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CONTENTS

1. ARTICLES

- Achouch, Y. To Reconstruct Inequality: Remuneration for Work and Actors' Strategies to Increase Income in the Kibbutz 3
- Gidarakou, I., Xenou, A. and Theofilidou, K. Farm Women's New Vocational Activities: Prospects and Problems of Women's Cooperatives and Small On-Farm Businesses in Greece 19
- Greenberg, O. The Principle of Temporary Residence in a Collective Community 39
- Romero, A.J. Psycho-Social Approach to the Associated Worker Cooperativism in Andalusia, Spain 49

2. BOOK REVIEWS

- Cernea, M.M. (ed.) The Economics of Involuntary Resettlement: Questions and Challenges
J.O. Maos 63
- Kowalak, T. Marginality and social marginalization
W. Nieciuński 65
- Handoussa, H. (ed.) Economic Transition in the Middle East, Global Challenges and Adjustment Strategies
S. Maron 67
- Shafik, N. (ed.) Prospects for Middle Eastern and North African Economies, From Boom to Bust and Back?
S. Maron 69
- Shafik, N. (ed.) Economic Challenges Facing Middle East and North African Countries, Alternative Futures
S. Maron 71

3. CURRENT INFORMATION

- Dissertation Abstracts 75

To Reconstruct Inequality: Remuneration for Work and Actors' Strategies to Increase Income in the Kibbutz*

by

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Abstract

In the kibbutz debate about changes, payment for work of the members is considered a fundamental change. Several kibbutzim have experienced this change since the beginning of the 1990s. What actually happens in a kibbutz community after it starts paying members for their work? How do people react to this change? Is it a final change or only a step toward a deeper change, such as the introduction of differential wages? These questions are treated in this paper. On the basis of qualitative data, it is suggested that: The different prevalent agreements of payment for members' work result in unequal opportunities to work for money. First and foremost, they seem to upset the classic stratification by discriminating against the highest strata (managers in the economic and social sectors). More than seven years after the introduction of remuneration for work, no stable rules have been found and this topic is in perpetual negotiation. Finally, Bourdieu's theory of social field seems to provide adapted tools to describe and explain the process involved in this specific change: with financial reward from work the kibbutz community figures as a social field where all the actors (the members) are involved. In this field, the increase of members' private income from work is at issue. To achieve this aim, the actors developed different strategies. But beyond the manifest and short-term "struggle" for accumulation of economic capital, a latent struggle is discernible. In this, at stake is the completion of technocrats' domination of the kibbutz community and the predictable *coup de grace* to the egalitarian ideology.

Introduction

Many kibbutzim have been struck by economic crisis since the mid-1980s. What was first perceived as financial and temporary difficulties proved to be a deep, enduring, and multi-faceted crisis of the kibbutz movement, affecting culture and values (Ravid, 1999). A major outcome was a wide debate about changes, and since

*A previous version of this article has been given as a lecture at the 34th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology, Tel-Aviv, Israel, July 1999.

Thanks are due to Prof. Menachem Rosner for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of the article.

the end of the 1980s the kibbutz has been shaken by a wave of profound changes in all aspects of kibbutz life. It started with changes the ways goods are distributed ("privatization" in kibbutz jargon) and a retreat in participation, management, and direct democracy (Hellman, 1994; Rosner and Getz, 1996; Ben-Raphael, 1997:103). Over the last few years we have witnessed the spread of a more fundamental change: payment for members' work. If, in the early 1990s, only a few kibbutzim used to pay for overtime or roster in communal services (such as laundry or dining room) and in no case was there differential salary, by 1998, out of 226 kibbutzim, 66 remunerated for overtime and 11 had introduced differential salaries (Getz, 1998).

About the research

The findings presented are from a study sponsored by Yad Tabenkin on the results of a number of changes initiated in several kibbutzim. The first step was a survey of members' attitudes to the chosen changes a few years after their introduction (Pavin, 1998), followed by a qualitative study to capture the process of change in a few kibbutzim according to the actors' perspectives (Achouch and Rapaport, 1999). This paper focuses on the latter; the field work was done in the spring and summer of 1997. On the subject of this specific change, payment for overtime, 33 people were interviewed at three different kibbutzim.

Theory and changes in the kibbutz

Two different theoretical approaches to the recent changes in the kibbutz were published in the same year, and constituted the first phase of research on this topic. Ben-Raphael (1997:103) considers the kibbutz part of modern Western society, which is characterized by a dilemma regarding values. As such, the kibbutz is under constant tension between two values. One is the spirit of democracy, expressed, for example, in equality and solidarity, and the other is the spirit of capitalism, expressed in achievement and competition. This duality predominates in Western history and explains, for instance, the oscillation of American social policies throughout 20th century, between the welfare state and conservatism, evinced by both Democratic and Republican administrations (Bellah *et al.*, 1991). The radical change in organizational patterns realized in the contemporary kibbutz reflects a new phase in this dilemma about values: more individualist and closer to the capitalist pole of the tension, it still does not negate entirely the goal of equality and solidarity. This phase represents a new expression of kibbutz identity rather than a new kibbutz identity (Ben-Raphael, 1997:103).

Contrary to Ben-Raphael, who highlights the common features between the kibbutz and capitalistic democracy, Rosner and Getz (1996) see the kibbutz as belonging to a different paradigm. They insist on free will as the cornerstone of members' affiliation to the kibbutz, thus situating the kibbutz together with cooperatives and religious or secular intentional communities: an alternative society founded on particularistic values. The total disconnection between the work sphere

and the need sphere, expressed in the slogan “To each according to his needs from each according to his ability”, constitutes the core principle of the kibbutz and establishes its identity and its belonging to the cooperation paradigm. In this theoretical frame, the wind of change that has blown over the kibbutz for the last 15 years has separated it from its original identity. The changes are indeed imported to the kibbutz from external paradigms (privatization of the collective budget from the market paradigm, for instance, or boards of directors in kibbutz industry from the hierarchical paradigm). But Rosner and Getz findings show that they are generally adapted to components of the classic kibbutz, and accordingly call them “hybrid” changes. An example is the model of representative council, which flourishes in several kibbutzim alongside the general assembly. The representative council is a manifestation of the hierarchical type of society since it usually concentrates engagement in public affairs and the power to make decisions in the hands of an elected minority. But in the kibbutz the council’s discussions are often open to all or screened over the communal video channel as a way of increasing members’ participation (fidelity to cooperation paradigm). In other kibbutzim the council focuses on discussion and most of the decisions are voted by a referendum, which notably reduces its decision-making power (retention of a crucial element of the direct democracy). Rosner and Getz conclude that the changes weaken the genuine kibbutz identity, but it is still too early to predict future since the kibbutz is in a transitional phase of anomie concerning consensual values.

Ben-Raphael (1997) and Rosner and Getz (1997) provide a fruitful theoretical framework for comprehending the meaning of change process in the kibbutz, but they say very little about the results of this process. These authors base themselves on data of the early 1990s, when so fundamental a change as remunerated work was still not prevalent; nor had sufficient time elapsed for them to evaluate results.

Today, a few years later, a new phase in kibbutz research is opening that can present empirical findings regarding the results of the process of change in the kibbutz. This paper belongs to this phase, and focuses particularly on payment for members’ work.

Kibbutz, work, and literature

As mentioned in the introduction, kibbutzim generally started to remunerate members for marginal work (overtime, roster jobs, etc.). In the interviews the remuneration was often presented as:

- An effective means to increase motivation at work, where social rewards had lost their value;
- A way to ease the budgetary constraints of individuals following several years of severe restrictions in collective and personal expenses;
- A merited supplement in reward for devoted workers who enjoyed before this change the same standard of living as “free riders”;

- A merited reward for tasks requiring the investment of time and heavy responsibility for management in the economic or social sector.

Rosner (1990) and Rosner and Getz (1996) consider this change a direct blow to the kibbutz identity since the specific character of the kibbutz is defined as negating the connection between work and the individual needs of the members. Drawing from the experience of cooperatives in Europe and from communes in the United States, they suspect this renunciation of the core principle of the collective identity to be a one-way ticket to assimilation into the capitalist environment. Leviatan (1990) doubts the effectiveness of paid work in increasing worker motivation. He builds his argumentation on important studies conducted in Western countries on work and motivation, showing the low and problematic impact of wage increase on work motivation. He also raises the difficulty of the implementation of a system of payment on the kibbutz, and suggests possible alternatives to payment such as improvement of working conditions, advanced studies to improve workers' interest in their jobs, reorganization of tasks in team work, and so on. Beyond such theoretical considerations, the question is what actually happens in a kibbutz community after it starts paying members for their work.

Having set off on the long road to work remuneration, a kibbutz community faces numerous questions. What kind of work merits a salary? Should only "blue-collar work" such as factory production or agriculture be rewarded? Is it necessary and efficient to remunerate work on Saturdays in the communal services (such as the laundry or dining-room, known as jobs by roster) to increase the declining motivation of members, or would it be better to close down these services? Should administrative functions, such as general secretary, economic coordinator, or kibbutz treasurer, be rewarded? What is the right way to calculate remuneration for kibbutz members: a hourly rate? The specific task? The economic contribution of the individual to the collective income?

Our findings show that these questions are generally approached pragmatically. Once some of those questions are answered and work remuneration has become part of the kibbutz reality, how do people react to this change? Is it a final change or only a step toward deeper changes? After presentation of the different models of remuneration adopted by the three kibbutzim of this study, this paper attempts to answer these questions through three particular outcomes of work remuneration in the kibbutzim presented here. These are perpetual negotiation around remuneration; remunerated work and social stratification; and actors' strategies to increase private incomes.

Data

*Kibbutz Noam*¹

Noam is an old kibbutz, its economy resting on five activities: a metal industry, various agricultural crops, poultry, dairy-farming, and a nightclub/discotheque. Fifteen years of crisis had serious demographic consequences for the kibbutz: 60 members left the community (the youngest generally), and since hardly any new members were absorbed during this period, Noam's population greatly aged. Of its 140 members, 76 are 60 years old and over. This demographic feature progressively increased the difficulty of maintaining traditional services (kitchen, dining-room, laundry) and other vital activities such as tending cattle on the Saturday rest-day and holidays. The economic crisis also undermined the kibbutz capacity to sustain the usual level of welfare of its members.

Limitations on welfare and serious difficulty in functioning on Saturdays and holidays were the two reasons given in the interviews for the adoption of a pragmatic solution in Noam, namely remunerating members for overtime. Three ways of remuneration were devised.

The seasonal weeding in the cotton fields. For six weeks in spring, members are mobilized to weed in the cotton fields. The cotton-growing team arranges between 30 and 40 "stints" of four hours each, five afternoons a week and twice on Saturday. The three first stints by each member are still considered a communal duty, but from the fourth he or she earns NIS 60 per stint.² There is no limitation in number of stints.

Overtime work on Saturday and holidays. This is available to members who fulfilled their regular work duty and communal services in the previous year. Good functioning of communal services requires that members under 60 work one weekend a month. The general assembly authorized paid overtime in five branches of activity: dairy farming, agriculture, discotheque, dispensary, and the retirement home. Overtime is between three and six hours, depending on the needs of each activity, and is paid NIS 80 per stint.

The second budget. This is distributed according to the previous year's economic results of the kibbutz, and is divided among members differentially at the end of the year. This budget allocates points to members according to these parameters: seniority, communal responsibility (the three main public functions, namely general secretary, economic coordinator, and treasurer), hierarchy (managers of the different productive activities), and personal contribution by external workers (kibbutz members who work outside) with a salary of NIS 6,000 or more.

In 1996 the second budget allocated NIS 2,000 to members with the highest accumulation of points.

¹The names of the three kibbutzim are fictional.

²US\$1 = NIS (New Israeli Shekels) 4.

Kibbutz Chen

Situated in the heart of Israel, Chen's economy reflects geographic location. Its economy is based on numerous and varied occupations such as industry, agriculture, poultry, catering, apartment rental (70 rooms or apartments on the kibbutz are leased), rental of storage space, and other enterprises. Kindergarten and other educative services are sold to people who live in this highly urbanized area. This diversification of activity occurred during the last decade, years after a crisis struck hard at the traditional economic structure of Chen which is based on old-style industry and agriculture. At the end of the 1980s, in view of the serious hardship, a major program of change was initiated. One change was remuneration for members' work.

The model of remuneration at Chen. Two ways of individual remuneration for work exist at Chen:

- As at Noam, there is seasonal weeding, with a few differences: only twelve stints are needed to complete the job; no stints are considered unpaid duty but all remunerated; and participants earn NIS 100 for each four-hour stint;
- Remunerated overtime is possible only in the productive branches at an hourly rate of NIS 5.5 per hour, and is limited to 50 hours a month.

The main public functions (general secretary and economic coordinator) are automatically credited with 50 overtime hours. Other traditional kibbutz functionaries such as head of the educational, health, or culture committees, which in the past were considered as occupations in themselves, are now also credited with overtime remuneration as they are held in addition to a regular job. As for kibbutz members who work outside, a salary of NIS 10,000 at least carries credit for 50 overtime hours.

Kibbutz Beit Harakia³

This kibbutz lies in the south of Israel, and its economy rests essentially on agriculture, dairy farm, and an old-style industry. In addition to these traditional activities, many members work outside the kibbutz. Even before the crisis of the mid-1980s Beit Harakia lacked economic stability. The fall in revenues from agriculture, on the whole characteristic of this period in Israel, intensified the difficulties.

As at Noam and Chen, many young and middle-aged people left Beit Harakia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and here too a process of changes was perceived as the last hope to save the settlement.

The model of remuneration at Beit Harakia This model has three forms:

- The entire duty roster in communal services and essential jobs on Saturday (dairy farm, retirement home, laundry, swimming pool in summer) is now remunerated;

³Kibbutz Beit Harakia was studied by Tal Rapoport, the United Kibbutz Movement.

- The managers of productive branches receive a regular income of NIS 250 per month additional to their individual budget;
- An original form, namely encouragement of members to find free-lance jobs outside the kibbutz in addition to their regular job. This “new money”, as it is dubbed by the members, is divided between the kibbutz and the member concerned, and a small share enters a communal fund. Once a year the fund is equally divided among members.

Perpetual negotiation of the work remuneration agreement?

More than seven years after work began to be remunerated, no stable rules have yet been set and this topic is in perpetual negotiation.

In Kibbutz Noam, remunerated labor in the early 1990s for seasonal work in the fields only was successively extended to include Saturday milking, the nurse’s Saturday duty, and weekend work in the pub-discotheque; this was later augmented to four times a week. This progressive extension of paid work was always motivated by the same argument: shortage of work force. It was always justified by the same argument: paying members for these particular jobs meant less hired labor from outside the kibbutz, a member’s work being cheaper than a hired worker’s.

But this pragmatic approach had unexpected consequences; it raised the level of discontent of the upper strata of the kibbutz. Managers in the social and economic sectors openly expressed their frustration. They asserted that they contributed greatly to the general welfare but were personally penalized. The heavy responsibilities they carry and their long day work did not allow them to enjoy the various opportunities for remunerated work.

Reacting to this discontent, Noam adopted a complementary way of financial reward, namely a second budget that rewarded members according to their level of responsibility in the community and according to their level of income from outside employment. The new budget was designed especially for the upper strata of the kibbutz as a new pragmatic solution to an emerging problem. However, from the different implications our respondents ascribed to these new rules, this step seems merely to constitute another advance in the process of extension of financial reward on the kibbutz. Some of the interviewees described the second budget as compensation for injustice caused by the existing rules of work remuneration. From their standpoint, it was a measure that reestablished equality or at least improved it. But others understood the new rule as a revolution. For them, it officially renounced equality and affirmed that different members merited different rewards: those whose input was greater should receive more. They nicknamed the second budget a “tiebreak” budget, a term borrowed from tennis, because as in a tennis match its goal is to create a difference (or to open a gap) between equal adversaries.

The findings in the two other kibbutzim confirm that no lasting agreement has been found concerning financial reward for work. At Kibbutz Chen the process

also began in 1990 with exclusive remuneration for seasonal weeding; a few years later it was extended to overtime work in factories and fields, but it has not stopped there. As a move in the change process, today Chen's economy is, for accounting purposes, separated into two different sectors, the communal and the productive. The communal budget, which supplies the needs of the entire kibbutz population, is from the wages paid by the kibbutz branches and from the salaries of the members who work outside the kibbutz. This system necessitates evaluation of each task and attributes a fictitious salary to each member, which is actually paid every month into the communal treasury by employers (the economic branches). The evaluation corresponds to that of an equivalent job in the national labor market. Accordingly, the top managerial job at the factory, held by a highly trained member, is rated to bring in to the community a monthly wage of NIS 20,000; an unskilled worker on the shop floor is deemed to bring in NIS 3,000 a month. At the time of field work, a discussion took place in the kibbutz representative council over a new remuneration proposal for members' work. It was proposed that 10 percent of each member's fictitious salary really be paid into his/her personal budget, and the two existing forms of work remuneration be abolished. This proposal would increase the gap, between highest and lowest income, to NIS 1,750 per month instead of NIS 250 during the field work period.

Like the sense of frustration of the leadership at Noam, which gave rise to the notion of the second budget, the same frustration felt by managers in industry stimulated this new proposal at Chen. The present remuneration system that has developed over seven years evidently has not produced consensus.

At Beit Harakia two different stages gradually led to the model set forth above. The first stage considered only the "new money" as a possible monetary reward, but the poor results of free-lance work outside the kibbutz during the first year compelled the extension of work remuneration to communal services on Saturdays and holidays, and a reward for various managers. A new change was recently introduced. Disconcerted by the younger members in the competition for remunerated work, the oldest members obtained the inclusion of seniority as a component in the personal budgets. Seniors, however, were not the only ones to be discontent. By the existing agreement at Beit Harakia, managers received a regular supplement of NIS 250 – which they considered a bad joke compared with the NIS 3,000 that a lesser qualified person earned selling his/her prowess as cauliflower grower in the vicinity around the kibbutz. This was an opportunity offered by the "new money" track, which, as detailed below, was closed to managers. This situation foreshadows further changes in the kibbutz agreement on work remuneration.

In sum, the findings of this section show that no stable agreement on work remuneration existed in any of the three kibbutzim under study. From the start, work remuneration agreement evoked a sense of frustration feelings in different sectors of

these kibbutz populations, which act to transform it in their favor if they have the power to do so.

Work remuneration and social stratification

Absence of ownership of means of production, absence of salary, regular rotation of key jobs among the members, and direct democracy characterize the traditional kibbutz as a classless society.

The absence of a class structure did not mean the elimination of all social inequality and stratification. Industrialization was perceived as a cause of widening inequalities among kibbutz members (Kressel, 1974; 1983). The absence of direct financial rewards did not prevent a differential distribution of inter-relational rewards among members. Stratification of social status was evident on the kibbutz, on the basis of the differential levels of authority, prestige, and influence of members in their community (Ben-Raphael, 1988). Kibbutz history was also considered a slow process of stratification. From the state of absolute equality in the heroic beginnings, a latent and slow process carrying hierarchy and economic gaps penetrated the kibbutz. Eventually, the first stage of changes after the crisis of the 1980s served to legitimize those gaps (privatization and abrogation of prohibition against owning a car or other private property; change in organizational structure with boards of directors to reduce public influence; etc.). The latest phase of this process is now the rehabilitation of work as a commodity with the re-connection between work and welfare to institutionalize inequalities (Pavin, 1996).

A critical feature of this process is the emergence of a managerial class. This breaks with the traditional discourse of the equality of the kibbutz and assimilates the culture of its professional strata to capitalist society. It signals the development of class consciousness among managers, which in the play of social interaction will probably bring about a similar development in other groups, hence, the internal transformation of the kibbutz from a classless society to a class society (Rosolio, 1999). A micro level study can follow this process and provide empirical illustration of it.

With payment for work, inter-relational rewards are no longer the only relevant factor in the spread of inequality. This change injects an economic component into the social domain of the kibbutz. Will this new resource be distributed equally? Or will it be distributed in keeping with the social stratification, and so enhance the advantages of the technocrats (Topel, 1992; Leviatan, 1994; Ben-Raphael, 1997)?

Inequalities in work opportunities for direct reward was found at Kibbutz Chen with the regulation of overtime. At Kibbutz Chen, paid overtime was allowable only in the productive sector. In theory, these hours were open to every member but in fact, factory workers benefited almost exclusively from these paid hours. The factory arranged and supervised the overtime, and was concerned to have its own workers fill the overtime quota. They had better ability, their production and quality were of

a higher level, and they had a personal relationship with those in charge of assigning quotas, which other kibbutz members lacked.

The perpetual negotiation noted in the previous section attests that no equal or satisfactory sharing of this new resource is perceived in these kibbutzim. Several other examples could be given of unequal opportunities for remunerated work. At Beit Harakia, for instance, in the competition for remunerated work sparked by this new labor market, the younger members largely kept the seniors out.

At every kibbutz the different agreements seem to have yielded unequal opportunities to work for money. Of interest is the finding that in all of them, because remuneration for work began at the fringes of the work system (overtime, services on Saturday, etc.) and in low-skilled jobs, the agreements first and foremost upset the classic stratification by discriminating against the highest strata (managers in the economic and social sectors). Examples of this general and paradoxical situation in each kibbutz are given below.

Kibbutz Noam first paid exclusively for recruited work, weeding the cotton fields. This particular job is seasonal, done four times a week in the afternoons and on Saturdays, for six weeks. The remuneration initiative caused unequal opportunities for paid work among the members because it was easier for field workers to participate as they were well trained for a physically taxing job. Their regular work day, beginning early in the morning and finishing soon after noon, made it easy for them to put in overtime, from four or five o'clock in the afternoon. A manager in the factory, by contrast, would have a more difficult time doing this overtime as he/she would not be used to physical labor. Moreover, the manager generally worked long hours at the factory, starting later in the morning and finishing late in the evening.

In the drive to better private income, beyond a physical⁴ and differential capacity to participate in remunerated work, a restrictive clause handicapped managers at Beit Harakia, namely the closure before them of the "new money" track. As distinct from Noam and Chen, Beit Harakia facilitated remuneration for skilled jobs from the beginning. The "new money" track permitted the sale of knowledge or other competencies on the external market, but not the sale of managerial competencies. To save the various kibbutz managers the dilemma of finding the right measure of commitment to the collective and/or to their family welfare, this track was closed to managers. This fact, compounded by the successful activity of the cauliflower consultant, greatly intensified kibbutz managers' sense of frustration. Beyond the financial damage caused them by this restriction they also reported feeling that their sacrifice and their achievements were not acknowledged or were underestimated by the community.

The same process of comparison and frustration was observed among managers at Chen. From their standpoint, they were discriminated by the work remuneration

⁴Agricultural work also handicaps women and old people.

agreement. They specifically compared themselves with external workers, who enjoyed substantial bonuses from their employers such as a car for their private use after work. Frequently managers also compared themselves with their counterparts outside the kibbutz to underline the discrimination against them and the “absurd” situation in the existing system of rewards on the kibbutz. Those comparisons provided an opportunity to de-legitimize the kibbutz system and its traditional striving for equality by derogatory expressions.

The first step in work remuneration seems to discriminate against the upper strata of the kibbutz; however, no new stratification is in evidence as the process is just developing. It will become an issue in the near future. For now, the increase by members of their private income through work is the collective goal. To achieve it, the actors elaborate diverse strategies.

Actors' strategies to increase income

The three kibbutzim are distinguished in the first place by two different kinds of strategies:

- Short-term strategies typical of blue-collar workers in different activities such as production and services. By this strategy, members attempt to maximize utilization of existing possibilities offered by the individual kibbutz agreements. More overtime or work on Saturday in services means an immediate increase of income at the end of the month. This competition for short-term maximization of profit leaves no time to think about future;
- Long-term strategies typical of managers in industry and agriculture. Their discontent over work remuneration, set out above, does not cause them to resign or to embark on a struggle for added income. Instead, they adopt a waiting attitude, confident in the future and the direction of change. Overall, they consider the existing agreements a necessary transitional phase, during which people become accustomed to this significant change and internalize a new way of thinking; the managers believe that a new way of doing will soon follow. Eventually they will use their influential position in the kibbutz community to improve steadily their situation.

A more elaborate analysis conducted on Kibbutz Chen confirms this distinction. Here also, two categories of strategies were observed:

In the first category, actors operated within the framework of existing rules. They attempted to maximize their profit by utilizing the different possibilities offered by the rules and by reinterpreting their own actions within this framework. In the second category, the participants broke the existing rules or worked to change them with the aim of maximizing their own gain.

Exception for a minority who adopted an exit position of refusing “to play the game” and to work overtime to increase income, all the others belonged to one of the two defined categories.

The case of Hanna at Kibbutz Chen illustrates the first category of strategies. At this kibbutz, some of the classic roles such as motor-pool manager or chairperson of the culture committee were remunerated as overtime in addition to the member's regular job. When a member of Chen filled one of those functions he/she was credited with certain quota of overtime. Hanna worked in the accounting department of the kibbutz. After her eight-hour workday, she made up the vehicle list for the next day and so added NIS 250 in overtime pay to her personal budget.

In another case, Lilach resigned from her work in the grocery shop because there was no possibility of overtime. She tried to join a productive branch where she could increase her private income. In doing so she acted according to the expectations of the institutions of the kibbutz where the labor-force committee is concerned to move workers from services to productive activities.

The case of the nurse at Chen also illustrates this category. For a year she negotiated with the kibbutz institutions for acknowledgment of part of her activities as overtime. Membership of the mental health committee or working on Saturday was considered an expression of public commitment in the traditional kibbutz. Today the nurse considers these activities overtime, and demands financial reward.

Regarding the second category, it was suggested above that people broke the rules or acted to change them with the aim of increasing private income. A group of managers was found to adopt this strategy at Kibbutz Chen. They took note of members who worked outside the kibbutz in less prestigious positions but enjoyed the perks they entailed such as a car for their private use and an expense account that considerably increased their budget. The managers regarded this as an injustice. In the interviews, they expressed their frustration, pointing out their important contribution to the communal economy.

Just before the time of the interviews, they had placed a new proposal before the council, described above, intended to introduce changes in remuneration from work.

Hedva, by contrast, was at the opposite pole to the managers on the social map of Chen. She acted to increase her private income by breaking the rules. She worked in the laundry, a position with no influence on public affairs. She was not equipped to fight in the public spheres of the kibbutz. Hedva described her job in the laundry as "subsistence work", but her real interests were focused on alternative medicine. She studied shiatsu therapy and occasionally practiced her skills on members or other patients for cash payment.

No decision has been taken to allow private work at Chen. But several observations made during the fieldwork confirmed that it is common practice, and the authorities have chosen to ignore it.

This overview of the different strategies to increase private income leads a consideration of the kibbutz community as a social field. All the actors (the members) are involved in and it is centered around financial reward for work.

The kibbutz community as a social field

With remuneration of members for work the kibbutz community features as a “social field”, understood here according to the definition by Pierre Bourdieu (1983, 1998, etc.). Bourdieu criticizes the classic Marxist view of society divided by class. This is too static, and is oriented to the economic aspects of social exchange. It imparts a non-economic, hence disinterested character to other aspects of social exchange. It prevents consideration of different forms of capital at work in society since it focuses exclusively on economic capital to explain social structure. It also focuses broadly on the materialistic phenomena of social life, ignoring symbolic others. For the notion of class, Bourdieu rather likes notions of social space and fields. A social space is a structure of differences, and Bourdieu invites us to understand the generative principle of these differences founded on the distribution of different forms and volume of capital and power. This structure of differences changes with time and according to the society considered. A social space is described in terms of field: a field of forces operating on agents involved in this specific field, and field of struggle where agents “fight” each other to improve their positions within. Positions in a field are determined by the allocation of specific capital to agents who belong to this field. Concerning capital Bourdieu writes:

Depending on the field in which it functions, and at the cost of the more or less expensive transformations which are the precondition for its efficacy in the field in question, capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations (“connections”), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility (1983:243).

Convertibility of capital from one form to another is a central feature of this theory, and is the basis of strategies actors employ to ensure and improve their positions in the field.⁵ This theory affords a new interpretation of the data analyzed in the kibbutz domain. With regard to work remuneration in the three kibbutzim under discussion, the issue seems to be the increase of private income, a sort of economic capital. To achieve this aim, social actors will invest efforts to transform a stock of available capital into economic capital:

- The “shiatsu” therapist, poor in social capital, will attempt to convert her skills in alternative medicine, a cultural capital, into economic capital;

⁵This brief presentation of Bourdieu’s field theory omits some of its fundamental concepts, such as reproduction or habitus, since they do not seem relevant to the analysis here.

- The managers work for the conversion of their professional skill (cultural capital) and their authority, influence, or prestige in the public sphere (social capital), into economic capital;
- The factory workers invest their social capital of membership in a group (the factory) and their professional skill (cultural capital) to monopolize overtime and so increase their economic capital.

But in this “gold rush”, how does one understand the relatively passive attitude of the economic elite? In kibbutz society they are certainly the best equipped strata in social and cultural capital but they do not seem concerned to transform it and improve their positions. In both Noam and Beit Harakia they are at the bottom of the pyramid concerning income from remunerated work. At Chen, a senior kibbutz in respect of this change, only recently, and after seven years of remunerated work practice, did a group of technocrats act to change the income system to their advantage, thereby creating permanent economic gaps. How may one interpret this strategy of waiting? At stake for these technocrats is mostly a moderate increase in income. Since they have adopted the symbols, the discourse, and the culture of the capitalist environment (Rosolio, 1999), they attempt to impose on others their new “social world” by changing the categories of perceptions and appreciation. They reduce the kibbutz to a kind of settlement like other kinds, negating its genuine vocation of social justice, and argue that there is no possible salvation from the economic crisis except complete renunciation of this vocation. To convince co-members they remind all of their economic competencies and managerial experience, presented as necessary for the communal welfare. In this way they achieve absolute domination, and present themselves as the only possible rescuers of the kibbutz from the crisis. In fact, the technocrats prefer to work on the transformation of their social and cultural capital into symbolic capital. This is a new form of capital that Bourdieu later added to his panoply of concepts (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). As Bourdieu put it:

Symbolic Capital is an ordinary property (physical strength, wealth, warlike valor, etc.) which, perceived by social agents endowed with the categories of perception and appreciation permitting them to perceive, know and recognize it, becomes symbolically efficient, like a veritable *magical power*: ... (1998a:102).

In the process of becoming “magical power”, economic and managing knowledge acts like symbolic violence on the community, a sort of “soft” violence:

Symbolic violence is the violence which extorts submission, which is not perceived as such, based on “collective expectations” or socially inculcated beliefs. Like the theory of magic, the theory of symbolic violence rests on a theory of belief or, more precisely, on a theory of the

production of belief, of the work of socialization necessary to produce agents endowed with the schemes of perception and appreciation that will permit them to perceive and obey the injunctions inscribed in a situation or discourse (*ibid.*:103).

By this pacific means of symbolic violence, managers attempt to legitimize their domination by the imposition of the “correct” and “legitimate” definition of the social world. In contrast to others, who develop short-term strategies to maximize their immediate profit by direct conversion of their stock of capital at hand into economic capital, technocrats develop long-term strategies. For them, symbolic power is at stake; the true struggle is about legitimization of inequality, the recognition by others of managers’ domination, and the “miscognition” by others of their real interests. This recognition/miscognition as the two phases of the dialectic process of domination will enable consensus in the kibbutz community as to the significance of the social world and the establishment of a new social order. Once this domination and consensus are achieved, no obstruction to the piercing of deeper gaps in income and to substantial social and economic inequalities will exist any longer.

Conclusion

Work remuneration is certainly a decisive move in the process of change in the kibbutz. With the first step a long march begins, and no arrangement is anything more than a way station to further advance of the process. Each arrangement raises new claims. In this social field, freshly opened to the struggle for economic capital, different actors develop different strategies. Some prefer to gamble on immediate profit through intensive use of existing possibilities of remunerated work. Others, primarily technocrats, while seemingly victims of this change, believe that the way to real profit is through total recognition of their domination and use of their economic and managerial knowledge as symbolic power. This process of redefining in the state of domination requires long and patient effort, for as Pavin (1996) noted, in the kibbutz it is equality that is institutionalized. However in this process the dominant win the objective complicity of the dominated, as is often the case (Bourdieu, 1998b). Remuneration for members’ work illustrates better than any other change the ideological upheaval that has occurred in the kibbutz. The dominant class, which owes its power to the egalitarian ideology, becomes the champion of a meritocratic ideology and soon forgets its own responsibility for the events that accelerate the upheaval. This phenomenon is well known in Eastern Europe.

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