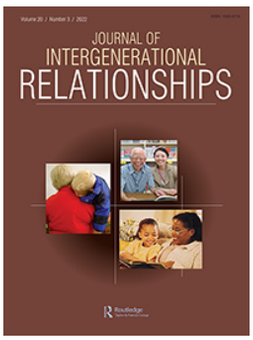

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Shared Knowledge and Social Messages in New Collective Communities of the 21st Century: A Generation Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The present qualitative research examined four new urban intentional collective communities in Israel as generational units, as defined in Mannheim's (1970) theory of generations. The findings indicate that the cooperative experience of most of the group members in their rural collective communities of origin had a notable effect on the lifestyles in the urban communities they founded. The results also reveal that the group members' interpretation of significant personal biographical events or collective memories shaped the group identity and consciousness into a new generational unit with a social message. The study contributes to the empirical research of the theory of generations. It also illuminates how intentional communities arise and oppose current trends in an era of neoliberalism and capitalist economy.

KEYWORDS

Intentional communities; generational consciousness; case study; Mannheim

Since the 1980s, there has been a rise in the number and the types of intentional communes (ICs) both in the world, generally, (Ben-Rafael et al., 2013) and in Israel (Dror, 2008). In Israel today, there are dozens of collective groups, representing thousands of members (Dror, 2008). Many members of these ICs were raised on kibbutzim and moshavim, two types of collective rural communities. Some were former members of youth movements and others joined independent of a youth movement background in their early twenties, both seeking a collective community with a social agenda (Dror, 2008). Hence, many of the new ICs in Israel are characterized by an ideological and cultural connection to kibbutzim, moshavim, and youth movements. The communities are, however, autonomous in terms of their choice of social initiatives, their level of collectivism, and their geographical location (Sharon, 2010).

Researchers of the typology of ICs in different countries have identified several characteristics of these communities. Miller (1998), who studied ICs in North America, coined the term "integrating continuity." He considered these communes as a developmental stage of traditional collective communities and examined their differentiation and integration in their environment. The result was a list of seven characteristics of the twentieth-century IC: a common goal; distinctiveness

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from the surrounding society; self-denial (conscious concession of a certain degree of personal choice in favor of group decisions); geographical proximity of member residences (in a single building or adjacent buildings); reciprocal relations among group members; some economic partnership (possibility of private property); conducting a communal lifestyle for a long period of time; and membership in the group of at least five people who are not related or couples.

Pitzer and Donald (2013) expanded Miller's definition of ICs to include communities such as cohousing and eco-villages. These communities are politically oriented and strive to integrate into the surrounding society, accepting the world of work, family, and career. The ICs in Israel differ from Pitzer and Miller's definitions in their ideological emphasis on collective social initiatives and social enterprise. They also differ from the religious communes founded in the nineteenth century and the hippie communes of the 1960s that chose to separate themselves from their environment.

Whereas previously ICs tended to maintain purely functional ties with other communities, there is now a growing trend of cooperative federations in many countries (Ben-Rafael et al., 2013; http://fic.ic.org). In Israel, efforts to unite around different projects and struggles and share collective wisdom include the establishment of Shatil – the New Israel Fund Initiative for Social Change and the Shahaf Foundations – Philanthropic Partnership for Promoting Young Communities in Israel. In practice, use of the formal partnerships for communication, leadership election, agenda setting, and joint initiatives among collective communities is less common; connections are manifest mainly in occasional meetings of local residents with the collective communities.

Thus, there are some notable similarities and differences between ICs in Israel and those in other countries. The motives of people to join ICs, as well as the objectives and goals of the communities, are largely similar. However, the respective processes of socialization differ. In most Western countries, the members generally arrive on their own or as families. In Israel, in contrast, the majority undergo a process of socialization in youth movements, during voluntary national service, or in the army, which creates a sort of cohort (Ben-Rafael et al., 2013). In both socialization contexts, the question arises as to what ideas lead young people to choose a collective life with social challenges, especially in a neo-liberal era that elevates individualism in all aspects of life. The goal of the present study was to illuminate this choice together with the goals and social messages of these communities.

Mannheim and the theory of generations

In his theory of generations, which developed out of the field of the sociology of knowledge, Mannheim responded to the question: "How [can] we define and understand the nature of the generation as a social phenomenon?" (1970, p. 378). In other words, what is the social change that leads to a given

generation and what are the necessary conditions for the formation of a sociological generation? He sought to explain the transition of traditional society to a modern one and the development of social disparity in Western society. In everyday language, "generation" refers to an age group and its members' position along a biological timeline. This is represented, for instance, in expressions such as "several generations ago" to note the past, "the generation gap" in reference to variation, and "my generation" as a sign of belonging. In contrast, Mannheim and his successors focused on the interface and influence between a biological generation and the conditions that allow the formation of a sociological generation. They analyzed the development of the message of a generation against existing reality (Corsten, 1999; Dant, 1991; Eyerman & Turner, 1998).

Mannheim (1970) conceptualized the collectives that created social change as "sociological generations," and his successors called them "generational units" (Corsten, 1999; Dant, 1991). These two key terms are essential for understanding the theory of generations today; in contrast to the generalized reference to a generation as a homogenous entity, "unit" represents more complex segmentation and diverse connections among groups in the population (Herzog, 2007).

Mannheim (1923/1970) conceptualized two directions of thought regarding the formation of a sociological generation and, later, social change. The first consists of biological conditions. Accordingly, such a generation is formed when members of a cohort, usually in adolescence or early adulthood, are dissatisfied with the response of the previous generation to existing social issues and formative events that they experienced as significant landmarks. The second direction concerns the social conditions by which the members of a generation collectively develop shared ideas, insights, and practices (Mannheim 1923/1970).

According to Mannheim and his followers, social change occurs when consciousness is translated into rhetoric and action. The members of the generation achieve recognition and public presence, gaining popularity and support for their ways (Corsten, 1999; Dant, 1991; Mannheim 1923/1970). Hence, while Mannheim emphasized an understanding of significant social events by means of retrospective analysis after formation of the sociological generation, his successors argued that the definition of a generational unit can help explain generational changes as they emerge (see Corsten, 1999; Herzog, 2007).

To examine whether a group should be considered a "generational unit" whose members are agents of social change, Mannheim set three criteria. The first is social location – shared ideas and social ties; status; and formative experiences, which resemble collective memories; and certain shared interpretations and meanings that bind the individuals to the collective. The second is the attribution of meaning, that is, the creation of a coherent group agenda

in response to the formative experiences of the group members in light of their shared interpretation of these experiences. The third is actualization, or striving toward the goal or idea of social change, which occurs when social consciousness is translated into rhetoric and actualization, and the members of the generation achieve consciousness and a public presence (Mannheim 1923/1970).

Contemporary researchers have argued that identification of generational units today must consider the complexity and frequency of concurrent global changes in technology, communication, and transportation. The experience of some events might be less dramatic than in the past and, at the same time, relatively minor changes could represent the development of generational units (Beck et al., 2003; Corsten, 1999; Dant, 1991; Eyerman & Turner, 1998). The present analysis of the new collective communities as generational units took these trends into account.

Mannheim did not define the term "knowledge" in empirical terms, but claimed that words and language serve as repositories of meaning and represent styles of thought or worldviews (see Mannheim 1936/1960, p. 245). The discourse of members of a sociological generation regarding the gap between the social ideals they aspire to and the existing situation guides the development of generational consciousness and knowledge (Mannheim 1936/1960). Hence, the present research examined the ideology of collectivism and social agenda of the research participants from their own statements. Specifically, the analysis was based on participant descriptions of their activities and the practices that structure their social life and construct their generational consciousness. The research is unique in two respects. First, it offers an empirical examination of the theory of generations. Second, it attempts to show that the new intentional collective communities studied respond to the three components of a generational unit determined by Mannheim: location, meaning, and actualization.

Method

This qualitative study examined the social messages that emerged in the ICs studied in three defined stages. In the first stage, I characterized the research field – the new ICs – as a generation unit according to generation theory. In the second stage, I identified the collective memory of the various community members. In the final stage, I examined the generational knowledge that emerged in the communities. The study received approval from the Tel Aviv University Ethics Committee.

Stake (2005) distinguished case study from methodology: "case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied" (p. 438). According to Van Wynsberghe and Khan (2007), case study [is] about the unit of analysis being discovered or constructed" (p. 89). Therefore, it was

important to examine the new intentional collective communities in terms of "meaningful social action and [an] in-depth understanding of how meaning is created in everyday life and the real-world" (Travis, 1999, p. 1042).

In examining the generational context of the communities, I chose groups that were similar in ideology and general organization framework, but that differed from one another in other respects. Most of the members of these new ICs were educated in youth movements, kibbutzim, and moshavim and all were Jewish. Very few members had no experience with collective life. The decision to join an IC with a social agenda was characteristic of all the participants in the study. The members centered their lives in the community and agreed to comply with the decisions the communities made by majority vote.

However, the communities differed in lifestyle and in their chosen social agenda and initiatives. The different language and culture of origin of the members of the Yuval community added another dimension to the research. The communities also differed in other respects: geographical location, year of founding, age of the members, and number of members. I interviewed both men and women. The community demographics are presented in Table 1.

The research was guided by a systematic design. After locating the IC communities for case study, an initial letter was sent to all community members explaining the research purpose and procedure. Of 68 total community members, 28 consented to be interviewed. The total number of community members is estimated due to frequent member transition. There was, however, a permanent core group in each IC. The data collection process was primarily based on a semi-structured interview (Stake, 2005). In each IC, I spoke with between 4 and 17 people (on the minimum size of a group, see Creswell & Creswell, 2013, p. 186).

The interviews were conducted privately, in the homes of the interviewees or a neighborhood coffee shop. Each interview lasted from 1 to 1.5 hours; all of were recorded and transcribed. The questions focused on the experiences and

Table 1. Demographics of new intentional collective communities.

	Community							
	Migvan		Jaffa		Yuval		Kama	
Youth movement	Hashomer Hatzair		Initially,Habonim-Dror; later, HaMahanot HaOlim		Hashomer Hatzair		HaNoar HaOved or no affiliation	
Membership in an association of communities	yes		yes		yes		yes	
Location in Israel	South		Center		North		South	
Year of founding	1987		2003		1999		2005	
Approximate number of members in community, by gender	17 people		10 people		7 people		34 people	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	9	8	5	5	3	4	15	19

development of the community members to that point. The interviewees spoke about challenges and coping strategies, their feelings, and their dreams for the future.

The interviews were categorized into main ideas and themes, which enabled construction of the knowledge universe of the communities; each community adding additional information and insights. Analysis of the findings related to the four communitiesas a single research unit. In the discussion of the findings, the interviewees are quoted using fictional names; the communities are identified by their actual names. As part of the process of ensuring interrater reliability, the findings were sent to representatives of the communities for comment and clarification. In addition, two researchers in this research field were asked to offer feedback as expert peers. Finally, the findings were presented to a forum of colleagues, who also contributed constructive feedback.

Findings

Significant events

Herzog (2013) asked: How and by whom does history become part of the construct of "us" and "ours"? The research participants related a mosaic of events, figures, and thinkers that led them to question their worldview. As a result, they examined the conventional perceptions that guided their actions until their late teens in light of a series of factors and conflicts that made them "dramatically aware of a process of destabilization" (Mannheim 1923/1970, p. 391). Such destabilization can release people from their conventional worldview, enabling embracement of new ideas and an independent theoretical approach that becomes "a natural view of the world" (Mannheim 1923/1970, p. 388). This feeling is independent of physical location or the individual's belonging to a community. Over time, individuals hold onto the interpretations they have developed and adopted, thus creating the shared view. This is based on their generational location, as Mannheim 1923/1970 called it, and what I, based on the findings, refer to as "ideological location." The ideological location of cooperative socialism served as the basis of the different interpretations of the generation of the new ICs and some of their practical ideas for social change.

In Israel, the social change that began in the mid-twentieth century included an orientation toward individualism. This was present in both the well-established, legendary rural collectives and in the country's middle class. The political, ideological shift to capitalist liberalism also permeated the youth movements and other social programs in the schools, creating a "whole that was smaller than the sum of its parts in many ways" (Z.). According to Z., this "whole" strangled the abilities of the persons within it, at times transforming them into narrowminded individuals of conservative thinking in all respects.

From the interviews, it is apparent that the members created new communities based on cooperative socialism with two central anchors. The communal life anchor, in contrast to prior generation ICs, rested upon prioritizing individual over communal will. This influenced the level of collaboration in the new ICs (for elaboration see discussion below).

With regard to the second anchor, implementing social initiatives in the public realm, the members interviewed spoke about the crisis of socialism in Israel, which affected their lifestyle and views of the values with which they were raised. They referred to significant processes, such as privatization policies and the growth of a consumer culture. They mentioned events, such as changes in the relative power of the different political parties, wars, and terror attacks – periods of constant change. These were described in the community discourse as events that distanced and impaired the attachment of the individuals to their surrounding social spheres, making them reluctant to participate in public and political spaces. The members of the new ICs wanted to break this cycle; they chose to focus on changing their urban living space. In the personal, private sphere, the research participants experienced several significant frameworks that constituted a formative transitional stage between adolescence and adulthood. These included, upon graduation from high school, mandatory enlistment in the army preceded by, for most, a year of volunteer service in educational and social inclusion projects. According to the research participants, these encounters with a multicultural population made them aware of people with different needs and the importance of undertaking social initiatives in adulthood. The interviewees attributed the desire to continue pursuing social initiatives in urban settings to dissatisfaction with living in a closed social framework, like the "gated communities" in which they had grown up. These findings are consistent with generation theory: adolescence and early adulthood, the biological period when individuals develop and shape their worldview (see Feuer, 1969; Mannheim 1923/1970; Shapira, 1984), was the common age at which the members joined the ICs studied (Ben-Rafael et al., 2013; Dror, 2008; Miller, 1998). Mannheim claimed that critical thinking and flexibility in ideology are necessary to generate a change in consciousness. In the terms of the theory of generations, the community members here built upon their formative life experiences and developed the spirit of their "core location" as a response to mainstream societal culture.

The members of the ICs chose to become involved in their environment, engaging in social initiatives, and not to build fences separating themselves from their surroundings. However, they also chose to create a living space of a certain character, one that reminded them of the rural places from whence many came, well-kept homes with gardens and lawns. Similar to prior generation ICs, they chose more fluid boundaries between public and private space, encouraging more informal time spent together in the homes of fellow

community members, a culture that distinguished them from their surrounding environment.

Following Mannheim 1923/1970 explanation that social groups are exposed to certain information by virtue of belonging to a group and often develop a shared position, the findings suggests that the IC members developed group meaning by means of shared discourse and messages and typical behavior patterns: These new ICs built a "class consciousness," in Mannheim's terms, which differed from that of previous generations. Their aspiration as a collective to "do the right thing" for society spurred them to unite in a new community unassociated with the family or community in which they were raised. Furthermore, it represented social ideals that they developed in a new place, which was more creative and open, in Mannheim's terms, "potentially fresh contact" (p. 391). The urban setting was a new milieu for fulfillment of community that enabled a "restart" of the way of thinking and acting for both the older and younger generations.

Collective memories

Examination of the interviews revealed that there were some events that all group members had experienced, and others that were unique to a given community and constituted milestones in shaping its members' worldview. However, according to scholars of generations, now more than ever, formative – and even traumatic – events are insufficient to transform generations into political, self-aware activist movements (Edmunds & Turner, 2005). Therefore, I analyzed the events that were meaningful to the community members as points of focus that they attached to their collective memories, or "social memory," in Mannheim 1923/1970 terms, transforming the collective to the personal and vice versa.

Based on my interviews with community members, the community memory was vital to analyzing the direction of change that they made as a generational unit. Memories include the interpretation of significant values and ideas. Moreover, when memory changes from one's own to "ours," its power increases significantly; it affects consciousness and lifestyles. Mannheim and his successors argued that we barely feel the presence and impact of these memories because they are implicit, almost subconscious. In adulthood, these memories affect language and thought. Social memory becomes our spiritual and intellectual property. Once established in us, it is difficult to change social memory and our consciousness of that memory.

The search for a memory that united the members of the new ICs and made a key contribution to their socialization during the formative years of the communities' establishment revealed two traumas. The first was the Second World War, including the Holocaust, in 1939–1945; the second was the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995. These events occurred

before many of the research participants were born, but for them, like many other young people in Israel, they were influential (Schuman et al., 2003). Given that these memories are widespread in Israel, it is important to understand the uniqueness of the social memory of the members of the communities studied, whether one that generated a "decisive politically relevant experience" (Heberle, 1951, p. 121) or one by which they were "sucked into the vortex of social change" (Mannheim 1923/1970, p. 304). The choice of these social events as meaningful for the communities indicates that they are part of a national collective, and unique as a collective with a purpose of preserving a memory for the present and the future.

Compared with the national memory held by the ICs as whole, the dominant memory that unified the members of each separate community was relatively local. The members of the Yuval collective community, who immigrated to Israel from England in the 1970s, spoke about a unifying memory of feeling – a sense of being a foreigner and not belonging in their birth country. For example, B. said that in England, he had felt he did njot belong, and did not consider essential issues such as his purpose in society. In contrast, in the community he founded with his friends in Israel, he felt a great sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. This derived, among other things, from their project of conserving and restoring an archive on kibbutz culture.

The interviewees from the Migvan community, who were adolescents in the 1970s and early 1980s, described their encounter with social disparity between people of different ethnic backgrounds as a formative experience. This occurred in the city to which they had moved and was part of the process of becoming acquainted and integrating into local society. They also described a prolonged period in which they were subject to missile attacks from Gaza as an influential time that forced them to rethink their social and political positions. However, there was no community decision in this respect.

The members of the Jaffa community, who were the youngest of the interviewees, adopted a memory from the past – the resistance movement in the Holocaust – and gave it meaning as an educational model for current leadership as part of contemporary existential ethos. In an effort to preserve and reshape the memory of the Holocaust, the members of this intentional collective community organized trips to Poland for adolescents to teach them about their heritage. In all the researched communities, a discourse developed over time between the members and their parents. According to the interviewees, this led to their parents' acceptance of their lifestyle. The research results indicate that the collective memories borne by each individual community member and together as a group were packed with ideological and emotional associations. The history of the Jewish people in the Diaspora and after the founding of the state of Israel became part of the collective "social memory" of the members of the communities. Thus, it seems that the members of the ICs researched

here held memories not only from their own life experiences, but also from the more distant, national past. Moreover, the different communities shared some memories, but each adopted its own formative memory that it integrated with current events. It can be said that each group brought history to the fore, connected it to a collective community biography, and used it to produce change in the present. History was a component of their social consciousness, which they translated into social-national initiatives that they considered meaningful and consistent with their values. Hence, in response to Herzog's (2013) question, cited earlier, about taking ownership of history, the members of the new cooperative communities wrote an updated narrative. They conveyed ideas and knowledge based on their collective interpretation.

Shared knowledge

Which knowledge and consciousness did members of the group create? The interviews indicate that the new ICs were aware of the need to grow and cultivate shared ideas and methods. They described this as a conscious process in which they had engaged continuously, from the time they joined the community to the present. Upon founding the collective community, the members had to develop shared practices, based on what they had brought with them from their youth movements, social-ideological activities in school, and so forth. When they were young – in their voluntary social service and mandatory military duty – a culture of discourse and critical views of authority, power, and injustice evolved, along with the ability to cooperate and respect tradition. The shared social dissatisfaction that they experienced together at task-oriented social meetings developed over time into group solidarity, customs, traditions, and personal sharing.

In Mannheim's terms, the members of the new ICs constructed meaning: they outlined the rules of connection and sharing of the group, with one another and as a whole. Specifically, each community had to determine its social change goals and choose its geographical location. Together, these created what Mannheim referred to as "social location." In the community language, this was an act of developing into an IC and choosing a geographical location and social goal. In the practices of the community members, it is evident that belonging to a class and association with an idea created the social location of the groups. As a result, they aspired to generate change by utilizing a familiar method of collective life, while creating ideas and practices that differed from those on which they were raised. Theirs was no longer an isolated, defined community, but rather one located in the heart of the social initiative they identified: to change from within, to integrate to a limited extent into the environment, and to respond to the social need to the degree that they chose.

The internal seminars of each community and those of the Intentional Collective Community Circle addressed practical aspects of sustaining the communities and creating an agenda. O. said that she wrapped herself in "a communal identity." "The environment I have lived in for the past five years … influenced me," she explained. Sometimes crystallization of identity entails a rejection of a different identity, such as a "threatening and aggressive" ultra-Orthodox one (Z.; B.). It may also occur in seminars led by community members for adolescents in an area characterized by conflicting values. This creates a need "[to establish] where I come from and where I am going, to whom I am committed and what my values are" (W.). H. said that he had developed a sense of "identification with the group as a whole after the training seminar."

According to the interviewees, comparison with the immediate environment also helped them define their unique, intentional identity. As Z. explained, the environment "provides you with a daily mirror that asks you what right you have to exist." Likewise, the differences between the collective communities also helped them learn from one another, for example, about methods of community management (N.). The findings also indicate an important challenge. As one interviewee stated: "[We] are struggling not to lose [the identity of each community] through a default reaction of distrust, competition, and struggle to get ahead" (Z.).

These excerpts indicate that the collective identity created a social network for the community members that united and distinguished "them" from "us." This network outlines the boundary between them and their environment while also enabling each individual to develop personally. It defines norms of social behavior and enables the existence of dialogue and mutual support, as suggested by Melluci's (1996) study of communities, and Oberg et al.'s (2004) analysis of social development of a generation.

In addition to preserving and changing the community idea, which could be defined as an intracommunity challenge, the communities also face external challenges. Their central challengeis succeeding in their chosen social initiative – to be involved in their environment – while remaining autonomous, distinct communities.

Another challenge is related to the new ICs' self-perception as being a force with political influence. Their perception is based on their being a well-formed composite of people committed to certain changes. As O. stated, "the goal is to create a reverberation of consciousness" to exert political influence in the municipal or national sphere. This is consistent with Mannheim 1923/1970, Mills 1963, and Dant (1991) in their discussions of the theory of generations. Later interpretations of Mannheim (Pilcher, 1994) added that the ability to affect social change lies in awareness of the possibility of collective action by generational units.

The participation of the ICs in public social activity represents the actualization of activism. It is aimed at refocusing public discourse from materialism

back to values education: voluntarism, development of social skills, tolerance of others, contribution to improved public lifestyle, public esthetics, and more. A specific example noted by interviewees is the struggle of the communities against the transfer of national land to private entities. A joint public information, media, and legal campaign succeeding in changing decision makers' opinions. This political activity involved the communities in a struggle against conservative forces and exposed them to local resistance.

These challenges create a tension of intersecting demands, leading to a pendular motion in search of purposeful development that will promote the idea of the cooperative, social change-oriented community. This search is consistent with the argument of the theory of generations that in modernity, group identity is characterized by numerous, diverse ideas, and group members need to find their place as a body of subjects within this diversity (Dant, 1991; Oberg et al., 2004). The challenge of the new ICs is to preserve personal identity together with collective identity and to maneuver between the conflicting trends. As noted, the new ICs consciously chose not to attempt to change existing, older generation cooperative communities because they believed the structure erroneous in its self-separation from society. This segregation led to atrophy of ideas and silencing of the individual. Bringing forward collective memory and traditional IC ideas of cooperativism, they located their ICs in urban settings within the broader population, and granted the individual a much greater voice in the collective community.

What then, is the "knowledge" of the members of the ICs? The interviewees testified that life in an IC contributed to their acquisition and cultivation of both theoretical and practical "community, social, and collective knowledge." In their view, this knowledge affords them abilities in diverse areas, such as working with people, organizing, social project management, persuasion, organizational politics, negotiating networks (work, community, and family), development and cultivation of different groups (mothers, cooking groups, marginalized people, and more), community-social curiosity, discourse and listening, analysis of strengths and weaknesses of social community development programs, and adherence to the ethics of cooperative communities (such as transparency and fairness). Analysis of the interviews indicates that the knowledge of the groups was composed of several disciplines and spheres of significance; this seems logical, because individuals each bring their own knowledge.

The findings indicate that the community members applied knowledge and experience they acquired to the skills of discourse, cooperation, and collective activity. They translate that knowledge into practice in their daily lives and in promoting their social goals. They have acquired highl levels of social, administrative, and political knowledge. Social knowledge includes both individual and group social skills. Political knowledge in the field of social initiatives is characterized by language skills, abstract thinking, the ability to fundraise

(from NGOs and municipalities), to rally people around a cause, and to recruit individuals for activities. Administrative knowledge is expressed in the management of both long-term processes of social change and short-term projects. They actualize this composite of knowledge in their community and social change related activities.

Summary: "Some things here are not time-dependent" (I.)

This case study examined whether the new ICs in Israel are a generational unit and a collective with its own language and social message. Analysis of the findings demonstrates that the members of the communities as a group have location, meaning, and actualization, the elements of a generational unit as defined by Mannheim and succeeding researchers. The examination here includes the ideology, social views, and practices of the members of the communities, as well as their expression in values, memories, experiences, and related feelings. Significantly, the members of the groups constructed knowledge and consciousness based on their past experience and adapted them to the ideas of their present-day ICs (Corsten, 1999; Dant, 1991; Eyerman & Turner, 1998; Mannheim, 1932/1970).

Several insights arise from this investigation. First, the communities share a generational social consciousness. The members interviewed expressed the need to bring about social change due to dissatisfaction with previous generation efforts to narrow the social gaps in Israel and because Israeli society had not, in their view, developed optimally. The second insight concerns their ideological or social location, focusing on methods for achieving change. These include practices of collective activity, cooperation, and consideration of diverse (and sometimes contradicting) points of view. The third insight, stemming from the previous two, is related to meaning, or generation as actuality. Meaning in this context is the consciousness of both belonging to a group with a common actuality and of the importance of acting as a unit in the present and using chosen means.

These insights reveal a generational message of community. Moreover, the way in which the members actualize community constitutes a social indication of the possibility of disseminating it to broader groups in the population. The research examined two interrelated points on which the effectiveness of dissemination of the generational message depends: the range of the "generational voice" of the members of the communities and the tension inherent in their being both a collective and a community dedicated to social change.

The findings indicate that the voice of the new ICs in Israel does not contradict the knowledge and experience of previous generations. Rather, the communities are constructing a new type of understanding and discourse based on what came before, as sort of "consciousness echo" in terms of the theory of generations (Dant, 1991; Mannheim 1923/1970; Mills 1963). In other

words, the communities allow for individual diversity, based on a pluralistic view and openness to the influences of the modern world. In addition, they are creating a renewal of the collective community, or in Mannheim 1923/1970 terms, "fresh contact." In this ideological framework, the members of the new ICs have renewed and initiated customs, traditions, and daily practices that are right for them.

The members of the communities expressed a complex attitude toward being both a collective and ideological community dedicated to social change. Declaratively, social change is the goal and collective life the means to obtain it. However, in practice, a great deal of energy is concentrated on the practice of collective life itself, with members working to preserve an intimate community framework. The communities permit flexibility regarding lifestyles that influences the personal decisions of their members, as well as diverse collective activities.

With respect to implementing social initiatives in the urban environment, the findings also indicate that the group members do not impose their lifestyle on their surroundings. Rather, they initiate educational projects and are active in regional and municipal systems. Thus, in Dant's (1991) and Oberg et al.'s (2004) terms, the communities have created "a variety of individuals" who are partners in their collectives. This pluralism reflects a desire to differentiate the IC and create boundaries around its activity, alongside the aspiration to connect with and integrate into the environment. The result is a tension, inherent in the idea and its actualization, between activity within the IC and its outward activity on behalf of social change. In Mannheim's terms, the members of the new ICs act with "elasticity of mind" that can intensify if the community members preserve this flexible thought over time as an engine for connecting the ideal to its actualization. This is their advantage – as well as their challenge – as a group.

As a result of their activity in the public realm, the communities have created a broad sphere of social influence that exceeds the numerical size of their population. Hence, the "social message" of the community members has, over the years, covered a wide and varied range of ongoing goal-oriented social activity. The voice of the ICs has gradually reached beyond the cities in which they are located, by means of NGOs and organizations that were founded to implement the activities elsewhere in the country. Today, years after the establishment of the new ICs, they benefit from public exposure and support. However, the scope of their influence is yet unknown. The communities' activity in the public social realm indicates that in terms of the theory of generations (Dant, 2013; Mannheim 1923/1970; Mills 1963), even though they are a generational unit with a social consciousness, they see themselves as secondary players who aspire to challenge the mainstream narrative, but not to replace it.

The study limitations should be noted. Interpretation of the findings is currently generalized to community members who did not participate and

other researchers might interpret the findings differently. Further studies can compare between additional IC communities in Israel and other countries. Perhaps the primary limitation is that the study focuses on communities that are marginal in Israeli society, and the phenomenon that I discuss may be temporary, lasting only a few decades, and may be characteristic of a very small number of groups. However, interesting processes are emerging, which resemble, in some respects, those of voluntarism and entrepreneurship and social consciousness in different sectors of society. Although these may not be identical to the subject of this research, they are based on the same social values.

In summary, the findings shed light on a social development that is inconsistent with the widespread trend of society in the Western world, and Israel, in particular. They indicate that the members of the researched communities are the product of the sociocultural climate in which they were raised. As part of Israeli society, which was initially characterized by collective socialism and later by individualist capitalism, the members of the communities represent a change. This change might be described as social liberal individualism; it allows individuals freedom within the collective. Thus, is can be said that they are agents of social change that they are actualizing in their shared life.

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