

The Rise and Fall of the Kibbutz

Social Capital, Voluntarism, and State-Community Relations: A Case Study

Paper prepared for the Workshop

'Voluntary Associations, Social Capital and Interest Mediation: Forging the Link'

ECPR Joint Session of Workshops,

University of Copenhagen, 14-19 April 2000

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“The way of the kibbutz is revolutionary conservatism. Conservatism in maintaining the foundations; revolutionarism in the willingness to strive boldly to resolve the problems that erupt into our lives from the outside, or arise from within.”

Ya’akov Chazan¹

Since its reintroduction in the 1990s by Coleman² and Putnam,³ the concept of “social capital” has been working overtime. The idea of the social resource that renders cooperation for mutual benefit more convenient and effective has found a home in discourse in the social sciences, inevitably meeting the usual medley of academic cheers and catcalls.

As with other concepts, terms, or approaches, one may already identify key phases in the life span of the new discovery: Recognition of its existence, and a declaration that it is an important part of social systems, or at least an outstanding analytical tool promoting a better understanding of these systems; a flood of theoretical and empirical articles attempting to consider the nature of the new discovery, define it more precisely, and illustrate it through concrete contexts; increasingly loud expression of disappointment attempting to show that the new discovery is no discovery at all, but rather the rehash of old noodles in a new sauce – a rehash that does nothing to help us better to understand or to operate society, and serves only to divert attention from genuinely urgent problems and to obtain publicity for the researchers involved; a backlash of supporters defending social capital, and attempting to employ philosophical and statistical tools in order to prove that this is indeed the missing link in society, as in social research; and so on.

¹ Ya’akov Chazan, *Reshit Chadasha*, (Merchavya: Sifriyat Hapoalim, 1988), p. 209.

² J.S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory*, (Cambridge, Ma: Belknap, 1990) pp. 300-320.

³ R. D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital,”

It may now be possible to report a certain stabilization in this process. After the initial breakthrough and the charged debate that followed, social capital is now being raised at the discussion table in a more mature and user-friendly manifestation. As the storm dies down, we may now turn to examining the mutual relations between this concept and other forces or components active in society; we may compare social capital to other types of capital in a substantiated manner and with theoretical and empirical depth; we may use this concept without needing to attach labels declaring whether the researcher is an adherent or an opponent of social capital; we may now examine its existence, factors, and influences in different contexts and environments.

As usual, it all begins with the relations between social players: mutual dependence and the relationship between players are rooted in the interest players show in events that are under the full or partial control of other players;⁴ according to Coleman, these interpersonal relations should be perceived not only as components of the system, but also as resources of the individuals involved.⁵ Accordingly, social capital is presented as an asset of the individual, or more precisely, as a mediating asset in relations between players – an asset defined by the function it aims to fill. This capital, like other types of capital, constitutes a kind of “generic name” incorporating a number of entities with common characteristics, all of which are based on particular aspects of social structure, and all of which facilitate the actions of individuals within that structure.⁶ What Putnam would later define as “cooperation for mutual benefit” is based, he posits, on three principles – trust, mutuality, and social networks⁷ – that help solve the eternal questions of common action, the tragedy of the commons, public good, the dilemma of the prisoner, etc.⁸

Journal of Democracy 6, pp. 65-78; “Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 28, pp. 664-683.

⁴ Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

⁷ Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, p. 172.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

In discourse on social capital, a considerable place is reserved for the study of voluntary organizations, and the influence these exert on their members and on the society within which they operate.⁹ Following Tocqueville,¹⁰ and to a certain extent Durkheim,¹¹ attention has once again been focused on the voluntary organizations as the core of civil society – that arena that mediates between the individual person or citizen and the state. Putnam and those who follow his approach argue that voluntary cooperation depends on the existing social capital among those who wish to cooperate, while voluntary activity itself assists the society and state in which it takes place, creating a more democratic environment.¹²

After establishing the foundation, defining the issue at hand, and delineating the field by reference to previous studies, it now seems pertinent to elaborate on the relationship between the membership of voluntary organizations, social capital, and democracy;¹³ to connect the study of social capital with the possibilities and opportunities created by governmental and non-governmental organizations or institutions; and thereby to examine the relationship between the organization and its environment – how does the organization project outward, and which products in the environment influence it? Does

⁹ See: J. Brehm and W. Rahn, “Individual-Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital, *American Journal of Political Science*, 41, 1997, pp. 999-1023; P. Dekker, R. Kooperman and A. van der Broek, “Voluntary Associations, Social Movements and Individual Political Behavior in Western Europe” in J. van Deth (Ed.), *Private Groups and Public Life: Social Participation, Voluntary Associations and Political involvement in Representative Democracies*, (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.220-240; F. Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: the free press, 1995); J. Hagen, H. Merkens and K. Boehnke, “Delinquency and Disdain: Social Capital and the Control of Right-Wing Extremism Among East and West Berlin Youth, *American Journal of Sociology*, 100, 1995, 1028-1053; G. Moyser and G. Parry, “Voluntary Associations and Democratic Participation in Britain” in J. van Deth (Ed.), *Private Groups and Public Life: Social Participation, Voluntary Associations and Political involvement in Representative Democracies*, (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 24-46; D. Stolle, “Bowling Together, “Bowling Alone: The Development of Generalized Trust in Voluntary Associations”, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1998, pp. 497-525; S. Verba, K. Schlozman and H. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), and others.

¹⁰ A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (New York: Schocken, 1961).

¹¹ Emile Durkheim, *The Division of labor in society*, (New York: The Free Press, 1963).

¹² Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

an open society facilitate the development of organizations, or do blossoming organizations facilitate the emergence of an open society? How do the mutual relations between community and state influence both participants in this tango, and what may one learn from this relationship regarding the creation, quality, and directions of dissemination of social capital?

Coleman states that the closedness and stability of a social system, and the involvement of an ideology at its foundation, are important factors in creating norms and in creating sufficiently profound trust, and hence, effectively, in creating social capital.¹⁴ Based on this theoretical framework, it will be interesting to examine actual patterns of the creation and erosion of social capital. It will be even more interesting to examine the mutual relations between two such systems, where one is included within the other: the mutual relations between a closed, voluntary organization that is stable and has its own unique and demanding ideology, and a similarly closed, stable, and ideological state within which that organization operates.

Israeli society, and the kibbutz society it includes, may serve as a fruitful case study in this context. Both the larger and smaller of these two systems were closed, stable, and emphatically ideological systems, at least during their earlier years; both systems exerted a profound influence on each other in all the parameters of relevance for our purpose – the presence of social networks, the motivation of individuals to engage in common action, the creation of individual and general trust, the imposition of norms and values as the basis for action, and so on; and, most importantly, both systems created social capital that was gradually eroded, whether due to external factors or due to the mutual relations between the systems.

Israel may be viewed as a “social laboratory,” due largely to the social experiments initiated during the *Yishuv*¹⁵ period preceding independence in 1948. The *Yishuv* society

¹³ Thus responding to those who challenge this relationship – Alejandro Portes and Patricia Landolt, “The Downside of Social Capital”, *The American Prospect*, No. 26, May-June 1996, as an example.

¹⁴ Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

¹⁵ *Yishuv* (literally “settlement”) is the term used to refer to the Jewish community in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

was a new one that could be built from the foundations according to an ideologically dictated social mold. One manifestation of this was the establishment of the kibbutz, the most innovative of the social experiments undertaken in the *Yishuv*, in an effort to solve the problem of managing agricultural farms established by the Zionist movement in the Jordan Valley.¹⁶

In the kibbutz, a total voluntary body unique in the Western democracies, every member is identified and identifies with the group (or community) and its constituent members, accepts the principle of the allocation of resources according to needs, and aspires to equality in all spheres of life. In this organization, which draws its ideas from Utopian Socialism, Marxism, and nineteenth century German Romanticism, from Tolstoy and from Rousseau, each individual subsumes himself to the general will of the organization, and acts toward the other individuals in a fraternal manner, from which the remaining values and social actions are derived, all of which coalesce into the principles of cooperation, equality, and responsibility.¹⁷ Social relations integrated in a single economic system encompassing the members of the group; cultural and educational partnership accompanied by proximity of residence; and the foundation of the entire system on voluntarism all make the kibbutz fertile soil for the development of social capital, and no less fertile soil for the study of this capital.

The significant relations between the kibbutz and the state and society in which it operates make our case study more interesting yet. Although at the best of times the kibbutz movement never accounted for more than 6.5% of the Jewish inhabitants of Israel,¹⁸ the kibbutz constituted an ideological, social, economic, political, and defense entity of the utmost importance during the formative years of Zionist Israel. The kibbutz existed before the state, and even in this early period society glorified the and identified with the ideas underlying the kibbutz – ideas such as the fulfillment of Zionism, the return to working the land, the Socialist ideal of a society based on labor free of exploitation, and the solutions created by the kibbutz for such problems as isolation in an

¹⁶ Dan Horwitz, Moshe Lisak, *Metzuket B'utopia* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1990), p. 167.

¹⁷ Avner De Shalit, "David Miller's Theory of Market socialism and the Recent Reforms in the Kibbutzim," *Political Studies*, 1992, xi, p. 118.

¹⁸ Eliezer Ben-Rafael, *Crisis and Transformation: The Kibbutz at Century's End* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 29.

alien environment, the dearth of means in a society of immigrants and uprooted people, preparing land for agricultural use, etc.¹⁹ All these parameters addressed by the kibbutz were similar to those faced by society as whole; accordingly, the kibbutz and membership thereof were positioned as the vanguard of the Zionist idea. The kibbutz was presented not only as serving its own members, but also as implementing national goals of the utmost importance; kibbutz members were perceived as an elite showing the way for society as a whole.²⁰

Changes in Israeli society over the years have had a crucial impact on the kibbutz within that society. The establishment of the state in 1948; the demographic and economic changes of the 1950s and 1960s; and the changes in values and politics of the 1970s and 1980s have all influenced the kibbutz as a source of social capital for its members and for society as a whole. Ninety years after the foundation of the first kibbutz, these changes have left the kibbutz movement at a crossroads: Its status in Israeli society is increasingly marginalized; the values it espoused are no longer a guiding ideal for society as a whole – indeed, they are inconsonant with those values held by society; and, as a result, the internal kibbutz environment is attempting to change and to adapt itself to this new reality.²¹

Thus the declining status of the kibbutz as a source of social capital for society as whole in the form of such norms as trust, mutuality, and cooperation has dealt a fatal blow to voluntarism, egalitarianism, and cooperation within the kibbutz itself, as will be seen below.

¹⁹ Zeev Landshaut, *Hayishuv Hakibbutzi B'erezt Yisrael* (Tel Aviv: Hasifriya Hatzionit Haketana, 1944), p. 35.

²⁰ Another pioneering sociological study undertaken after Landshaut is that of Yonina Talmon-Gerber, *Yachid Vechevra Bakibbutz* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1970).

²¹ Numerous studies have examined the changes and patterns of change in the kibbutzim in recent years. The most prominent studies include: Eliezer Ben-Rafael, "Progress Versus Equality: Stratification and Change on Kibbutz," *Machbarot Cheker* 13-14 (Tel Aviv: Golda Meir Institute for Labor and Social Research, Ramot, 1986); Uri Weber, *Lehitchadesh: Hakibbutz mul Atido* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishers, *Kav Adom* series, 1992); Stanley Meron, *Hatnua Hakibbutzit 1994* (Ramat Efal: Yad Tabenkin, 1995); Avraham Pavin, *Ribud Veshinui Bechevra Shivyoni* (Ramat Efal: Yad Tabenkin and the Institute for the Study of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea, 1996); Daniel Rosolio, *Hashita Vehamashber* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1999); Menachem Rosner and Shlomo Getz, *Hakibbutz B'eidan shel Shinuim*, (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishers, 1996), and others.

The Kibbutz

The entry “Kibbutz” in the Israeli Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, published by the Kibbutz Publishing House, begins by defining the kibbutz as “a rural community in Israel based on cooperation in all fields of life...”²² The fields of cooperation on the kibbutz include the joint ownership of all means of production and consumption; the joint organization of labor in production, services, and administration; joint responsibility for meeting the spiritual and material needs of the kibbutz members; joint education of children from birth in the educational institutions of the kibbutz; and an aspiration to consolidate a common world view. Each member is expected to contribute to the kibbutz, through work, social activities, and so on, according to his abilities and skills, while the kibbutz is charged with the responsibility for meeting his material and spiritual needs within the limits of the standard of living on the kibbutz.

The first kibbutz, Degania, was established in 1909 during the “Second *Aliyah*”²³ period. The number of kibbutzim established by the end of the First World War was small, and there were no stable patterns of cooperation among the kibbutzim. During the 1920s, in the early part of the “Third *Aliyah*,” a large number of kibbutzim were established by the graduates of youth movements and the “Pioneering” movements. Many of these kibbutzim had their origins in groups formed to participate in public works (paving roads, work at the ports, etc.), and later established agricultural settlements. It was also during this period that movement frameworks began to develop, with a series of divisions and unifications. During the 1930s, a period of particularly large-scale Jewish immigration and strong attachment to “Pioneering” principles, as well as a profound political and security crisis, the kibbutz became the principle instrument for Jewish settlement in Palestine.²⁴

²² Menachem Rosner, entry for “Kibbutz,” *Ha’entziclopedia Lemada’ei Hachevra* (Merchavya: Sifriyat Hapoalim, 1970), Vol. D., pp. 335-345.

²³ *Aliyah* (literally: “ascending”) is the traditional term for Jewish immigration to the Land of Israel. After the emergence of Zionism as an organized movement, such immigration occurred in a series of waves, referred to as the First *Aliyah*, Second *Aliyah*, etc.

²⁴ With the massive encouragement of the institutions of the *Yishuv* – the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund, *Keren Hayesod*, etc., in terms of the purchase of land, financing establishment, etc. This encouragement adds an additional and interesting dimension to the

This is where the strength of the group became evident: achievements that could not be secured by means of individual interests were realized due to motivation, social cohesion, and the principles of cooperation and equality. Poverty and everyday hardship were easier to bear within a social group that denigrated individual achievement; common production created possibilities for rationalizing processing systems and for the more efficient exploitation of human and material resources. The financial burden of protecting and guarding life and property, once divided equally among all the members of the group, was considerably less wearing than that faced by the individual settler, or by those living in settlements based on the principles of the private economy, including the desire for profit and for the economic strengthening of the family farm.²⁵

The principles of administration and internal organization on kibbutz emerged in stages. In the initial stage, the relatively small population of the kibbutz, its homogenous nature, the simplicity of the agricultural farm, and the paucity of contacts with the surroundings enabled the involvement of all members in decisions and management. Even in later stages, however, different kibbutzim developed divergent procedures forming a broad common denominator. Kibbutz democracy is not merely a system of government whereby all the members participate in decision making and in electing officials; it aims to achieve the profound identification of the individual with the whole. The fact that membership of a kibbutz is a voluntary act and that every member is free to leave prevents the use of any form of governmental coercion.²⁶ The implementation of decisions that were often opposed by some of the members was supposed to be secured solely through the sense of partnership and the comprehensive affinity to the kibbutz. To this day, the acceptance of the authority of the kibbutz by its members remains the central problem of kibbutz democracy; once there is a decline in the level of identification of the members with the kibbutz, this authority usually weakens.

The characteristic integrative partnership of the kibbutz, which encompasses all spheres of human activity and life, makes the *a priori* assumption that the majority of the

nature of kibbutz as a voluntary and social organization that is both connected and not connected to the establishment.

²⁵ Anita Shapira, "The Rise and Fall of the Labor Movement," in: *Hahalicha al Kav Ha'ofek* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1988), p. 369.

members will be involved in all spheres, and not confine themselves to the decision-making or election process. The egalitarian foundations of the kibbutz also dictate the desire to achieve equality in terms of power and social influence; once again, this cannot be ensured merely by passive – or even active – participation in the general meeting, but through active participation in all manifestations and spheres of activity on the kibbutz.

The “general meeting,” which typically meets once a week, functions as the quintessential manifestation of this democracy, symbolizing the overall character of kibbutz life and the cohesion of the different aspects of life and the different internal authorities. The general meeting functions as an integrative framework balancing the principles that guide the various spheres of activity (such as economic considerations versus social or educational ones), or the interests of distinct social or organizational groups. The constitutional function of the general meeting is reflected in policy setting and in developing the principles that guide the different spheres of activity; in approving the economic and work plan; in determining the expenditure budget and investment plan; and in discussing cases that raise important precedents. The general meeting also fills a communicative and social function as a social encounter of all the strata on the kibbutz.²⁷

The organizational structure of the kibbutz is based on committees responsible for addressing different spheres of life, and on a system of “branches” (work groups). The committees are devoted to specific spheres (culture, health, education, etc.), or to coordination between spheres (the kibbutz secretariat, the economic committee, and the work committee). The principal officials are: The secretary, who is responsible for coordinating social activity; the economic coordinator, who is responsible for coordinating economic activity; the treasurer, responsible for the financial system; the work coordinator, responsible for the allocation of personnel to the various branches, services, and other spheres of activity.

Kibbutz administration is characterized by several unique features. In particular: The officials are not appointed but elected, and the overall evaluation of their personality and character plays an important role alongside their objective capabilities; the officials have

²⁶ It is important to stress, however, that the economic ramifications of leaving the kibbutz also serve as a significant disincentive.

²⁷ On this aspect, see: Menachem Rosner, Nani Cohen, *Hademokratiya Vehakibbutz* (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Hapoalim, 1988).

a fixed term of office, usually from one to three years; there is no formal definition of a hierarchy, and all positions are considered to be of equal value; the definition of the obligations and rights of the officials is usually informal and based on their personality; most of the positions occupy only part of the individual's time, and are secondary to his/her principal work. Thus the organizational structure of the kibbutz is based on a structure of multifaceted social relations.²⁸

Another characteristic feature are the motives for action, rewards, and the system of social inspection. On kibbutz, there is no correlation between material reward and the standard of performance. Inspection of implementation takes place largely through public opinion, thus avoiding a hierarchy of inspection and authority. As the result of the involvement of most members in the responsibility for managing society and for decision making, and due to the principle of rotation in positions, it is essential that a large number of members take an active part in filling these positions each year. This creates the problem of how to motivate members to fill positions which, in many cases, require an investment of work after completing the regular working day and which offer no material advantages or advantages in terms of prestige and status. On kibbutz, the willingness to fill positions usually relates to the satisfaction that comes from filling the position per se, and from the personal advancement this entails in terms of the individual's level of identification with the kibbutz and their willingness to accept the authority of social decisions of their own free will – precisely those components that would later come to be known as social capital.

The arrangements for cooperative consumption on kibbutz are based on the responsibility of the kibbutz to meet the full range of individual needs, including attention to the particular needs of particular individuals. The level at which these needs are met is determined according to collective considerations. In the early period, the “Pioneering” tasks of the kibbutz and the needs to build a self-sufficient economy entailed a poor standard of living. This did not reflect an ascetic philosophy, but was essentially the product of economic considerations and an affinity to a particular way of life. As the economy developed, and against the backdrop of economic changes in Israel as a whole,

²⁸ Chaim Barkai, *Hitpatchut Hameshek Hakibbutzi* (Jerusalem: Falk Institute, 1980), pp. 114-117.

the standard of living on kibbutz rose, and patterns of distribution and supply began to develop that also meet personal aspirations.

The organization of consumption is based in part of institutions that supply commodities or services directly to members (dining room, laundry, sewing shop, etc.) and partly on external institutions (medical treatment, vacations, etc.) Various methods of distribution realize in varying degrees the guiding principle in consumption: To each according to their needs, within the capability of the kibbutz.

Thus the complete correlation of the private and public domains and the totality of identification subsume the individual to the will of the whole, creating the mental commitments and psychological blocks that mitigate against abandoning the framework. The higher the level of devotion demanded of the individual, the greater the social cohesion required in order to compensate members for their personal sacrifices and in order to provide moral and psychological support in times of crisis. Naturally, the higher the level of demands from the individual, and the higher the level of identification required with the social structure, the smaller the number of those capable of meeting these expectations. The perceived glory of indigence and poverty and the view that the egalitarian meek were superior to those who are not “allies” developed in a natural manner. Elitism was one of the rewards created by society in order to compensate kibbutz members for voluntarily foregoing their personal interest, individual benefit, and other mundane pleasures.

Kibbutz and State

Without ideological Socialist motivation, it is difficult to imagine that the kibbutz movement could have been established or could have survived. After the emergence of this unique form of life, however, it emerged that in addition to its inherent value, it also served as an extremely important instrument in the process of Zionist colonization in Israel.²⁹

²⁹ Anita Shapira, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

Given the absence of a sovereign governmental framework capable of enforcing the recruitment of personnel and resources by law, the recruitment of personnel and resources in the *Yishuv* could not be based on state coercion. Accordingly, it was conditional on the maintenance of a collectivist ideological orientation, and in the existence of secondary units mediating between the individual and national and class-based collective.³⁰

The collectivist ethos was embedded, whether consciously or otherwise, in all facets of cognition and consideration in the *Yishuv*. The sense of being part of a small *Yishuv* facing threatening enemies; of being part of a national movement involved in a struggle to realize its destiny, was instrumental in nurturing an ethos in which the individual was required to be willing to sacrifice comfort, self-fulfillment, and, when necessary, his or her life for the sake of supreme social values. The solidarity of life in the *Yishuv* blended with traditional Jewish solidarity; jointly, these features helped emphasize the importance of the whole as opposed to the individual. These strata were common to all sections of the *Yishuv*, producing a highly political community. An additional stratum was Socialism, a work view that glorifies the general benefit of society as opposed to the benefit of the individual members thereof. Society is perceived as a unit with a will of its own and with common interests, motivated by processes that are beyond the control or will of the individual. While the ultimate destination is the uplifting of humanity, the path to realizing this goal leads through class solidarity and a willingness on the part of individuals to play their part for the greater good. Suppressing the egotistical instinct – the inherent negative impulse of humans – is achieved through educating individuals to view themselves as merely one small component within a great social system. Individual glory depends on the glory of the system as a whole. The process of sublimating the negative impulse is even more evident in avant-garde circles molded according to this principle; these educated youth to imagine that they faced each day the trial of their peers, and to fear lest they be found unworthy of the society of which they formed part.

Commitment to ideological goals was viewed not as a commitment to universalistic and abstract values, but rather as service to a specific human collective: On the fundamental

³⁰ Dan Horwitz, Moshe Lisak, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

level – the people, the class, or both; on the operative level – the movement of political party embodying collective needs as perceived by the elite that carried the ideology.³¹

The kibbutz movements were the bodies that were best able to supply the leaders of the economy with the personnel they needed for special, long-term, and arduous tasks. Public opinion within these frameworks glorified volunteers and took a poor view of those who were slow to offer their services, constituting a motivating factor of the utmost importance. Moreover, the kibbutz framework provided economic support for volunteers and their families while they performed national service; they had no need to fear they would lose their job or see their farm go untended.³²

Two parallel processes occurred: the center of gravity on the kibbutzim shifted to roles in the national realm, and a direct correlation emerged between the level of social cohesion and affinity to the collective and the level of devotion to national tasks. During the 1930s, when the arrival of immigrants with different ideologies and the nascent emergence of an urban capitalist society foiled hopes for the immediate emergence of a Jewish Socialist society in Palestine, the kibbutzim modified and limited their vision. Some continued to view themselves as the avant-garde for a future society, charged with the advancement of society as a whole, but others took on the more passive role of a prototype, in the sense of a group exemplifying through their life and behavior the shape of a future society that might be tardy, but would surely come. Those who viewed themselves as an avant-garde soon faced the contradiction between their desire to act – an inherent quality of an avant-garde – and the limited scope of activity in the Socialist realm. Almost without it being noticed, the revolutionary zeal that sought an outlet found one in the national sphere.³³

Changing Realities

³¹ Zeev Sternhal, *Binyan Uma o Tikkun Chevra* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1995), pp. 55-57.

³² Anita Shapira, "From *Yishuv* to State: The Components that Did Not Transfer," in: Yehuda Reinheartz, Yossef Shalmon and Gideon Shim'oni (Eds.), *Leumiyut Vepolitika Yehudit* (Jerusalem, Merkaz Zalman Shazzar, 1997) p. 257.

³³ Anita Shapira, "The Rise and Fall of the Labor Movement," p. 371.

Even before the establishment of the state, changes began to emerge within the Labor movement, and particularly in MAPAI,³⁴ the dominant political party in the institutions of the *Yishuv*, in terms of the relative weight of the affinity to the class collective relative to the affinity to the national collective. The particularistic class framework ceased to be the focus for collectivist actions designed to realize both class-based and national ideals. This change received ideological endorsement in the approach adopted by David Ben Gurion (one of the leaders of the *Yishuv*, Israel's first prime minister, and the "leader of the nation") who coined the formula "from class to people." After independence, this approach paved the way for the transformation of the movement-based frameworks for recruitment into state frameworks. The collectivist orientation also developed dramatically. In place of voluntary commitment to movement frameworks through which the individual realized their affiliation to the collective, the individual could now be coerced to participate in the collective national effort through legal means.³⁵

Thus statism replaced voluntarism; tasks were no longer filled with regard to ideological or social motives, but on the basis of loyalty to the position, the hierarchy, and the governmental system. Affinities in the spiritual realm were no longer a motivating force, and were replaced by passive discipline, with a shift in emphasis from the mental state to functional capability.³⁶

The establishment of the United States was accompanied by a debate on the principled issue of the desirable extent of centralization in the new nation.³⁷ By contrast, the process by which functions and authorities were transferred from the *Yishuv* society to the State of Israel was marked by the absence of any discussion as to whether this was a desirable process, and whether a governmental structure in which the state is responsible for all spheres of life was the optimum model for the Jewish state. As in so many cases, fateful decisions were made in an almost cavalier fashion, without anyone considering the significance or the long-term ramifications of these choices. The young state adopted the centralized statist model popular in the Communist nations and in many states whose

³⁴ The Party of the Workers of the Land of Israel.

³⁵ Dan Horwitz and Moshe Lisak, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

³⁶ Anita Shapira, "From *Yishuv* to State: The Components that Did Not Transfer," p. 260.

independence was preceded by a process of national liberation. Authority, initiative, and responsibility all stem from a single source: the state. Not only were particularistic bodies deprived of their authority, but they were even depicted as illegitimate; a secondary system of loyalties was considered to impair citizens' exclusive loyalty to the state.

This excessive enthusiasm for the transfer of functions and responsibility from society to the state was an understandable phenomenon. After two thousand years of authority not based in law, there must have been something appealing in finally casting aside the ambivalence and vagueness that had characterized the Jewish community and the *Yishuv* society, and in preferring clear definitions of authority and government. In Israel, *Mamlakhtiyut*³⁸ (statism) became the ideology of centralized government that does not shirk from intensive involvement in all spheres of life – policy, army, economics, welfare, development, and even in shaping public opinion and the guiding ethos. In this respect, the origins of Israeli democracy lay not in the Anglo-Saxon regimes, which developed from the bottom up, from local governmental structures, but rather in the authoritarian governmental tradition prevalent in Eastern Europe during the first half of the twentieth century, brought to Israel by the leaders of the state, and combined with an ideological affinity and organizational admiration for Bolshevik systems of government. Israeli society paid a price for this wholesale adoption of statism, in the form of the loss of initiative on the part of individuals and social bodies, and their declining sense of responsibility for developments in the state. The inherent message of all these changes was that the era of the collectivist ethos had passed.

As already noted, the state ostensibly needed to engender a fundamental change in cognitive perceptions, and accordingly one would expect the messages conveyed by policy setters and opinion makers to reflect the new trends. In reality, however, at least as far as the 1950s are concerned, investigation shows that for the most part there was still an assumption that the collectivist ethos continued to enjoy hegemony. The principle

³⁷ A debate that led to the drafting of the “Federalist” documents, studied to this day in political science departments around the world.

³⁸ The Hebrew term *Mamlakhtiyut*, translated here as “statism,” is one of the underlying principles of post-independence Israel, determining that all sections of society must act

of the “Working Land of Israel,” recruitment to help the people, settling in remote areas, living a simple and egalitarian life, opposition to careerism and ambition, and a hatred for everything associated with the concept of “politics” – all these slogans were disseminated through the state media.³⁹

There was an internal contradiction between the ideals of the youth movements, with their inherent collectivist ethos and over messages as carried by the media, and the unconscious messages broadcast by the political system, which demanded professionalization, achievementism, and a struggle by the individual to achieve a prominent place in society; between the position of the kibbutz at the top of social values and the demand that society’s best youth should join the standing army, study in university, and even find their place in the government machinery.⁴⁰

Changing Consciousness

Despite the dissonance noted above, a change in consciousness was also to accompany the changing realities, albeit belatedly. The kibbutz was perceived as the quintessential product of the Second *Aliyah*. The entire national leadership spent some part of their life on kibbutz, and thus underwent a process of kibbutz socialization. Nothing is more symbolic than the fact that by the late 1960s and early 1970s, as the Second *Aliyah* generation left political center stage, the kibbutz also experienced changes in its national and social status which, as will emerge below, were also to influence its functioning and internal cohesion.

During these years, a new form of Israeli settlement emerged, challenging the centrality of kibbutz and creating an antithesis to its essence. The “Development Towns” were

through the state and in the interests of the nation as a whole, subsuming sectarian differences and identities.

³⁹ A cursory study of the newspapers, official speeches, visual images, and public ceremonies is sufficient to reveal the continued vitality of the fundamental social images of society and of the *Yishuv* – the image of the “Pioneer” and the image of Socialism. See: Shmuel Noach Eisenstadt, Chaim Adler, Rivka Bar Yosef, Reuven Kahane, *Yisrael – Chevra Mithava* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1972), pp. 6-13; Oz Almog, *Hatzabar – Diokan* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1998).

⁴⁰ Anita Shapira, “From *Yishuv* to State: The Components that Did Not Transfer,” p. 262.

born from the practical need during the early years of the state both to settle areas of Israel where there were relatively few Jews, and to find housing solutions for the mass wave of immigration experienced by the new state – and particularly for the immigrants from the Islamic countries.

The geographical dispersion of the development towns created a situation where they were in close proximity to the kibbutzim. The towns were supposed to provide an urban hinterland for the kibbutzim; in practice, however, the economic and social strength of the kibbutzim and the emerging process of industrialization produced a completely different picture. The kibbutzniks were quick to identify the need for a transition to an industrial economy, and to integrate factories alongside agricultural labor. However, industry – unlike agriculture – also brought with it the need for a professional hierarchy of laborers and professional managers, planners and executors, labor and capital. As well as posing a problem for the internal vision of egalitarianism on the kibbutz, this situation also created conflict with the urban environment. Instead of the development towns functioning as centers for the kibbutzim in the region, the kibbutzim became a magnet for workers from the development towns, who found employment in factories managed by the kibbutzniks. Thus hired labor became commonplace and accepted. It emerged that kibbutz society, which has been successful in imposing egalitarian norms within its own confines, finds it difficult to do this in its contacts with external agents. The relations between the kibbutz and its immediate environment became increasingly charged and sensitive.⁴¹

Throughout the 1970s – a period that may broadly be considered a watershed in the life of the kibbutz, as in other social phenomena in Israel – these relations became increasingly complex. The various factions of the Labor movement, and the central party of government MAPAI, which were broadly identified with practical Zionism and with the early years of the state, began to lose their glamour following a series of failures, corruption, scandals and tensions. This situation reached its peak during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 – a war that caused many of the underlying currents in Israeli society to rise to the surface.

The damage caused to the social and political establishment and to Israel's founding elites had a direct impact on public attitudes toward the kibbutz. Since for many years the kibbutz had served as the ideological and physical shop window for the Labor movement, which had in turn been the dominant and decisive force in the state, any damage to the Labor movement's status also led to a discernible and significant devaluation in the status of the kibbutz. The kibbutzim were unequivocally identified with the establishment, and as the latter lost its greatness and came to be viewed in negative terms, the kibbutz also lost its status as the jewel in the Zionist crown.⁴² The kibbutz was transformed from a national symbol to a sectarian symbol, highly identified in political terms and hence arousing opposition or rejections from other sectors. As these sectors grew in strength and moved from the sidelines of Israeli society to center stage – a process of growth that was first expressed in political terms in the dramatic elections of 1977, which brought Menachem Begin and the right-wing movements to power – they no longer felt any sense of commitment toward the kibbutzim. On the contrary, the new leadership not only lacked any identification with the values and heritage of the kibbutz, but actually saw it as a typical, and hence illegitimate, manifestation of the old guard. Moreover, the newly-powerful leadership drew its electoral strength and support from those immigrants from Islamic countries who had come to Israel en masse in the early years of the state – immigrants who were settled in the development towns, and some of whom were employed in the kibbutzim. These immigrants bore a grudge against the kibbutzniks, whom they viewed as representing their mirror-image – Ashkenazis, well-established in Israel, secular, left-wing, and so on.⁴³

⁴¹ Avraham Pavin, *Ze Im Ze O Ze Leyad Ze: Dinamika shel Yachasei Gomlin bein Kibbutzim V'ayarot Pituach* (Haifa: Institute for the Study of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea, Discussion Paper #78, 1987), pp. 12-13.

⁴² Menachem Rosner, *Hakibbutz Vehachevra Hayisraelit 1989* (Haifa: Institute for the Study of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea, Position Paper #92, 1989), pp. 13-14; Uriel Levitan, *Adatiut, Biografia o Demografia - Ma Kovei'a klapei Hakibbutz?* (Haifa: Institute for the Study of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea, Discussion Paper #103, 1990).

⁴³ Israeli public consciousness maintains a vivid memory of an election speech by Menachem Begin, prime minister and leader of the right-wing ruling party, who gave a speech in a development town in which he referred to the millionaire kibbutznikim who wallow in their

Social and economic changes also contributed to the challenge to the status of kibbutz. As Israel developed and grew stronger, changes occurred in prevailing values. In place of the value of egalitarianism that had played a central role in a society coping with shortage, liberty now became the ultimate value lauded by society.⁴⁴ Cooperation, equality, and responsibility are no longer perceived as key norms; accordingly, when people seek communal forms of settlement, they look not to the kibbutzim but to forms of communal settlement that provide a social framework and communal affiliation without requiring economic cooperation or all-embracing mutual liability. The statistics show that from this point on, almost no new kibbutzim have been established, with the exception of geographical points important to Israel's defense – locations where there is still a need for this effective model for cooperative settlement. This, however, is a classic example of the exception that proves the rule.

Despite the changes in Israel's collectivist orientation, the kibbutz movement continued to nurture the affinity of the individual to the movement collective as the basis of the kibbutz way of life. However, the self-image of a central national role that had dominated the kibbutz movement was impaired by the fact that membership of a kibbutz was no longer perceived by the general public as implying a contribution to achieving the objectives of the national collective. These changes led to a changing emphasis in the ideology of the kibbutz movement itself. The self-image of the kibbutznik as a pioneer in the service of the nation weakened, and was replaced by a stronger emphasis on the material and cultural standard of life within the kibbutz, including the contribution made by the values of cooperation and egalitarianism to the economic security and social welfare of the individual. The weakening connection within the kibbutz movement between the affinity to the movement collective, on the one hand, and the national collective, on the other, eventually led to a centrifugal movement of the kibbutz from the center to the periphery – a movement which, as noted, reached its peak in the alienation

swimming pools, isolated from events in Israeli society and from the problems facing other citizens; the crowd roared its approval.

⁴⁴ Some have even gone so far as to argue that economic prosperity and plenty actually dealt a death blow to the kibbutz, a system established to cope with conditions of scarcity and capable of surviving only in such conditions.

of the kibbutz movement from the political establishment during the period of Likud rule.⁴⁵

The decline of the Labor movement also marks the beginning of the decline of the statism of Israel's early years, i.e. a decline in the state and the renewed emergence of civil society, offering a diverse range of structures and bodies mediating between the individual and government. Yet while one might have expected that the re-entry of society into the picture would also benefit the kibbutz, which had been a principal pillar of society some fifty years earlier, it became evident that in modern Israel society, the kibbutz is perceived as an excessively pressuring society, and as the carrier of outmoded values or values that do not enjoy public prestige and status. The kibbutz is seen as a community with its future behind it, only capable of serving either as a "nature reserve" or bastion of nostalgia for some, or as a red rag symbolizing difficult and bitter years for others.⁴⁶

The Decline of Voluntarism

An examination of the condition of voluntarism within the kibbutz is interesting both because the kibbutz as an organization emphasizes this aspect and views it as a supreme value, and because of the unbreakable connection created on kibbutz between a place of residence, a community, a commercial system, and a voluntary organization.⁴⁷

The kibbutz is a voluntary organization with clear patterns of affiliation and departure; with a constitution, goals, and objectives to realize; with an internal division into groups; and with members bearing obligations and rights. However, while long-standing definitions of voluntary organizations perceive these as addressing one or two aspects of the members' life, and as limited to a restricted field in terms of goals, activities, and

⁴⁵ Yonina Talmon-Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-263.

⁴⁶ Baruch Kanei-Paz, "Israel toward the Year 2000: A Changing World," in: Moshe Lisak and Barukh Kanei-Paz (Eds.), *Yisrael Likrat Shnat Alpayim*, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996), pp. 419-427.

⁴⁷ Ben-Rafael, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-42.

members,⁴⁸ the kibbutz is a total voluntary organization⁴⁹ that addresses many, if not all, of the aspects of its members' lives, including health, security, education, housing, leisure, employment, and welfare.

In the case of the kibbutz, voluntary affiliation to the organization usually took place in the founding generation. The founders associated in a group, formulated their goals and methods, "set their stake down" on the ground, and established the kibbutz. As in many other organizations, the second generation, and to a large extent the third, did not choose to join the group, but was born and raised in it. Like its parents, the new generation was free to leave at any time, but the totality underlying the kibbutz made such a decision very difficult. In this case, leaving meant a comprehensive change in the character and way of life, entering a reality that in many cases was viewed as alien and contrary to kibbutz reality. Due to the ideological emphasis on cooperation and responsibility, those leaving were "labeled" as traitors, weak willed, or even ideological enemies.

Despite the psychological and physical obstacles that discourage leaving kibbutz, and as in other organizations, the kibbutz gauges its success by the extent to which the second and third generation remain on kibbutz; by its ability to persuade them to opt for kibbutz, to continue their membership of the organization, and hence to perpetuate the existence of the entire organization.⁵⁰ This situation naturally intensifies the environmental pressure on the member of the organization, however voluntary it may be, to remain and to continue membership.

Voluntarism is gauged not only in terms of the willingness to remain in the organization or community, but more importantly by the willingness to be an active part of this system, i.e. to take part in the decision-making process and in realizing these decisions; to initiate and cooperate with other members in acting in the interests of the organization; and to maintain mutual relations of assistance and liability with the organization and its individual members.

⁴⁸ Some of the classic definitions may be found in: Constance Smith and Anne Freedman, *Voluntary Associations: Perspective on the Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 1-33; J. Rolan Pennock, John W. Chapman (Eds.), *Voluntary Associations* (New York: Atherton Press, 1969).

⁴⁹ As defined by Goffman.

In this respect, external changes have been closely related to the internal situation. While kibbutzniks of the first, and perhaps the second generation thought in terms of giving to the state and to society, acted accordingly, and acquired status in this manner, the members of the third generation, born into a reality in which society at large has turned its back on the kibbutz, have already begun to think in privatized terms of meeting needs, and to act accordingly. The needs are dictated by society as a whole, as in the past, but the melody has changed: no longer group or national fulfillment, but instead personal fulfillment and individualism. This change has influenced voluntarism, not only in terms of the willingness of the second and third generation to remain on kibbutz, but in terms of their motivation and willingness to contribute to the workforce and to fill organizational positions. This aspect is of central importance, since in the absence of differential economic rewards, the value of the individual on kibbutz is determined according to their place in the workforce. The prestige enjoyed by individuals is based on the positions they fill and their contribution to the organization. When cracks appear in this crucial principle, the group finds itself financing people regardless of the output or contribution, or finds itself dependent on paid workers to fill positions that were formerly filled by members on a voluntary basis.

A review of the statistics collected on these aspects in recent years (see appendix) reflects significant changes in the opinions and actions of kibbutz members with regard to the ramifications of voluntarism.

The Rise and Fall of the Kibbutz

Connecting theory and reality, we find that the kibbutz is a place that might almost be considered to have been born to create social capital. This is an egalitarian and bridging organization along the lines of the secondary voluntary organization maintaining direct personal relations; it is “member-oriented” rather than “leader-oriented,” thus enabling the creation of mutuality and trust; it may certainly be considered a horizontal and non-

⁵⁰ Uri Levitan, *Gorme' Hazika shel Bnei Hakibbutz Lakibbutzim Vesibot La'azivatam* (Haifa: Institute for the Study of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea, 1980), pp. 9-20.

hierarchic organization; it offers members numerous high-quality opportunities to take on responsibility, implement tasks, and show involvement; it is based on an ideology and norms underpinning the members' actions; and the commitment of the individuals to the organization and to other individuals is high.⁵¹

However, several aspects distinguish the kibbutz from the classic voluntary organizations studied in the literature.⁵² While Putnam and Nostarum argue that mutual trust and cooperation are created after years of acquaintance, common residence, and coping with the same difficulties – coping that leads to the growth of similar norms and relations of cooperation⁵³ – on kibbutz, comprehensive cooperation (due to economic and defense constraints) comes first, while the norms and relations follow on. Unlike mutual assistance organizations that developed in existing villages, where the goal of the organization was to reinforce solidarity in the village or region, the kibbutz offers a model of a rural community established from the outset with a voluntary organization and with mechanisms for egalitarianism, cooperation, and far-reaching mutual liability.

Moreover, on kibbutz residence, work, studies, and most aspects of life take place within the organizational framework; accordingly, individual and general trust are more forcefully created. While the opponents of the argument concerning the importance of voluntary organizations in creating social capital note the workplace, the place of residence, the family, and the school as places that are more important in creating such capital, the kibbutz unifies all these aspects.⁵⁴

On a broader level, the kibbutz may be viewed as a quintessential example of an organization established for certain goals that also realizes other goals through creating available social capital. This is an intentional organization – a voluntary organization that produces public goods. Even if it seeks only to realize its primary goals and is not responsible for other goals, it serves these primary goals for a wide range of players beyond those who initiated the action.⁵⁵ In the specific case of the kibbutz and Jewish

⁵¹ Stolle, p. 503.

⁵² Tocqueville and his followers discuss neighborhood associations, choirs, cooperatives, sports clubs, and mass movements.

⁵³ Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, p. 169.

⁵⁴ Stolle, p. 503.

⁵⁵ Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

society in Israel, these primary goals were nation building, social reform, “redeeming the land,” surviving in a hostile environment, and creating an infrastructure of vital collective norms.

These norms form the heart of social capital as manifested on kibbutz, since, as Coleman argues, “When an effective norm does exist, it constitutes a powerful, but sometime fragile, form of social capital... A prescriptive norm that constitutes an especially important form of social capital within a collectivity is the norm that one should forgo self-interests to act in the interests of the collectivity. A norm of this sort, reinforced by social support, status, honor, and other rewards, is the social capital which builds young nations (and which dissipates as they grow older), strengthens families by leading members to act selflessly in the family’s interest, facilitates the development of a nascent social movement from a small group of dedicated, inward-looking, and mutually rewarding persons, and in general leads persons to work for the public good. In some of these cases the norms are internalized; in others they are largely supported through external rewards for selfless action and disapproval for selfish action... This social capital, however, not only facilitates certain actions but also constrains others.”⁵⁶

As with other forms of social capital, the collectivist norm on kibbutz was the result of other social actions⁵⁷ that in turn constituted a response to external constraints. Once the norm was created, however, and achieved success in the field (the kibbutzim proved to be the best and most effective form of life in Israel in the early twentieth century), social capital on kibbutz not only helped the members of the kibbutz movement in their contacts with the external environment, but also “exported” and “colored” the entire *Yishuv* with its brand of Constructivist Socialism, or at least with shades of egalitarianism, cooperation, and mutual liability.

In this manner we may bridge Coleman’s perception of social capital, emphasizing individuals in society, with that developed by Putnam, which places greater emphasis on social groups – the same relations between individuals in a small group, the same personal trust, personal networks, and local cooperation, are exported by the group to other groups in its environs. The level of sociological analysis changes in this case, but

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 310-311.

⁵⁷ Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 170, footnote 40.

the concepts and phenomena remain stable. Personal trust acquires the form of group trust; the frameworks increase in scope and number of members; and the norms are extended to cover broader groups and sectors within an entire given society. One may still speak of the resource of players (groups) within society (a state, for our purposes) assisting joint action and intensifying cohesion, on the one hand, while also capable, on the other, of leading to the emergence of such phenomena as closedness or stagnation, if it adopts one of its negative manifestations.

If this is indeed the case, then those primary sources of social capital, the members of the small group supplying social capital to its environment, should win social “bonus points” in terms of prestige or status. This is precisely what happened in the case of the kibbutz: affiliation to the kibbutz movement was perceived, both by the members themselves and by the surrounding society, as affiliation to an elite which, while it might not provide rewards in terms of physical capital, equipped its members with enhanced esteem and social standing, in turn increasing the individuals’ sense of self-worth and enabling them to overcome the difficulties created by life in such a collective and total organization as the kibbutz. Thus this case is consonant with the relevant theoretical angle Pierre Bordier addresses when he notes the association of social capital with the advantages that accrue to individuals from their membership of a given group, organization, or community. Thus a cycle is created in which the kibbutzniks produce and export social capital for their group and for the surrounding society; the surrounding society in turn rewards them with status, prestige, admiration, etc.; these rewards help the kibbutzniks overcome the inherent difficulties of kibbutz life, and they therefore act in the kibbutz, volunteer, accept responsibility, and initiate; and thus they create social capital for their group and for the surrounding society, and so on.

Since many of the advantages of actions creating social capital are “Public Goods”, i.e., they are obtained by people who did not participate in these actions, it is not in the interests of these people that such activities should take place. Thus a situation emerges whereby most of the forms of social capital are created or destroyed as a side-effect of other actions.⁵⁸ Such destruction may be a side-effect of ideological changes moving from collectivist values to more individualistic values such as self-fulfillment or

privatization; such destruction may also accompany changes in physical factors, such as the arrival of plenty or wealth that reduce the objective or subjective need for joint action and cooperation in order to overcome difficulties and solve vexing problems. Another force for destruction or erosion is the external intervention of government or other agencies with influence over society as a whole – agencies that operate directly with regard to individuals, reducing the need of these individuals for each other, and hence reducing cooperation, mutual relations, and reciprocity among themselves.⁵⁹

In our case study, all these eroding factors operated in tandem. Ideological change or changing social values in Israeli society, as it reached maturation, shifted the emphasis from the group to the individual, thus also leading to an erosion in the status and value of the kibbutz and of the kibbutz member. At the same time, society experienced a transition from scarcity and threat to relative plenty and security. Changing conditions also changed the rules of the game – relative security means that there is no longer a need for settlements to guard the borders in peripheral regions; the transition from agriculture to the industrial and post-industrial eras displaces the land and the connection to the land from their central status; and economic prosperity leads to a shift from the value pole that blended egalitarianism, cooperation, and restraint. The connection between the voluntary organization and the state also emerges as destructive when an excessively obvious political affiliation leads to the party political identification of the organization, and even to a dependence that impairs the organization's broader social and national status, and hence its ability to continue to function as an important source of general trust and other forms of social capital.

Once such erosion begins, the benign circle described above is reversed; in the new vicious circle, declining demand for such capital outside the organization leads to a concomitant decline in demand internally, and to a reduction in the scope of such capital.⁶⁰ Social networks are weakened, trust becomes more limited, and mutuality, or the expectation thereof, become gradually less important. Evasion and defection from performing functions, or from the organization as a whole, also become increasingly

⁵⁸ Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 320-321.

⁶⁰ Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

common. In the next stage, the voluntarism of the voluntary organization is impaired, leading to far-reaching changes in its character, its defined goals, and the goals of its members, as well as in internal organization and its relations with its environment.

However, the changes the Israeli kibbutz is undergoing should not be viewed as merely technical. In fact, these changes relate to profound values, and the change has a revolutionary character. Viewed according to the yardstick of the central kibbutz values – egalitarianism, cooperation, and responsibility – the changes can no longer be considered a form of continuity. The kibbutz is presently in search of a different core definition.⁶¹ A diverse range of changes show that this search relates to all spheres and strata, and reflects changing values as perceived by people who live on kibbutz:

- Financial incentives for those who fill public positions.
- Financial rewards for those who work overtime.
- Abolition of rotation in key positions on the kibbutz.
- The increased strength of professional committees at the expense of the general meeting of kibbutz members.
- Replacement of the general meeting by an elected representative council.
- Perception of each work branch or field as an economic enterprise (a “profit center”).
- Economic separation from the community.
- Collaboration with private promoters.
- Transfer of the responsibility for children care from the kibbutz to the parents.
- Allowing members freedom of choice in employment.
- Extending the budget provided for each family, and increasing the family’s ability to decide how this should be spent.
- Payments for meals in the common dining room.
- Closure of the common dining room, or cancellation of some of the meals served therein.

⁶¹ Shlomi Ravid, *Normot Ve'arakhim – Hemshekhiut o Mahapekha* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishers, 1999), pp. 12-23.

This partial yet significant list reflects a withdrawal from cooperation in various facets of life and in determining the communal agenda. Cooperation remains in areas where it is worthwhile in terms of economic interests, rather than from a perception of cooperation as a value in its own right. A significant erosion may also be seen in the value of responsibility: the responsibility of the kibbutz for the education, employment, etc. of the member, and members' responsibility toward the kibbutz, including their willingness to participate in general public activities, their trust in the organization and its members, and the vital facet of mutual liability. Communalism and solidarity, reflected in the desire to educate, experience, and recruit together, have also declined.

The eternal triangle underpinning and accompanying the social sciences – individual, society, and state – appears here in its full glory. In this case, social capital navigates the space delineated by the sides of this triangle. Is it necessarily true that a stronger society implies a weaker state? Might a stronger society actually increase the effectiveness of government? Is it in the state's interest to promote the creation and distribution of social capital given its contribution to democracy? The test case of the of the Israeli kibbutz shows that state-engendered injury to social mediation bodies, with the goal of strengthening the state and the affinity of citizens thereto, damages the production of social capital in the mediation bodies and in society as a whole.