who share meaningful social traits (Coleman, 1957), thus forming a geo-political unit or a committed public bound by origin, occupation, lifestyles, worldviews, or other significant attributes. Communities differ from each other according to their internal solidarity, the integration of their subsystems, and their autonomy vis-à-vis the wider society. Essentially, the notion of community is much more appropriate, if using Toennies' terminology, to the autonomous, strongly solidaristic, and integrated Gemeinschaft model than to the associative instrumental-exchange oriented Gesellschaft network (Toennies, 1957). The phenomenologists add here that the more communitarian a group, the more it develops its own understandings of reality (see Berger, 1977). This notion is especially appropriate for the kibbutz which is marked by a sharing-egalitarian orientation and whose community principle is couched in a socialist ideology. This communitarianism upgrades rank-and-file work and emphasizes the importance of members' dedication to their tasks. It strengthens group solidarity and plays down the significance of social differentiation.

The type of community constituted by the kibbutz has attracted the attention of researchers ever since the 1930s (see Infield, 1955) . The kibbutz reached a degree of relative organizational stability only in the early 1950s, a stability which, however, lasted until the mid-1980s. This kibbutz, which we are now tempted to call the 'classic' kibbutz, might include from a few dozens to 600 or 700 members (on average, between 150 and 250 members, and between 300 and 500 souls in total).

Sharing equality is implemented, in this kibbutz, as a central value applying to all major spheres of life. This kibbutz also comprises direct-democracy institutions, which means that all areas of activity are run and supervised by elected committees headed by a Secretary and an Economic Committee which are accountable to the General Assembly. The most outstanding feature of this system is the absence of any monetary rewards. This demands that no relation whatsoever may exist between the individual's contribution to the collective and the material gratifications she or he receives from it. Members should contribute their capacity to the common good, and receive from the collective, without any relation to their contribution, and according to community norms,

the goods necessary to their well-being—either directly (such as for housing, education, and food) or through egalitarian budgets (such as for clothing or furniture). Only personal requests (for job placement or higher education, for instance) require ad hominem decisions of collective bodies.

The collective dining-room is the symbolic center of the public life, where members take three meals a day. While there are other collective community structures such as the club and the cultural center, collective education plays a primary role. Its declared aim is to shape a generation that accepts community life as a natural milieu. A major part of this is achieved by running peer group houses in which the children live together, until they join the regional high school which enrolls youngsters from kibbutzim in the same geographical area. The role of the peer group house was seriously reduced, however, in the 1970s when it was decided, in most kibbutzim, that children should no longer sleep in these houses but stay overnight in their parents' apartment.

It is in the context of this singularity of the kibbutz endeavor that, still in the 1990s, Rosner (1993), a leading sociologist of the kibbutz movement, asserts the primacy of the community in the image which he proposes of the kibbutz. Sharing egalitarianism, he contends, warrants the cohesion of all aspects of the social life in the kibbutz:

> I believe that . . . the kibbutz is defined by an axis-principle which ...is the principle of satisfying the legitimate needs of its members by recognizing the differences of individual needs... This is the central axis which organizes the operation of the major institutions of the kibbutz. This is the unique character of the kibbutz, and every aspect of the kibbutz is functionally adjusted to this axis.

This kibbutz which Rosner speaks of is itself a transformation of an original intensely family-like community. The changes that it experienced related to a gradual shrinkage in the role of sharing as an organizing principle of the community's social order, as it faced the ever-increasing individualism of its members. Looking at the kibbutz in the 1950s, Yonina Talmon-Garber (1972) already emphasized the erosion of idealism, and pointed out that individualism and familism became increasingly prominent. Members' wishes for a "normal" (or routine) individual and family life gained in ascendancy. In the background of this development, and what justified it, was the fact that the kibbutz has never rejected individualism; on the contrary, the ultimate aim of the collective experience was always defined as the development of the individual.

Talmon-Garber shows that the ascetism of the initial period—that is, before the proclamation of the State of Israel in 1948—became outdated by

aspirations to personal comfort. One major expression of this new attitude was the growth of the power of the family, which the kibbutz gradually recognized and institutionalized. This process led to the emergence of new foci of power (extended kinship networks and interfamily cliques) and to the expansion of their influence on the areas of education, housing, and consumption budgets. The possibility of moving the children from the peer group houses to their parents' homes for the nights was already on the agenda when Talmon-Garber investigated the kibbutz in the early 1950s, a change that finally occurred 25 years later. Talmon-Garber (1972) understood these changes through a functionalist approach. For her, external circumstances such as growing urbanization and industrialization of the society at large compelled the kibbutz to revise its concepts and adopt new outlooks. On the other hand, the kibbutz itself underwent modernization by removing itself from its original, intensely solidaristic model, and by becoming a multi-generational and institutionally differentiated community; less egalitarian, collective and participatory, and more individualistic, family-oriented and materialistic.

Talmon-Garber's approach has been implicitly criticized by sociologists like Rosner (1973; 1980; 1993) and Shepher (1962) who are kibbutz members themselves. Rosner views the changes which the kibbutz has seen over the years as primarily determined by the weakening of the members' ideological allegiance. Shepher (1962; see also Tiger and Shepher, 1975) views the changes in the kibbutz reality as the re-emergence of genetic givens which are beyond the control of social arrangements. Such facts can lay dormant only for limited periods of time. While most kibbutz arrangements are socially or psychologically sound as they do not deny natural drives, some of these arrangements, primarily those which involve family and gender roles, violate genetic codification and must surrender to nature sooner or later. It is in this vein that Shepher explains the transformation of the originally anti-familistic aspects of community life into a predominantly familistic setting.

Cohen (1983) focuses on the kibbutz ideology itself and shows that this ideology is eclectic, combining both collectivistic perspectives—socialism and nationalism—and individualist-humanist outlooks. As a consequence, discrepancies in orientations engender multiple dilemmas on the diverse levels of social life. Like Spiro (1983) who speaks of a multi-dimensional transformation of the original kibbutz, Cohen points to a general process leading from a situation where the community stands over and above the individual, to an association of members. These outlooks are not far from our own standpoint which views these changes as the expression of the fact that, whatever the specific circumstances, the kibbutz's sharing egalitarianism, which was not conceived as the denial of individuality, has always been potentially challenged by familization and individualization.

The Inner Contradiction of the Kibbutz's Enterprise

The kibbutz, which controls its own resources both in terms of its human capital and the material means of its economic production—plantations, plants, real estate, and equipment—constitutes an entrepreneur. As such, the kibbutz is motivated by strong material ambitions. It strives to amplify its economic power as well as to achieve high standards of living, quality of life, education and individual fulfilment. Each member is expected to contribute his or her work to the community which, in theory, is entitled to dispose of them at its will—though, in fact, the individual is generally given a job on a more or less permanent basis acccording to his or her own preferences. The kibbutz's economy is managed by autonomous teams in the different work branches headed by managers and senior workers. Moreover, ever since the late 1960s, regional economic cooperation of kibbutzim has brought about the multiplication of enterprises owned in common by neighbouring settlements.

In the above respects, the kibbutz can be considered an example of the progress-entrepreneurship principle (Cornwall, Pearlman, 1990; Bird, 1989). Like any commune, it relies mostly on the exploitation of its own property, means, and workforce, but unlike many other forms of commune, the kibbutz has the explicit drive to increase its assets, and views this as a goal that justifies its very existence. The "spirit of capitalism" which aspires to achievements and progress and endows material success with a value significance (see Weber, 1930; Mc Clelland, 1961) is thus not alien to the kibbutz. Contrary to the view of some of its own spokesmen, who for decades depicted the kibbutz as the realization of Marxist socialism, the kibbutz has never illustrated the Marxist model which looks for the total abolishment of private ownership and a new civilization free of the profit-seeking motive (Marx, 1978).

The kibbutz rather implements the anarchist principle of private-collective ownership which, indeed, respects materialistic motivations. This kind of perception is illustrated by a key figure in a play about the kibbutz, performed by a kibbutz group in the early 1980s, who describes the kibbutznik as "a partner of Western civilization, standing with one-and-a-half foot in the twenty-first century (Ben-Ner, Kotler, 1981)." An approach which is echoed a decade later: "The kibbutz now has to . . . encourage excellency and not only equality; it has to go beyond average performances (Palgi, 1993)". This approach has been recently elaborated in the writings and initiatives associated with Yehuda Harel, a leading figure in the Takam who argues for a new kibbutz in which the economic interest is set free from both community control and external non-economic commitments. This kind of orientation primarily requests from the kibbutz to adopt norms and patterns which are characteristic of any capitalistic enterprise—such as a rational

distribution of manpower and clear lines of authority which sanction social differentiation and the power of "bosses" (see Bendix, 1963).

On the other hand, the kibbutz enterprise is owned by a partnership of members, and this means that it is grounded in a principle of solidarity and direct, personal affiliation. This affiliation substantiates the assumption of participants' readiness to contribute whatever they are able to, without requesting differentiated material rewarding. This partnership principle thus is the opposite pole of the efficiency principle which, as we have seen, is the other ingredient of the facet of entrepreneurship. This inherent contradiction of kibbutz entrepreneurship is documented by research. Etzioni (1959) already showed in the 1950s that specialized elites had emerged from different spheres of the kibbutz's activity, which, as analyzed by additional studies, implied tension and conflict. Rosenfeld (1951) focused on the differentiation, among kibbutz members, between rank-and-file and bosses and revealed the ill-feelings that may exist among the former. Vallier (1962) pointed, later on, at inconsistencies between solidaristic values and differentiation processes, while Topel (1979) described the tensions that resulted from the control of major economic branches by informal leaders. Shapira (1987) studied power elites, oligarchic tendencies and class crystallization in regional plants and within kibbutzim. These processes are viewed from a different angle by Kressel (1974, 1983) who analyses the kibbutz as internally divided by clique networks in control of collective resources.

Ben-Rafael (1988) offers a comprehensive approach to the study of social inequality in the kibbutz by focusing on prestige and power criteria of status differentiation, paths of occupational and political mobility, oligarchic tendencies in branches and the public life, and forms of individual and group conflicts. On the other hand, Yuchtman-Yaar (1983) insists also on the relative deprivation of individuals who, in the kibbutz, achieve a high status for their special contribution in their particular economic activity, but who get the same material rewards as their rank-and-file partners. This is especially poignant when, as Dar (1992) claims, profitability and contribution to the kibbutz's income are primary factors of the valorization of work among members.

To sum up, entrepreneurship in the kibbutz involves both high economic ambitions and the implementation of collective partnership. Circumstances—external or internal, conjunctural or permanent—account for the fluctuations in the tensions brought about by this contradiction which, itself, is a given of kibbutz identity.

Elitism versus Collective Egoism

The third facet of kibbutz identity is elitism, a principle which defines the kibbutz, in the eyes of its own members, at least, as conveying a message of special societal significance (see Albertoni, 1987). This facet requires

some degree of social mobilization, and a sensitivity to the environment and the dominant culture which largely determines the kibbutz's status in society (Welsh, 1979; Field, Lowell and Higley, 1980). This vein of rhetoric can still be heard in kibbutzim under varying forms. A small group known as Ha-Zerem Ha-Shitufi, (the Sharing Trend) which expresses this orientation in post-Modernist styles is a good illustration when it contends that (Frank et al., 1988: 53):

> The ideology of the kibbutz is still alive and gives the kibbutz a 'raison d'être' at a time when the Western world witnesses drastic changes: a revolution is going on in the occupational structures, leisure, culture and life styles . . . we have to understand the meanings of this revolution; it may lead to greater oppression and exploitation but it may lead to freedom, equality and sharing. The welfare state has not given us any genuine solution; it goes now through a crisis as unemployment is growing, a new poverty is emerging and Third World immigrants are the victims of a new system of oppression . . . The means at our disposal today can however be powerful tools for solving these problems and we have to dedicate ourselves to the building of a better society. The kibbutz must respond to the challenge and . . . be the pioneer leading the crowd.

This orientation of kibbutzniks means, actually, dependence on the outside world. It is accounted for by the fact that the kibbutz came into existence as an integral part—a self-defined vanguard—of a national movement. These aspirations to status, legitimized by a conviction that they embodied important values, led kibbutzniks to develop power ambitions as well.

This syndrome goes beyond the classic Weberian typology (see Weber, 1966) which asserts a substantive distinction between 'status' and 'party'. Status, in Weber's mind, refers to the prestige in society of communities characterized by common lifestyles. Party designates the coalitions of forces which aspire, under the leadership of professional politicians, to participate in, or influence, the ruling of society (see also Weber, 1964). Weber saw these two dimensions as relatively independent from each other—as designating widely different kinds of actors—and from his analysis transpires that he viewed a one-to-one correspondence of status and party as an exception.

The case of the kibbutzniks concretizes this exceptional possibility where status is viewed as directly 'convertible' into political power. What explains this exception is that ever since the first steps of the kibbutz movement, kibbutzniks have aspired to prestige in society, as a confirmation of their self-image as carriers of values of general significance. This elitism has, paradoxically enough, justified segregation from society in crucial areas of the collective endeavor. Closing the kibbutz school to outside children has long been justified by the desire of a kibbutz education able to socialize individuals