Discourse between yesterday and Tomorrow: New Communes in twenty-first-century Israel

# Abstract

This qualitative study examined the components of the “generational discourse” of intentional communities (ICs) from the perspective of Karl Mannheim’s generation theory. Few studies have used the discourse of a sociological generation as a theoretical basis for the study of ICs, and those that have were based on empirical examination of the conditions for the emergence of a sociological generation and its manifestations in the generational discourse. The findings suggest that generational discourse can be considered a significant component in identifying the essence and ideas of discourse in new intentional communes as a social language promoting social change.

**Keywords:** intentional communes, Mannheim, generational unit, generational discourse, social change

# Introduction

## Intentional Communes in Israel and Other Countries

The research aims to understand generational discourse's structure, content, purpose, and application in promoting social change within these communities. The research focuses on different nonreligious ICs in Israel, including urban kibbutzim and groups of youth movement graduates, comparing their characteristics and analyzing their generational discourse.

Since the 1980s, the number of intentional communities (ICs) has grown steadily in many countries (Oved, 2017; Pitzer 2014), including Israel (Michaeli & Dror, 2008). At the present time, there are dozens of new intentional communes (NICs), with thousands of adult members, throughout Israel. This is a social development that contradicts the general trend in society. Instead of capitalist idealism, these young people have chosen a life of collectivism and contribution to society as a lifestyle, with the aim of generating social change. Against this background, researchers have sought different definitions of these communes, such as “intentional communities” ­ – communities that are committed to a social cause as well as a collectivism.

The NICs included in the present research were of two types: urban kibbutzim and groups of youth movement graduates. The urban kibbutzim are communities of people who joined together to create a collective life dedicated to a shared cause in cities (Michaeli & Dror, 2008). The graduate movements are another type of NIC. They include several hundred members, living in dozens of groups in rural and urban localities throughout Israel (Michaeli & Dror, 2008).

The ICs in Israel and other countries have changed over time, demonstrating different processes of acclimation and adaptation to the environment and lifestyles (Oved, 2017, Pitzer, 2014). In his research on ICs in North America, Pitzer (2014, p. 94) coined the term “adaptive continuum.” According to this approach, the intentional communes represent a developmental stage of collectives, which are examined in terms of their separation from and integration into the surrounding communities. Pitzer (2014) listed seven defining criteria of intentional communities: a shared cause; separation from the surrounding society; some concession of personal choice in favor of group decisions; geographical proximity of members’ residences (a single building or adjacent buildings); personal reciprocity among members of the group; some economic collectivism (with the possibility of private property); a long-term communal lifestyle; at least five people who are not related or couples in a group. Based on these criteria, Pitzer (2014) concluded that communities such as eco-villages, co-housing, and the like met the criteria of intentional communities.

There are some essential differences between the ICs in Israel and those in other countries. First, the members of the ICs in other places encourage their children to continue in their footsteps, to ensure the continued existence of the communities, preserve their values and customs, and not assimilate into the environment (Pitzer, 2014). However, Pitzer (2014) found that in the course of time, the ICs throughout the world had not dissolved formally, but in practice, their second generation now lived in cities near the communes. In contrast, the members of ICs in Israel strive to integrate with the surrounding communities ­ – in the world of work, family, and careers (Michaeli & Dror, 2008).

Second, many ICs throughout the world are involved in social activities in the fields of sustainability, ecology, education, inclusion, and others (Escribano et al., 2020; Farias, 2017). In Israel, each NIC has embraced its own social cause of improving and contributing to Israeli society (Michaeli & Dror, 2008). MAKOM Pioneers, the organization of communes devoted to social causes that includes most of the urban kibbutzim and graduate movement communes, estimates that the activity of the communes to promote equality, narrow disparities in education, increase access to cultural activities and integration in the workforce, and more, affects approximately 700,000 people (Barak, 21 December 2018). This indicates that the communes have a strong impact that benefits a large portion of the population.

For the sake of consistency, in the present paper the researcher adopted the terms IC (intentional community) and NIC (new intentional commune). the research use the terms “group” and “community” interchangeably, depending either on the quote or the spirit of the text discussed.

## The Sociological Generation and the NICs as a Generational Unit

In the present research, the analysis of the generational discourse in the NICs was based on generation theory. This theory examines the cultural traits, ethical codes, and deep social structures that lead to social action, in general, and social change, in particular (Mannheim, 1923/1970). It is grounded in the term “sociological generation,” or as Mannheim’s successors called it, “generational unit.” The term “generational units,” which the researcher use in this article, is preferred in contemporary generation research, because it refers to small, diverse groups that create a movement of social change (Beck, 2008; Connolly, 2019, Corsten, 1999; Herzog et al., 2013; Popescu, 2019).

Studies of social change in history have found that the creation of a generational unit that constitutes an engine for social change requires three components: location, meaning, and actualization. Location refers to a conceptual, emotional, and usually physical affiliation; the attribution of meaning is based on a code of values and behavior patterns that are meaningful to the group; and actualization includes activities that fulfill the ideas of the group (Edmunds & Turner, 2005; Herzog, 2013; Watroba, 2018). In addition, according to Mannheim (1936/1960), social change occurs when the members of the generational unit succeed in developing public support for their way of life, enjoy public recognition, and their social insights become widespread and are translated into action among the public (pp. 276-277). The present research was based on previous findings that these NICs constituted a single generational unit that had a physical location, defined lifestyles, and an ideology that they worked to actualize (Author, 2021). The present study focused on an analysis of the generational discourse of the NICs in Israel.

## Generational Discourse as a Practice of Social Change

Researchers have discussed the structure and content of generational discourse as a means for examining the messages of generational units (Dant, 1991; Edmunds & Turner, 2005; France & Roberts, 2015; Pilcher, 1994). Accordingly, Dant (1991) claimed that “discursive practice involves social action that can be identified in time and place” (p. 31). Another example can be found in Foster’s (2013) empirical study of intergenerational conflicts in Canada, and his conclusion that a group can be considered a microcosm of its generation and analysis of its discourse can help explain how the group serves as a human agency of the generation working for social change. In other words, social knowledge is constructed by means of discourse.

The way of telling the story of human experience varies with time and technology. According to Leccardi (2017), who studied the 2008 recession and linked historical-social time with biographical time, it enables a unique representation of time for each generation, based on its generational experience and social and cultural conditions.

Therefore, the sense of social belonging and the emotional meaning that form the sociological generation are important. This suggests that for the current generations, the compression of space and time by processes of technological change and globalization cause a rapid integration of the immediate future with the present. As a result, the gap between action and outcome almost disappears. It follows, then, that the examination of generational discourse requires a multidimensional view that includes levels of the individual, the group, and the surrounding society. Furthermore, it must describe the meaning of the discourse not only for its participants, but also for other partners that are influenced by the social relationships discussed.

Inspired by the work of phenomenologists such as Berger and Luckmann (1967), identity is not seen here as a concept that resides in the mind of the self, but rather as a process of construction that has its locus in social interaction. Of the different approaches to analyzing discourse, the present study focused on the relationship between people. In particular, the associations between uses of language and social identities were not presupposed; rather, their investigation was based on the expression and management of identities in the concrete social practices of the individuals and communities.

In a comprehensive view of discourse, Foucault (2019) emphasized the importance of time, place, structure, dynamic, and discursiveness, in addition to the power relations expressed in discourse. Like Foucault (2017), Purvis and Hunt (1993) stressed that generational discourse forms social relationships by means of information and knowledge, but also through debates and disagreements, because these create experiences and, as a result, insights. Interactive discourse also contributed to formation of the core identity trend in the classification of companies (Hester & Eglin, 1997). Interactive discourse focuses on the specific ways in which societies create, discuss, and negotiate their meaning. These representations may be forms of knowledge, ideologies, attitudes, emotions, norms, and values (van Dijk, 2009). Collective identities, such as national or political ones, have been a favored object of investigation for proponents of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989), that is, scholars interested in using discourse analysis to fight social inequalities and prejudice.

From a local perspective, Gan (2020) found that every generation in Israel has created a unique local language and style of discourse that fit the time and the subjects on its agenda. According to his research, the prevailing discourse of the present has been penetrated in recent decades by organizational and task-oriented tones that incorporate norms and values that fit the current trend in Israeli society. In addition, in a study of the components of contemporary Hebrew language in the youth movements in Israel, Katriel (1999) found that the discourse of the adolescents was based on the central theme usually identified with the middle class that developed “Israeliness” as perceived in the public image (p. 13). Hence one might view generational discourse as a tangible representation of the ideas of a generation and the way in which its members want to actualize them.

## The Research Question

In recent years there has been growing interest among researchers in the concepts of generational discourse and sociological generation (Dant, 1991; Gan, 2020; Leccardi, 2017). Researchers have addressed two main questions on this subject: what is the structure, content, and purpose of the discourse and how can it be applied to understand social change? The present empirical study examined the contents of discourse as a main component in the process of social change to which the NICs in Israel were committed.

# Method

The decision to conduct a case study was based on a similar research framework that examined the characteristics of the discourse and experience of social groups (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). As customary in qualitative research, the researcher entered the field without developing hypotheses in advance. As Stake (2005) claimed, "case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of what is to be studied" (p. 438). This approach offers a wide space for explanations and interpretation during the research process.

## Description of the Groups and Their Members

To examine the discourse in the NICs, the researcher chose groups that were similar in ideology and organizational framework. However, they differed in several respects, such as the degree of social collectivism and their respective social causes. The group members belonged to nonreligious NICs, including urban kibbutzim and groups of youth movement graduates (Michaeli & Dror, 2008). Most of the commune members had been raised in youth movements, kibbutzim, or moshavim; a smaller number had not experienced collective life before they chose to live in collective communities as adults. All the group members interviewed had decided to join a commune with a social cause that conducted a lifestyle characterized by some level of collectivism. In their twenties they had moved their center of life to the research NICs, where they agreed to uphold group decisions made by a majority vote. However, the communes differed in their lifestyles, geographical location, year of establishment, age of members, and size of population. In addition, the members of the Yuval community, from Britain, differed from the others in native language and culture of origin, adding research interest. A comparison of the characteristics of the NICs researched are presented in Table 1.

**Insert Table 1 about here**

## Data Collection

An initial letter was sent to the members of the different NICs, explaining the rationale and the framework of the research. Of the approximate 68 members in these NICs, 28 responded to the request to contact me. The topics of the interview included the personal history of the respondent, the challenges of living in the NIC, social action in the city, and other subjects, such as the process of absorption into the community. In each commune, the researcher spoke with between 4 and 17 people. The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face; they lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, until saturation of the information. They were recorded and transcribed.

## Data Analysis

The initial data analysis was based on the quantitative data about the NICs: population size, ages, jobs, and the like. Then more refined concepts of values and beliefs, as well as recurrent expressions, images, and so forth were added. Rereading the transcriptions helped identify the central ideas in the discourse and based on these, the characteristics, intensity, frequency, and main themes of the discourse. Sorting the findings according to areas of discourse created a clearer map of the composite of information and discourses taking place in each NIC. The findings were sent to representatives of the different places and to two researchers familiar with the field of research, for the purpose of feedback. The quotes of members are presented here with pseudonyms; the NICs are identified by their actual names.

# Results

## Two Discourses of Social Change

The analysis of the interviews focused on two areas of discourse in the NICs: discourse regarding the family and the rural kibbutz (including the youth movement); and discourse with residents of the city in which the NICs were located. The framework of the discourse ranged from close, familiar, and personal discourse to more general and broad discourse with people who differed from the members. The themes of the generational discourse of the NIC members reveal a world of experiences and aspirations for social change, which are represented here in quotes from the interviews and their interpretation based on the different relevant theories.

## The Discourse Regarding the Rural Kibbutz

The first discourse dealt with the content and practice of the rural kibbutz. It constituted a broad source of dialogue in which NIC members compared the rural kibbutz with their lives as a community in the city. The examples given by the interviewees indicated the depth of their familiarity with the structure and content of kibbutz life. Most of them had been raised on kibbutzim and others had lived there for periods of time as part of their youth movement activities. Consequently, a lively, critical, and emotional discourse developed about the rural kibbutz. It was unique in that it was a group discourse in which memories and experiences of the past were presented in a satirical way, exaggerating the actual situation and enabling, a Hepworth (2002) found in his research of sociological generations, a sense of “generational subjectivity,” of a community connection that also included drawing lessons for the present.

The interviews suggested a sense of disappointment with the present state of the glorious project of the rural kibbutz. They attributed this to failure of the previous generation to promote and develop the kibbutz creation: “the vision of fulfilment [on rural kibbutzim] is an illusion.” The disappointment with the past was combined with a yearning and desire to live near their families, as they once had. They fondly recalled sitting on the lawn, the communal space that offered a sense of security, riding bicycles in a traffic-free space, and farming. Thus, it seems that on the one hand, their shared rural experience was a connection that had emotional significance for the NIC members. It was a collective narrative of a shared experience on kibbutzim and in the movement, intertwined with personal experiences of childhood and adulthood. It was an experience that, as Purvis and Hunt (1993) put it, generated social relationships through insights that evoked experiences, debates, and disagreements. The interviewees expressed these insights in their collectivism and development of social causes that were relevant to them, including the locations in which they decided to establish their communities.

Most of the parents of the NIC members still lived on rural kibbutzim. Therefore, the discourse with them was part of the discourse with the rural kibbutz. Many of the interviewees claimed that their parents had adopted a capitalist-individualist worldview and viewed their (the children’s) choices as a venture that had no chance in the face of the general social trend. They considered it as a sort of attraction of the moratorium period of the youth movement and adolescence. As Yotam put it, “there’s no doubt that the pressure [to undertake] studies is very strong, the pressure [to build] a family, the individualism ….” In the intergenerational discourse, a prominent subject was that of the children’s education, representing the common and desired modern path that offers future employment opportunities.

The analysis of the intergenerational discourse indicated a perceptual dissonance or deauthorization, as Roberts and France (2021) refer to it, where there is agreement on some ideas, but controversy regarding the practice and adherence to their implementation in adulthood. For some of the parents, the interviewees’ implementation of collective lifestyles beyond the period of childhood and adolescence aroused frustration. They felt the younger generation lacked a mature perspective and failed to adapt the ideals on which they were raised to adult life. In comparison, for the NIC members, the reaction of their parents aroused a sense of incoherence regarding the education they had received at home. They said that they had been raised on guiding values such as education, equality, friendship, collectivism, but were now expected to join the capitalist race. As Foucault (2019) noted regarding the analysis of discourses, it is important to pay attention to what is not said, as this testifies to the inner truth. The analysis showed that age of the NIC; a varying level of its collectivism that allowed their sons and daughters to choose their independent path; and the integration of bourgeois ideals, such as creating a family, the possibility of owing private property such as a home, and higher education, contributed to the parents’ acceptance of the choice of their children.

From an intergenerational perspective, it is interesting that even three and four generations after the establishment of the rural kibbutzim, there was still a spirited discussion among the NIC members regarding the rural kibbutz and its ideas. The intensity of the debate on the ways and practices of the rural kibbutz indicates its active role in the decisions of the children and grandchildren of the kibbutz founders to act according to or in contrast to it. This echoes the findings of Gan (2020), who found a similar phenomenon in a study of discourse between the first and the third generations of a rural kibbutz and of Roberts and France (2021), who discussed the spiral motion of generational response to social experiences and phenomena. Like the members of their chronological generation who lived in rural kibbutzim, the members of the NICs also conducted a discourse that criticized the assumptions and core truths of the previous kibbutz generations. However, among the NIC members, this was an external discourse regarding a social framework they no longer belonged to; therefore, the intensity of the emotion involved in this discourse is interesting. The discourse of the NIC members dealt extensively with tangible concepts, such as location (city versus countryside) and the social cause and practical lifestyles (collectivism versus equality). However, it also focused on the need to develop meaning and form a meaningful life. According to the analysis, the NIC members had not disengaged from their past, but rather adopted some aspects of the collective and socialist method and abandoned others. In taking their lifestyles with them to the city, the NIC members placed themselves in a “site,” a concept that has generational importance (Foster, 2013; Mannheim, 1923/1970) as well as significance in the analysis of discourse (Foucault, 2019). This enabled them to create a community framework and rendered them a generational unit that was both distinct from their surroundings and separate from their past.

Another interesting aspect of the generational discourse examined in this research was that the NIC members avoided taking a stand regarding the next generation. The interviewees claimed that they had no control over the future or the decisions of the next generation. They had chosen collective life in the city for themselves, and their children would make their own choices (Author, 2018). As Reuven (Migvan) said, “we will stay here; they will live their own lives.” Furthermore, according to the NIC members interviewed, the financial survival of the ICs did not depend upon the next generation managing or working the land, which would require generational continuity. The financial skills required for a community in the city are social communication, training and education, and the ability to make a living in the liberal professions. From this angle, the overall perception of these NICs differed from those of other ICs in the United States (Pitzer, 2014) or in Israel (Ben-Rafael & Topel, 2017), where encouraging the younger generation to continue collective living was very important.

## The Discourse with Residents of the City in Which the NICs Were Located

The second discourse was held with the environment in which the groups chose to locate. It was unique in several respects. This was the main discourse for examining the declarations of the NIC members regarding their practices and it serves as an acid test of the implementation of their social causes. In Mannheim’s (1923/1970) terms, this was the discourse of generational actualization. Unlike the other discourses that addressed memories and experience, this discourse dealt mainly with the present and, especially, the future of the NICs. In addition, it was largely a unilateral discourse, in which the NIC members spoke about the idea and its implementation, but the residents of the city were barely heard. The NIC members stressed living in the city and long-term activity in that environment. They aspired to have a voice and to make a difference, but also to incorporate the local tones and nuances, to create shared events and memories with the other residents of the cities.

The social action included community work in a neighborhood cafe that employed and trained adolescents who had dropped out of school (Kama), distribution of food to Holocaust survivors (Yaffo), opening and operating afterschool programs (Yuval), and promoting projects with disadvantaged people together with the municipality and NGOs (Migvan). In addition, there were daily activities based on acquaintances and shared interests: participation in the city choir (Migvan), meetings of the local religious studies center (Migvan), activities in a nursery school, and meetings in the children’s schools and the shopping center. This indicates that contrary to research findings in other countries and in Israel that indicate separation of the groups from the surrounding population (Ben-Rafael & Topel, 2017; Oved, 2017; Pitzer, 2014), these Israeli took measures to create encounters, discourse, and involvement with people in the surrounding area.

The present research did not examine the attitudes of the city residents; it may be that the location of the NIC residences on a single street or in the same building created separation and alienation from the perspective of the local community. However, based on the interviews with the NIC members (even if we consider the discourse between them and the local residents as partial), it seems that in this case, similar to that reported by Bakó et al. (2021), the message was conveyed and promoted social change. In terms of generation theory, the NIC members tried to create what the researcher consider a new “paradigm of consciousness” with the city residents. They strived to put past experiences behind them and create a new present and future of multiculturalism, cooperation, and shared goals. They wanted to convince the residents that their intentions were genuine and honest. This was the ideal, but its realization required action on many levels.

In summary, an overall view of the discourses of the NICs studied indicates that the discourse and the social action were based on relationships with others through dialogue without prejudice or bias ­ – a relationship of I and Thou (Buber, 2012). To achieve the goals of the NIC members to transform their relationship with the residents of the cities in which they lived to a bilateral one, a bond and a shared consciousness with the “it” in I-It (Buber, 2012, p. 27) must be formed. In other words, it is necessary to create an entity that is neither “I” nor “thou,” but “we.” At that point, the “we” will expand to include the residents and the NIC members as one community.

# Discussion

Based on the findings and on the model presented by Shemer (2014), which examined the community solidarity of the NICs, the researcher developed a model of the positions of the discourses along two axes: that of the individual and the NIC and that of the internal and external environments of the NICs (see Figure 1). This model enabled examination of the issues of the generational discourse of the NICs and the main ideas that arose within it. The discourses in the NICs were mapped on two axes, representing their location: the first included the speaker or speakers in the discourse ­ – personal or community; the second included the subject of the discourse – the shared internal social cause and the external cause of the NIC. This framework enabled analysis of the generational discourse in the NICs from two different perspectives, that of the speaker in the discourse and that of the target of the discourse regarding its subject. Figure 1 presents the axes and mapping of the speakers and targets in the discourse of the NICs.

Insert Figure 1 about here

**Figure 1. Location of Discourses Along Two Axes: Individual – NIC and Internal and External Environment – NIC**

The figure highlights the network of relationships in the NICs. It illustrates the mutual influence of the individual and the IC with the cause of collectivism within the NIC and with the shared social cause in the environment. It illustrates the interface, overlap, and mutual effects of the individuals and the NICs as reflected in the community discourse. The importance of the model lies in its use in analyzing aspects of time, location, structure, and dynamics as Foucault (2019) and generational researchers (Aboim, 2013; Dant, 1991; Edmunds & Turner, 2005) suggested, to obtain a more accurate picture of the relationships between the discourses conducted in the NICs in this research.

The model indicates that the generational discourse as a method and practice was embedded in all aspects of life in the NICs. It can be found between the members of the NICs, with their parents, and with the people in the surrounding community. This is an overall discourse that, as Foster (2013) put it, activates the body, the organization, and the space, and it includes daily arrangements, decision-making, and the like. It is a discourse aimed at examining the past and common assumptions through a critical contemporary lens. It is an attempt to draw lessons from the past while preserving the ideational essence of collectivism and concession of symbols, rituals, and decisions that do not serve the establishment of life together. The analysis of the personal and group discourses indicated a worldview and path that the interviewees chose to follow in the framework of their NICs. The diverse subjects covered in the discourse reveal processes of developing the group and personal identities. They indicate issues that the NICs adopted and others that they rejected, the events they experienced as individuals or as a community that became significant, and more. The practice of discourse and the understandings that arose from it enabled construction of a new modern collectivism that responded to the needs and aspirations of the members. In Foucault’s (2019) terms, the discourse conducted in these NICs defined the dominant ideas and the boundaries of the discourse. This created a fruitful discourse that promoted social development.

An example of change that was emphasized in the discourse is the attitude toward the location and importance of the individual and the family (see Figure 1). This discourse accompanied the interviewees throughout their lives; it was dominant, located in the space of the individual, the community, and the cause and it constituted the central axis. However, the analysis also revealed that from the perspective of time, the addition of the effect of the life cycle to the discourse became a significant factor of change in the NICs. There was a motion in the life cycle from childhood to adulthood and old age, which inevitably included the roles of parenthood, work, and livelihood. Thus, for example, with the establishment of the families and the birth of children in the NICs, and afterwards when the children grew up and left, the NICs experienced processes of institutionalization alongside changes in the perceived boundaries between the community, the individual, and the family, so that the community became a collection of families.

Over time, the center of gravity shifted to different subjects that were important to the NICs. A clear example of this is the importance of the effect of the NIC on the surrounding community and its lifestyle, which was replaced by intensification of the discourse on the role of the individual in the community. In Dant’s (1991) terms, this choice combined social action characteristic of the time and place. The present research results indicate that the social cause was present, but daily personal life simplified the vision, and the imagination created the generational subjectivity (Hepworth, 2002) of the NICs. This is consistent with the findings of Pitzer (2014) regarding the process that occurred over time in similar communities in Israel and other countries.

The change over time in the emphases of the discourse regarding social activism is evident in the key words of the interviews and the connections between them and the central ideas in the NIC discourse highlights additional differences. Examples of such ideas can be found in the words accompanied by strong emotion, such as: fulfillment, enabling, and responsibility. The use of concepts that the NIC members had been taught in their parents’ homes and the communities in which they grew up appeared in the NIC discourse, as well. The research shows that the NIC members had transformed these terms to reality in their present lives, thus conceptualizing and realizing memory and history by means of language, to create a sense of identity and belonging to the NIC in the present. The link between the terms of the past and the language of the present emerged in the NIC discourse of ideas and concepts related to processes and perceptions of change. This was an internal change regarding values and an external change derived from action. The combination of terminology and practice led to the roots of an “evolution of a language” that generated, as the research shows, the generational discourse unique to the members of the new intentional communes. Its meaning was social change that is continually adapted, in location, meaning and actualization, in the way that Mannheim and his successors referred to actualization of the sociological generation (Mannheim, 1923/1970). It can be said, then, that the members of the NICs described a process similar to that described by Mannheim (1923/1970) of separation from and development of an alternative to the former generation. This is an inevitable process of gradual change by a generation that leads to integration of their worldview with that of the past generations.

An interesting finding of the present research is that of parallel processes of a generational discourse. The NICs actual conducted a generational discourse along two axes at the same time, where one referred to chronological time and concerned the rural kibbutz, and the other referred to location within the consciousness of general Israeli society. The discourse that referred to time and the rural kibbutz was a conflictual discourse of the generational struggle, which generational researchers consider inevitable (Connolly, 2019; Roberts & France, 2021). They have argued that the formation of a new generation involves a confrontation regarding worldviews, political attitudes, ways to realize ideology, and so forth. However, most of the members of the NICs noted a gradual conciliation of those around them and their families with their choices, reflecting an essentially different process from the crisis described by generational researchers (Edmunds & Turner, 2005). According to the interviewees, the methods and culture of the discourse customary in the NICs, which they brought from their parents’ homes, helped reduce the conflicts. In time, this also led to reconciliation of the parents with their children’s lifestyles. Thus, the present research shows how, as Steven and France (2020) showed, the structure and the practices of intergenerational discourse in the “NIC generation” developed in a spiral form that contributed to development and maturity and to the NIC members’ adaptation to the new situation in which they now lived. In practice, the research shows that, as generational researchers have found (Purvis & Hunt, 1993), generational discourse can set off a process of developing social relationships and demonstrate intentions of social change. However, at times the discourse also involves an encounter with people who are not members of the community. This leads to social insights that express social change in different ways, such as a slower pace of change, focus on different areas than those originally planned, inclusion of more parties in the process, and the like.

The study has several limitations, such as the subjectivity of Interviews. Additional methods like surveys or observational studies for a more comprehensive view can be done in the future. Also, the study focused on nonreligious ICs. Future research could include religious ICs for a more holistic understanding, as well as the views of city residents toward the NICs.

# Summary

The present research analyzed the social activity of a generational unit by examining its generational discourse. The results indicate that generational discourse is a practice that drives, directs, and realizes social change, and as such, a rich source for analysis of the attitudes and practices of a community. By looking towards the future and acting in the present, the NICs formed a new society that had a secular culture with respect for Jewish tradition, which they considered part of modern social-liberal values. Thus, the NICs developed a set of values that included ideological and cultural meaning for them and created an active, supportive community structure that fit an activistic worldview and social vision. The findings of the present research are innovative in that the generational discourse that appeared frequently among the members of the NICs as a generational unit put their vision and aspirations into practice to create a new situation. In addition, the engagement of the NICs with their urban environment was an innovation in terms of structure, organization, and consciousness in which time was a significant element. This combination ­ of social vision, discourse, and action was created out of a discourse of understandings. The NIC members expected that the message of a respectful, inclusive discourse aimed at creating partnerships of action as a civil society that considers all its citizens would expand in time to additional population groups in Israel.

Future research on similar groups in the world that includes examination of the perspectives of urban residents towards the NICs and the focus of the NIC leaders, along with deep analysis of linguistic structures of the discourse could further contribute to the body of knowledge of this subject.

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