

ACADEMIC CAPITAL OR SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS?
A Critique of Studies of Kibbutz Stratification

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Why did six decades of kibbutz studies not discover the existence of complex social stratification? This curious blindness is explained by the dominance of a coalition in the study of this complex social field, which includes both kibbutzim and federative organizations. The uniqueness of kibbutzim enabled this coalition to perpetuate a series of partial truisms, including a supposed lack of stratification. Critics have exposed some degree of status differentiation but ignored the primary evidence of stratification and missed its true extent. The author's desire to address his own society's problems led him to engage in a "long effort applied to oneself which [converted] . . . one's whole view of . . . the social world" (Bourdieu 1990:16), and this view exposed the true extent of stratification in this social field. Thus, the motivation to reform the kibbutz led to a level of understanding which traditional academic research had not achieved, supporting Whyte's (1992) assertion that social scientists must seek social theories for action, not for pure knowledge, and Wallerstein's (2004) thesis that division of the social sciences and humanities into separate disciplines hinders scientific progress.

. . . one cannot be satisfied with an explanatory model incapable of differentiating people whom ordinary intuition in the specific universe tells us are quite different (Bourdieu, in Wacqaunt 1989:7–8).

THE KIBBUTZ IS WIDELY RECOGNIZED as Israel's most interesting social creation.¹ Interest in it has indeed lessened significantly of late, however, owing to the debt crisis into which the kibbutz movement sank and from which it was rescued by massive public financial assistance, leading to a mass exodus and adoption for the most part of capitalistic norms which transformed the communal culture (Ben-Rafael 1997; Rosolio 1999). Nevertheless, this relatively small segment of modern Israeli society—270 kibbutzim totaling some 125,000 inhabitants—has served as a subject of thousands of studies by hundreds of students for some sixty years. Faced with this huge research effort, it is natural to expect that kibbutzim would be a well-understood social field (*sensu* Bourdieu 1977). And since the kibbutz is supposedly egalitarian, what should be more studied and understood than the extent of its egalitarianism and the lack of stratification? How is it that some scholars (e.g., Rosner 1991; Shur 1987; Talmon 1972) have not recognized the tangible evidence of stratification, while others (Ben-Rafael and Yaar 1992; Bowes 1989; Fadida 1972; Kressel 1974; Shapira 1987, 1990, 1992; Topel 1979) have detected three, four, or even more strata? Historians have depicted lifelong heads of main kibbutz federations—termed “the Movements”—as very powerful and prestigious figures, seemingly a top social stratum (Beilin 1984; Kafkafi 1992, 1998; Kanari 2003; Kynan 1989; Near 1997; Tzachor 1997, 2004), but only one ethnographer, Rosenfeld (1951), depicted Movement officials as constituting a top stratum in a kibbutz. Her anthropological colleagues have depicted the top stratum as the 12–15 members who rotated main local offices among themselves (Spiro 1955), a kibbutz's chief economic officers (Schwartz 1955; Vallier 1962), the four members who circulated between main local offices and Movement jobs (Fadida 1972), the three managers of a kibbutz's plants (Kressel 1974), the three patrons whose clients managed a

kibbutz (Topel 1979), a few veteran officers (Bowes 1989), or the head of the ruling economic clique (Schwartz and Naor 2000). For sociologists, the top stratum was either the main officers of each kibbutz (Landshut 1944); the 20% of members with the greatest authority, prestige, and influence (Ben-Rafael and Yaar 1992); the technocrats who managed the main branches of a kibbutz (Ben-Rafael 1996); or the local oligarchs (Rosolio 1999:29).

Ordinary intuition rejects these views in favor of histories and deputies' testimonies (Cohen 2000; Shem-Tov 1997; Shure 2001; Vilan 1993) wherein the top stratum was said to be composed of the heads of the largest Movements: Itzhak Tabenkin of the Kibbutz Meuchad (hereafter KM), and Me'ir Yaari and Yaakov Hazan of the Kibbutz Artzi (KA). These Movements represented 75–80% of all kibbutz members up to 1952, and some two-thirds afterwards. For half a century, they also dominated as heads of affiliated national parties and Knesset (parliament) members **who nominated cabinet ministers**. They also chose hundreds of KM and KA functionaries to become Movement staff members and decided policies and actions, acting as heads of Hasidic courts known as Admors.² Common sense tells us that any analysis of stratification is flawed if it ignores the outward signs of these leaders' guru-like superiority (see Tzachor 2004). Admors were known not only to every kibbutz member, but also to most Israelis via the news media, and via their keynote addresses at KM, KA, and party conventions, executive meetings, and cadre seminars. They wrote ideological books, censored Movement and party publications, hobnobbed with national leaders, and rode in chauffeured, ministerial-style cars (Aharoni 2000; Beilin 1984; Halamish 2003; Kanari 2003; Keshet 1995; Shure 2001; Tzachor 1997, 2004; Vilan 1993).

The inadequacy of the analysis is also clear from the variety of etiologies that have been proposed for kibbutz stratification, **which are as follows**: The power of kibbutz chief officers is a result of access to better information (Landshut 1944:87); differential prestige is due to the leadership roles held by veterans of the kibbutz movement (Rosenfeld 1951); control of the kibbutz economy made economic officers dominant (Vallier 1962); acquiring higher education and circulating between main local offices, emissaries abroad, and Movement jobs (Fadida 1972), continuous management of a kibbutz's plants (Kressel 1974), or patronage of clients who held main local offices (Topel 1979) bred dominance; differential longevity among members led to control by veterans (Bowes 1989); differential authority, prestige, and influence of roles created stratification (Ben-Rafael and Yaar 1992); technocracy led to power differentiation (Ben-Rafael 1996); rotation of main offices among a few members bred oligarchy (Rosolio 1999:29); and heading of a power clique within the kibbutz's economic committee bred supremacy (Schwartz and Naor 2000).

How can one account for such a variety of explanations? Researchers were apparently blind to the existence of stratification created by the steep hierarchies of thousands of functionaries called *pe'ilim* (meaning "activists"; singular: *pa'il*) who administered the Movements and hundreds of other **regional and national federative organizations, 36 types of equal partnerships of some or many kibbutzim** through which most relations with the encompassing society were managed. There were some 250–300 federative organizations in which some 4,500–5,000 *pe'ilim* administered almost twenty thousand hired employees (Shapira 2001, n.d.a: chap. 5). **The researchers** looked for evidence of stratification only in the flat organizational structures of democratic kibbutzim, with short-term officers of relatively low power and prestige, no privileges, and limited authority, while ignoring hierarchic and autocratic federative organizations whose *pe'ilim* were clearly stratified by differential power, authority, prestige, privileges, and job tenure.

My conclusion is that previous researchers were indeed blind to reality. In this paper I will outline the main facts and factors of stratification, supported by ethnographic examples, but I will not attempt a full analysis, which will be found in a forthcoming book. The academic blindness to the existence of stratification raises troubling questions: How did it come about, and why did such

a substantial body of research fail to expose it? Was an inadequate paradigm used because it served a dominant coalition's interest in academic capital and epistemic authority (Bourdieu 1988; Collins 1975: chap. 9; Gieryn 1999)? Did communitarian epistemic cultures (Knorr-Cetina 1999) cause conformity to this paradigm? Did the failure to integrate findings by different disciplines cause the myopia, and if so, why did ethnographers not integrate them? What lessons can this add to recent critiques of ethnography (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Hammersley 1992; Van Maanen 1995)? Does this case support Wallerstein's (2004) thesis that the division of social sciences and the humanities into separate disciplines hinders scientific progress?

This paper is divided into three parts. In the first, the mistaken image of kibbutzim is exposed and the main errors of the customary view are clarified. The second part explains the origins and longevity of the blindness, and the third explores its exposure, in particular the "long effort applied to oneself which [converted] . . . one's whole view of . . . the social world" (Bourdieu 1990:16), a view which exposed the true extent of stratification. The conclusions call for the shaping of new types of academic careers that include periods of social action and involve various researchers in each other's fieldwork and analysis, as well as adequate support for the huge research investment required for preventing such blindness, and a revision of decision-making norms for publication that currently suppress radical thinkers.

THE BLINDNESS TO KIBBUTZ STRATIFICATION

. . . modernism privileges understanding at the expense of seeing. In effect, explanations and interpretative schemes inculcate blindness to concrete existence (Linstead et al. 1996:7, citing Hugo Letiche).

In order to explain the kibbutz phenomenon, researchers have followed the paradigm used for studying communal societies that isolated themselves from the outside world (Oved 1988; Pitzer 1997), but kibbutzim, as pioneers of Israeli society, were heavily involved in "the outside world" both directly and through the Movements and many other federative organizations. They belonged "to a Kibbutz Movement, the Histadrut and the Labor Movement" (Rosner 1991:1),³ and therefore "cannot be understood outside this context" (Rosolio 1993:10). For this reason the use of the communal societies paradigm led to academic myopia since, unlike in the cases of other communal societies, the encompassing federative organizations and Israeli society impacted social organization within kibbutzim. Researchers found stratification to be primarily an outcome of amassing power, and tangible and intangible capital by which privileges that furthered power and capital were obtained (Bourdieu 1977; Collins 1975; Harris 1990:357-86; Lenski 1966; Michels 1959 [1911]; Weber 1946). Hence, when a Movement amassed power over its kibbutzim, its *pe'ilim* could enjoy advantages rarely found in local kibbutz offices (except for a minority of capitalist-like kibbutzim with mass hired labor and permanent, privileged autocratic managers [Kressel 1974, 1983]). At their peak, in the mid-1980s, the two main Movements, which represented almost all the kibbutzim, comprised dozens of subsidiaries, including a national party and a major stake in one of Israel's two ruling parties, youth organizations with hundreds of branches in Israel and abroad, daily and weekly newspapers, quarterly journals, publishing houses, printing plants, research institutes, colleges, seminaries, museums, psychology clinics, choirs, orchestras, theater groups, a dance company, an art gallery, and firms engaged in architecture and planning, building, finance, insurance, supply, marketing, import, export, shipping, and economic consulting, among others.⁴ In accord with scale and power advantages, almost a thousand of some 2,400 Movement *pe'ilim* enjoyed company cars, while in each kibbutz, hundreds of members shared only a few cars (Adar 1975; Gilbo'a 1991; Ilana

and Avner 1977; Lifshitz 1990; Shapira 1979; Yadlin 1989).⁵

In addition to the Movements, hundreds of other federative organizations were administered by some two thousand additional *pe'ilim* (Shapira n.d.a). If the privilege of company cars signaled Movement power, a higher percentage of *pe'ilim* having cars must signal a more powerful federative organization. A case in point is the eleven commercial-industrial conglomerate organizations called Regional Enterprises, with some 110 processing plants and farming service facilities, employing 8,000–10,000 hired workers (some 2,000 of them seasonal) and administered by some 1,200 *pe'ilim* (Brum 1986; Niv and Bar-On 1992). Since 1970, the largest, Milu'ot, has proven to be more powerful than the Movements themselves (Ginat 1979a, 1979b; Lifshitz 1983, 1986; Rosolio 1975). Accordingly, more than 90% of Milu'ot *pe'ilim* had company cars at their disposal, compared with only some 40% of Movement *pe'ilim*, and the situation was quite similar in other powerful Regional Enterprises (Arieli 1986; Shapira 1978, 1987; Tzur 1980). Yet another influential organization category is composed of dozens of national economic federative organizations with thousands of hired employees managed by a small number of *pe'ilim*, each one with a car (Anonymous 1979, 1983; Arad 1995; Halevi 1990; Shteinberg 1974; Tzimchi 1999; Tzur 1996). In contrast, in more than a hundred weaker regional organizations, such as elementary and high schools, colleges, heavy transport federations, and local government firms, only few senior *pe'ilim* had cars (Adar 1975; Gelb 2001:112; Niv and Bar-On 1992; Shepher 1980:165–70).

A federative organization car was a prime status symbol since kibbutz cars were rare; mostly trucks, vans, and jeeps were used, and drivers changed frequently, while a *pa'il* consistently drove a specific car, which testified to his status. Car sizes, models, and age were finely graded according to rank in a federative organization hierarchy, as well as being emblematic of each federative organization's power and prestige (Adar 1975; Shapira 1979, 1987; Tzur 1980), analogous to Bourdieu's (1977, 1984, 1996) findings for French society. At the top were the Admors, with the largest, chauffeured cars, and at the bottom were humble *pe'ilim* of lesser federative organizations, who used public transport or were transported collectively in vans. Lesser *pe'ilim* of powerful Regional Enterprises—storekeepers, technicians, office workers, etc.—were ranked a little higher: Five would share a small, Israeli-made, Susita fiberglass car with an 1100 cc engine (Shapira 1978).

Length of job tenure served to stratify *pe'ilim* less clearly, as some top jobs were short-term, for political or other reasons. If, however, one analyzed career success and continuity instead of job tenure, the most successful, life-long careers in top-level jobs beneath the level of the Admors were powerful federative organization heads, Knesset members, and executives of the Histadrut, the Jewish Agency,⁶ the government, or other bureaucracies on behalf of federative organizations, who never returned to the ranks (Arieli 1986; Gelb 2001; Halevi 1990; Lifshitz 1983, 1986; Near 1997:161, 180–82, 257; Rosenhak 1988; Shapira 1990, 1992, 2001; Shure 2001; Tzimchi 1999; Vilan 1993). The norm of periodic job rotation, termed *rotatzia*, meant that tenure of mid-level *pe'ilim* was usually shorter; they typically circulated between federative organization and kibbutz offices, sometimes returning to minor jobs or even to the ranks (Fadida 1972; Helman 1987; Leshem 1969; Shapira 1978, 1987, 1992). Lesser *pe'ilim* usually served a single three- to five-year term and returned to minor kibbutz offices or the ranks; even this term, however, was longer than that of most kibbutz officers, and many of these *pe'ilim* managed hired employees and had privileges and status symbols unavailable to kibbutz officers (Fadida 1972; Gelb 2001; Shapira 1978, 1987; Topel 1979), except for the few managers of capitalist-like kibbutzim mentioned above. A clear sign of *pe'ilim* supremacy was the common failure by kibbutzim to shorten their job tenure (Shapira 1995a; Shepher 1980:168–72).

Researchers Ignored Federative Organizations, Pe'ilim, and Other Outside Officeholders

The kibbutz is not as we imagine, an isolated community. We belong very much to the outside, but since members don't want to sit and discuss our relations with the entities [on the outside] to which we belong, we are not coping with the problem. In order to explain it, we must recognize it. Maybe we do not want to do that . . . (Kibbutz Kochav member).⁷

According to Bourdieu's (1977) conceptualization, the hundreds of kibbutzim and hundreds of federative organizations constitute a **single social field**. Yet kibbutz members externalized and ignored the impact of federative organizations for an obvious reason: Stratified, hierarchic federative organizations were diametrically opposed to the egalitarian kibbutz ethos. Almost all researchers followed suit, avoiding the study of federative organizations, and thus, these facts were neglected. For instance, Ben-Rafael and Yaar's (1992:83) list of roles which defined kibbutz members' status did not include members' high-status roles on the outside, as later noticed by Ben-Rafael himself (1997:141). Likewise, Evens's (1995) ethnography of Kibbutz Merhavia did not mention *pe'ilim* or outside officeholders, although KA Admor Yaari, *pe'ilim* Tilman (1990) and Tzur (1996), and other outside officeholders such as tenured university professors Grol and Yasoor were Merhavia members. Accordingly, most researchers ignored their status symbols: cars, "dress" clothes,⁸ briefcases, home phones, travel abroad, etc. (with the exception of Rosenfeld 1957; Kressel 1974; Shapira 1979, 1987; Topel 1979; and Shepher 1980).

Scholars evaded the study of federative organizations, which resulted in missing the **true extent of stratification of the social field** as a whole and also caused erroneous depictions of local stratification. Ben-Rafael and Yaar stated that the upper stratum of a kibbutz comprises 20% of its members (1992:30), but among the some 500 members of Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek, nobody came close to KA head Hazan's Admor status (Argaman 1997; Tzachor 1997). KM head Tabenkin and KA head Yaari exhibit similarly high status in their respective kibbutzim (Argaman 1997), as had Pinhas Lavon in Kibbutz Hulda (Kafkafi 1998), Kadish Luz in Degania (Near 1997:182, 251–54), and many others whose local prominence disproved Ben-Rafael and Yaar's thesis (1992). The Admors' superiority was explained by their charisma (Ben-Rafael 1997:45; Rosolio 1999:23), but their use of undemocratic, "Iron Law" power since the 1930s negates this explanation and calls to mind other autocratic commune leaders (Brumann 2000): centralization, conservatism, censorship of publications, repression of innovators, and privileging themselves and their loyalist *pe'ilim* (Aharoni 2000; Beilin 1984; Cohen 2000; Kafkafi 1992; Keshet 1995; Kynan 1989; Shapira 2001; Shure 2001; Tzur 1981). Other federative organization heads did the same, but while hundreds of students carried out thousands of studies of kibbutzim, only four have studied federative organizations (Avrahami 1993; Hermesh 1975; Rosolio 1975, 1999; Shapira 1978, 1987), and only one (myself) has alluded to the Iron Law of Oligarchy.⁹ This avoidance was less significant before 1948, as many *pe'ilim* were ascetic and were motivated by Zionist ideals, but it became untenable as asceticism diminished (Talmon 1972), stratification seeped from federative organizations into the kibbutzim, and the field became oligarchic owing in part to the norm of *rotatzia*.

Because they did not study federative organizations, researchers missed the fact that periodic *rotatzia* of officers, supposedly aimed at preventing oligarchy, actually failed in its mission and enhanced oligarchization. As there **were** thousands of jobs in federative organizations, officers who were rotated from kibbutz offices mostly gained federative organization offices, only sometimes returning to local positions (Fadida 1972; Helman 1987; Leshem 1969; Shapira 1992; Topel 1979). Since *rotatzia* was formally incorporated into federative organizations, most *pe'ilim* had to circulate from one short-term office to another and therefore needed a new job every few years, while federative organization heads and executives controlled jobs or obtained them for clients through old-boy networks of senior *pe'ilim*. **In accord with Hirschman's (1970) conceptualization**, federative

organization heads placed loyalists in deputy jobs; thus, being the client of a federative organization head was the best guarantee for retaining managerial status (Shapira 1987, 1995a). Clients' dependency enhanced federative organization heads' power and oligarchic rule, and helped explain the half-century hegemony of Admors despite their dysfunctional leadership since the 1940s, [in accord with studies](#) by Hirschman (1970, 1982), Hambrick and Fukutomi (1991), and Brumann (2000)—a truly Michelsian nightmare (Shapira 2001, n.d.a, n.d.b).

Because they ignored federative organizations, scholars missed the fact that the *pe'ilim* violated the principle of egalitarianism, [and the fact that this violation encouraged the same by outside careerists](#). Since these privileges negated egalitarianism, they were not mentioned in print until the mid-1970s and only rarely afterward, but their existence was later acknowledged in interviews with kibbutz veterans. For instance, in 1990, David Kahana, a veteran member of Kibbutz Beit Alfa, stated that in 1930 he had been a *pa'il* of the Agricultural Center, a Histadrut subsidiary, and was able to put aside money for a private radio from the weekly expense allowance given for five-day accommodations in Tel Aviv, while the other hundred or so kibbutz members were served by a radio located in the dining hall. Biographies of outside careerists, professionals, authors, editors, artists, and senior army officers, among others, made it clear that having jobs outside the kibbutz elevated their status (Aharoni 2000; Cohen 2000; Dagan and Yakir 1995; Gelb 2001; Rosenhak 1988; Tzimchi 1999; Vilan 1993),¹⁰ but unlike my ethnographies they never disclosed the fact that careers were boosted by ignoring *rotatzia* and [violated the principles of egalitarianism, as did *pe'ilim*](#) (also see Kressel 1974; Shepher 1980). Moreover, when Kibbutz Rama (fictitious name of a veteran kibbutz with 400 adults and 250 youngsters) decided in the late 1970s that *pe'ilim* had to share their cars with other members on weekends, some *pe'ilim* ignored the decision, as did outside careerists who had company cars. Likewise, three such careerists for whom Rama had bought cars which were essential for their jobs justified ignoring the decision by alluding to the violation by the *pe'ilim*. Later, some kibbutz officers with cars did the same; thus, most cars in Rama ended up symbolizing the drivers' high status, all as a consequence of a few *pe'ilim* who violated an egalitarian decision.

The impact of federative organizations and *pe'ilim* on kibbutz stratification was profound. I have provided [here](#) a few conspicuous examples of the many that exist (Shapira n.d.a). Now let us see how kibbutz research missed the existence of stratification.

CREATING AND MAINTAINING THE BLINDNESS

An Economist-Sociologist and Anthropologists Provided the Foundation

The economist-sociologist Landshut (1944) conducted research on kibbutzim in 1939–1940. His study, which was, in the main, valid and illuminating, included analysis of the Movements' ideological impact on kibbutzim, but it missed the impact on social stratification and ignored the dominance of Admors and senior *pe'ilim*, designating local main officers as the [supreme kibbutz stratum](#) (1944:88).

The work of three American anthropologists who researched kibbutzim in 1949–1951 [can be](#) criticized as [realistic](#), innocent, ahistoric ethnography (see Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Hammersley 1992; Van Maanen 1995). They, too, missed the impact of *pe'ilim* and federative organizations, but the differences among them are quite revealing: two are men with prospects for academic careers at Ivy League universities, and the third is a woman with lesser prospects, from the Jewish Board of Guardians in New York. Only the latter, Eva Rosenfeld (1951, 1957), saw some of this impact and the existence of real stratification, by discerning that a few senior *pe'ilim* were looked up to as the main kibbutz figures, and she correctly designated them as the top stratum, although she missed recognizing their status symbols, privileges, and power. “The sociologist's

misfortune is that . . . the people who have the technical means of appropriating what he says, have no wish to appropriate it . . . whereas those who would have an interest in appropriating it do not have the instruments for appropriation” said Bourdieu (1993:23). The two Ivy League faculty members could have made use of her findings and exposed the existence of stratification by asking questions about prominent members such as which Movement jobs they held, what advantages they received, how long and how exactly did it impact their local superiority, etc., but they missed her perceptions. Spiro’s Harvard-published ethnography (1955) noted the existence of 12–15 members who kept rotating the main kibbutz offices among themselves (p. 25), but though he mentioned the Movement many times (calling it “The Federation”), he did not explain that these members kept their status even when out of these particular leadership jobs by circulating to other Movement jobs or other career-enhancing positions (Fadida 1972; Helman 1987; Shapira 1995a). He also missed the fact that those who did rotate among various positions were juniors vis-à-vis two veteran, senior *pe’ilim* who retained their positions throughout: one was the Movement’s main economist, and the other headed Tnuva’s main division, with over a thousand employees.¹¹ Schwartz (1955:427) recognized “10–15” ex-kibbutz officers who held outside “decision-making positions” (i.e., *pe’ilim*), but he saw none of their accrued status, power, and privileges.

By not probing the impact of the federative organizations on kibbutzim, the four research pioneers missed how different outside careers led to differential stratification within kibbutzim. For instance, the very successful kibbutz I have called Kochav (with almost a thousand inhabitants) was more clearly stratified than Spiro’s (1955) Beit Alfa, since Kochav’s two seniormost *pe’ilim* held higher federative organization offices than Beit Alfa’s: one was the veteran head of a very large federative organization, and the other edited the Movement’s daily newspaper, then spent decades in the Knesset and became a government minister. In contrast, in Kibbutz Rama, superiority of veteran senior *pe’ilim* declined early as they lost high-level federative organization jobs, and as new power elites became dominant, one composed of economic *pe’ilim* and ex-*pe’ilim*, and another of successful outside careerists (Shapira 2001).

Surveys Missed Social Action But Were Legitimized Academically

In the mid-1950s, Hebrew University sociologists entered the scene and dominated kibbutz studies for decades, headed by the renowned functionalist S. N. Eisenstadt (Ram 1995). Their surveys enhanced the blindness, being “disengaged from any concrete situation, . . . record[ing] responses induced by the abstract stimuli of the survey situation as if they were authentic products of the habitus” (Bourdieu 1990:294). Survey biases remain unknown until they are exposed by nonreactive measures (Yankelovich 1991). This requires extra fieldwork, but senior scholars are detached from the fieldwork carried out by their juniors; are busy with analyses, writing, and publication, which lead to fame and academic capital; and therefore usually ignore this requirement (Platt 1976). Alas, because of this division of labor the seniors lack “the profound intuitions gained from personal familiarity” (Bourdieu 1988:3), do not meet “individuals . . . who . . . have been waiting there . . . not just to answer questions but to instruct [them] as to which ones to ask” (Geertz 1995:61; also see Williams 2000). Bourdieu, for instance, did much of his fieldwork himself (Collins 1989; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:29), but kibbutz sociologists rarely do that, following the dominant Anglo-American sociologists who sent junior sociologists to the field (Platt 1976), as I personally experienced as a *pa’il* of the Kibbutz Research Institute. They used “technological wizardry” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:33)—complex statistical analyses that gave their findings an appearance of objectivity, although these were often “tape spinning” that explained nothing (Whyte 1992:9; also Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:31). Surveys enhanced the dominance of theoreticians over empiricists (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992): Senior theoreticians chose a communal

society paradigm, and junior empiricists followed suit; their survey questions and analyses ignored federative organizations and *pe'ilim*, and the copious evidence of stratification was missed.

Reviewers Missed Cardinal Errors, Sanctioned the Wrong Paradigm

Early kibbutz studies gained academic recognition: works were sanctioned by the scientific community and published by prestigious journals and publishing houses. One might ask: Why did reviewers not call into question the designation of local officers as constituting the top stratum, especially after Rosenfeld (1951) pointed out the superiority of members who belonged to kibbutz movement leadership, and Landshut (1944) and Spiro (1955) both showed the power of the Movements over kibbutzim? Why did reviewers approve analyses of such a highly organized national social movement with so many large, hierarchic and oligarchic federative organizations, with no reference to large organization classics and theories of social movements, political parties, and power elites?

Though a full answer to this question must await further study, its contours are quite clear: Reviewers approved inadequate ethnographies and surveys that excluded federative organizations because of their remoteness from the field and the dominance of Anglo-American functionalist sociology. Lacking “the profound intuitions gained from personal familiarity” (Bourdieu 1988:3; also see Shokeid 2001), reviewers either did not suspect that involvement of the kibbutz in the larger society impacted stratification, or they missed the difference between the social field of the kibbutz and other communal societies and did not reconsider their paradigm. As students who ignored federative organizations gained epistemic authority (Gieryn 1999), this paradigm became more entrenched, all the more so since no one studied federative organizations until the 1970s and then only four social scientists did such research.

Since the 1960s, however, some researchers and reviewers have themselves been kibbutz members who were intimately familiar with the field. Why were they also blind? One answer is the above-mentioned dominance of functional sociologists, whose communitarian epistemic culture (Knorr-Cetina 1999) enhanced conformity, and who nurtured or sponsored almost all kibbutz-member students up to the 1970s, when critics appeared at Tel Aviv University. Their criticism, however, had little effect on functionalists' dominance, since few studied federative organizations or managed to publish findings in respected, English-language outlets. The few who did publish either missed federative organizations (e.g., Evens 1995), or their full impact (e.g., Shepher 1980). Shepher (1980) was close to exposing the connection when he considered the problems caused by outside office-holding and its negative impact on egalitarianism and democracy. However, as discussed below, it is very difficult to introduce a new paradigm in ethnography (Hammersley 1992), and without it, he largely missed federative organizations' impact on stratification.

A second answer is the closely knit networks of the small country in which kibbutz researchers and members were enmeshed. Kibbutz members externalized federative organizations and ignored their impact, as noted above; the egalitarian image helped justify their own choice of kibbutz life. By following suit, an academic enmeshed in their network expressed his/her sympathy for them and their cause. This explanation is supported by the fact that the few studies of federative organizations were made solely by kibbutz members; they did not have to prove such sympathy, and hence could study federative organizations relatively freely, unlike outsiders, whose interest in stratified federative organizations was suspiciously perceived as aimed at ruining kibbutzim's egalitarian image.

A third answer is that even erroneous paradigms serve scientists' needs. A paradigm provides a discipline with an organization that is basically social, unifying members around a common enterprise of dominating a field of study (Collins 1975:493–96). Bourdieu pointed out that

“intellectuals have a much greater than average capacity to transform their spontaneous sociology, that is, their self-interested vision of the social world, into the appearance of a scientific sociology” (quoted in Wacquant 1989:4). Kibbutz member researchers had a self-interested vision of the kibbutz as egalitarian, and their first cohort was nurtured by dominant functionalists who held this vision. Through the capacity mentioned by Bourdieu, they used the wrong paradigm, turned their spontaneous egalitarian view of the kibbutz social field into an appearance of scientific sociology, and the dominant scientific coalition rewarded them by having their writings published and promoting them to respected professorships. As reviewers, they then suppressed critical scholars from Tel Aviv. A good example is the vehement rejection of Kressel’s excellent ethnography (1974, 1983) by kibbutz-member sociologists of the dominant coalition (Ben-David 1975; Shepher 1975); hence, it was not published in English and was mostly neglected.

Kibbutz Prestige, Academic Capital Seeking, and Federative Organization Heads’ Power

Academicians and intellectuals, like other social agents, seek cultural and social capital inter alia by attaching themselves to prestigious sectors of society (Bourdieu 1988; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:108–9). This was also true of kibbutz researchers and helps explain the lack of consideration of impacts of federative organizations on kibbutzim: federative organizations were oligarchic; their inclusion would have largely ruined the kibbutz image of egalitarian society, whereas exclusion kept this image intact. The structuring of *pe’ilut* (being a *pa’il*) as an egalitarian role helped maintain the wrong image: no differences in salaries, and *rotatzia* of most *pe’ilim*,¹² which supposedly prevented oligarchy. Federative organization heads with lengthy tenures were relatively few and easily overlooked by scholars, and omission of federative organizations from research masked their dominance and the way in which circulation of most *pe’ilim* among various positions enhanced stratification instead of curbing it.

A complementary explanation for excluding the study and evading the impact of federative organizations was the power of local leaders, who could bar access to kibbutzim. Indeed, with accumulation of power and oligarchization, control of access became stricter (Kressel 2000:31). I learned of this both from my own experience and from that of fellow graduate students who wanted to study federative organizations but could not gain access. This is supported by the fact that, until the 1990s, only the Regional Enterprises had been studied; they are the federative organizations closest to kibbutzim and are visited daily by a host of members for a variety of purposes, so that barring entrance only to kibbutz-member researchers was not easy, and either was not attempted or failed, as in my case.

Senior social scientists have great symbolic power and many resources at their disposal. But the fact that the subject of the first large-scale sociological study (Talmon 1972) was the Ihud Movement, which lacks a powerful leadership like that of Admors (Near 1997), supports the explanation that research can be stymied by powerful leaders. Senior researchers knew of or could feel federative organization leaders’ interest in excluding themselves from study and the leverage of their power in terms of control of funds for research and publications; control over lecturing in kibbutzim, their colleges, seminars, and cultural clubs; and control over publishing outlets (Aharoni 2000; Keshet 1995; Shure 2001; Tzachor 1997). In order to see that the study of federative organizations was essential and worth entering into conflict with such powerful leaders, it was necessary to connect federative organizations etiologically to kibbutz processes. But members masked this connection, aimed at maintaining an egalitarian image, and their radical young leaders ignored federative organization heads’ hegemony for other reasons. Ethnographers might have exposed this hegemony, and some indeed partially did (e.g., Fadida 1972; Kressel 1974; Shepher 1980; Topel 1979), but in the absence of a new paradigm that included federative organizations as

part of the social field, their evasion did not cease.

Without Sociological Theory, Historians Failed to Recognize Oligarchic Change

The historian's task is to study societal changes and their causes. Emmanuel Marx (1985:141) pointed out "an irony in that the historian is used to following processes, although the data flow to him is usually not abundant, while the anthropologist, who has rich data about changes, does not always bother to describe them." Furthermore, "The separation of sociology and history is a disastrous division, and one totally devoid of epistemological justification" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:90). Sociologists and anthropologists who studied kibbutzim lacked a historical perspective of federative organizations' oligarchization, while historians could have discerned this change had they used sociological theories to integrate their observations. Near (1997:329) discerned the Admors' lack of political success dating from 1936, and Kafkafi (1992:125) found that KM head Tabenkin had initiated "cadre seminars" to enhance his power as early as 1937. However, in order to expose oligarchic rule they would have had to combine these findings with the Admors' other failures and power perpetuation efforts, the centralization of Movement control, censorship of publications, granting of privileges to assure conformity of *pe'ilim*, conservatism, promotion of loyalists and suppression of innovators, as well as myopic leftism, such as admiration of Stalin's dictatorship, which legitimized autocracy. Alas, without sociological theories applied to leaders' dysfunction and the oligarchic shift to consolidate personal gains, historians failed to recognize that this leftism was aimed at self-perpetuation of power. Rather it was viewed as a political error (Near 1997:70), although it would have been inconceivable for very experienced leaders to commit such an error (Shapira n.d.b).

THE LONG ROAD TO EXPOSING THE BLINDNESS

Ethnography has a hard time when a new theory is required (Hammersley 1992). Ethnographers' main problem is "Finding our feet, . . . trying to formulate the basis on which one imagines, . . . [ethnographic] writing consists as scientific endeavor" (Geertz 1973:13). In order to find the basis for a proper interpretation of cultures, ethnographers must choose the most significant facts and activities from among the huge variety they observe. The difficulty in choosing results from the fact that every culture "is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and [the ethnographer] must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render them" (1973:10). A "culture consists of socially established structures of meaning in terms of which people do" things (1973:12); these structures are created by behaviors influenced by a variety of factors and the "superimposed upon or knotted" collection of complex conceptual structures. Only with a firm basis for their separation, identification, and grasping of their intertwining can one understand how these meaning structures were created, influenced actors' views and actions, and how actions strengthened or subverted these structures.

Finding one's feet in the kibbutz social field was difficult because its two cultural types, kibbutzim and federative organizations, have contradictory meaning structures and norms that subvert one another. According to Bourdieu (1990:86), "symbolic systems owe their practical coherence . . . on the one hand, their unity and their regularities, and on the other, their 'fussiness' and irregularities and even incoherences . . . to the fact that they are the product of practices that can fulfill their practical functions only in so far as they implement . . . principles that are not only coherent . . . and compatible with the objective conditions—but also practical . . . easy to master and use." Federatively organized, egalitarian and democratic communes were a practical solution for the harsh conditions of the Jewish nation's rebuilding effort. Norms that would ensure democratic

succession of federative organization heads, however, were not practiced, as in other Zionist organs. An egalitarian image was maintained by *pe'ilim* being unpaid or paid equally, and by *rotatzia*. Exclusion of federative organizations from the kibbutz discourse masked their oligarchic stratification. Without penetrating this mask, one could not “find one’s feet” in the mix of contradictory ethos types and cultures.

Tel Aviv University students served as critics of Hebrew University’s dominant coalition. The epistemic cultures of the critics were individualistic, whereas those of the dominant coalition were communitarian (Knorr-Cetina 1999). Communitarian cultures enhance conformity, while individualistic ones promote critical thinking. The success of a new paradigm, however, requires an epistemological robustness hardly achievable by a lone researcher (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:187–97). The works of the critics were crucial for the exposure of the **blindness**, but while some studied only federative organizations (e.g., Rosolio 1975; Shapira 1978, 1987; Beilin 1984; Kanari 1989; Kynan 1989; Kafkafi 1992; Keshet 1995), others studied only kibbutzim (e.g., Fadida 1972; Kressel 1974; Topel 1979; Shepher 1980). Marx (1985:147) has written: “The hardest part of [ethnographic] research is discerning the context of phenomena.” Both groups missed this part or did not integrate contexts with texts and their syntax (Hazan 1995), and as explained above, other academics and kibbutz members did not alert them to this oversight.

Upon reflection, I overcame this oversight by raising questions not previously explored and by being motivated to persevere over the long process involved in **overcoming** the existing paradigm. My aim was to solve problems in my own kibbutz, rather than to obtain an academic career. I held public offices in my kibbutz and managerial jobs in its factory, and I perceived grave problems associated with a lack of egalitarianism and democracy. Sociological education seemed the best path for coping with them, so I finished a BA at Tel Aviv University, but additional executive experience proved that further education was required. I performed ethnographic research for my MA thesis at a **Regional Enterprises federative organization**. As a fellow of the Kibbutz Research Institute, I found its surveys to be of no help, in contrast to the above-mentioned ethnography and other **studies** I had done at kibbutz plants on behalf of the Kibbutz Industry Association (Shapira 1980). However, the Institute rejected my study of federative organizations as not being part of its mission, so I left to investigate the Regional Enterprises on my own accord to pursue a Ph.D.

Even though my investigation exposed many **secrets** of mismanagement, I missed the main context: older, larger, oligarchic national economic federative organizations which shaped their capitalist culture. I erred in blaming the managers for this culture and tried to alert kibbutzim to the high price they were paying for it, but this was futile: Admors had reconciled themselves to this culture and the Movements used many of its norms, while the dependency of kibbutz officers on the Enterprises’ heads for future jobs deterred them from joining my critique (although in private they mostly agreed with me). These heads, for their part, saw to it that my findings received minimal publicity. Without publicity, I had no feedback to alert me to the above-mentioned context, and I missed another crucial point: namely, that the norm of *rotatzia* actually enhanced federative organization heads’ power and the oligarchic process by enhancing patronage **of the rotating officeholders**.

Essential Managerial Habitus Lengthened the Road to Exposure

My managerial habitus led me to search for effectiveness and efficiency in the Regional Enterprises, but instead I found *pe'ilim* who were mostly ignoring these aims, seeking image-creation and career advancement. This has been common in states and armies that use *rotatzia* and “parachuting”—appointment of outsiders who lack essential local knowledge. It was explicable

given their short terms, vulnerable status, and limited power in contrast to entrenched insiders (Chow 1966; Gabriel and Savage 1981; Ho 1962; Shapira 1987; Vald 1987).

My analysis pointed to a plausible alternative that would have made officers' status less vulnerable without encouraging oligarchy, but this did not interest kibbutz movement leaders, who were conservative loyalists of the old guard and lacking in critical thinking, **in accord with** Hirschman (1970; see Avrahami 1993); nor did it interest academics who did not like the applied notion of seeking solutions. One journal reviewer criticized one of my articles, claiming that it was illegitimate to both analyze a problem *and* suggest a solution. Other reasons for rejections seemed to be sociologists' and behaviorists' neglect of organizational anthropology (Bate 1997) and the dominance of functionalist sociology (Ram 1995). However, a few anthropologist mentors and kibbutz-member colleagues strengthened my belief in my findings and urged me to continue.

I decided to study *rotatzia* inside a kibbutz in an effort to pinpoint its effects without the confounding effect of "parachuting." This study required only modest funds and an abundance of time, which I obtained by minimizing efforts to publish (although this questionable move prevented academic advancement and thus limited the time available for research). For a year and a half I studied Kibbutz Kochav, visiting two days a week, interviewed 123 members and ex-members, and studied its archival records. I was able to document the fact that use of the *rotatzia* was problematic, that it enhanced patrons' power; promoted conservative, ineffective loyalists; and demoted, sidetracked, or caused the exit of effective, creative radicals whose innovations, such as the sharing of cars and plant shift-work, enhanced both egalitarianism and economic success (Shapira 1990). Later ethnographies substantiated this finding: the early adoption of the *rotatzia* by two younger kibbutzim made them ultra-conservative and less efficient and effective than Kochav, which adopted the norm much later in its development. Their patrons obstructed democracy by means unknown in Kochav, causing a mass exodus and a brain-drain that enhanced patrons' rule but crippled the kibbutzim.

This self-serving rule alerted me to powerholders' morality. A fourth case of a veteran, conservative, mediocre kibbutz further proved that powerholders with low morality ruined trust, democracy, effectiveness, and progress, as in Banfield's (1958) "backward" Italian village, and this pointed to the morality side of the Iron Law of Oligarchy, power self-perpetuation being a self-serving behavior. Then I discerned that Kochav patrons were highly moral as local leaders, advanced kibbutz interests rather than their own, and even as veteran federative organization oligarchs, they never used undemocratic means to thwart young radicals' solutions for promoting egalitarianism, in contrast to the patrons I had documented in other cases. This was explicable by the fact that Kochav's patrons had attained their high rank owing to radicalism, rather than by conservative loyalty to federative organization heads, the means by which other patrons advanced. Then I realized how fatal the omission of federative organization studies was for understanding kibbutzim, and discerned scholars' blindness to stratification (Shapira 2001).

The Long Road's Lessons: Habitus and Motivation as Critical Factors

The long road to exposure emphasizes the importance of continuous fieldwork by the social scientist (Collins 1989:461; Shokeid 2001), and the critical factor of proper motivation for overcoming the frustrations of a long, lonely journey toward "finding one's feet" and properly interpreting the complex mix of a system's cultures. Mistakes arising from working alone and the biases of one's habitus are inevitable; thus, unprejudiced recording of social facts, analysis of subtleties, adherence to primary material, and digging for actors' deeper motives are essential (Kressel 1996). This methodology may not unravel the complexity of conflicting cultures, though it helps to prevent mistakes. One must find the "gravity" of the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant

1992:17), but in my case there were two opposing “gravities”: the socialist one of the kibbutz’s ideas, ethos, and communal culture, and the capitalist one of Israeli society, economic federative organizations, and many kibbutz factories (Cohen 1978; Kressel 1974). The latter explains, for instance, why, from their beginnings in the early 1940s, kibbutz plants used hired labor despite the Admors’ objections. The context of a particular social field may reverse a factor’s impact: A manager coming from the outside in a typical organization tends to innovate more than a loyalist who was promoted from the inside, but not in a context where *rotatzia* and “parachutings” reign. In such a field, new managers tend towards conservatism as, like paratroopers in alien lands, they are aiming at survival in the face of meager knowledge and other intangible capital, and receive little trust and help from knowledgeable, but entrenched, insiders (Chow 1966; Ho 1962; Shapira 1987, 1995b).

Further problems of interpretation stem from the fact that the boundaries of a field are “always at stake in the field itself” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:100), and its discourse excludes elements unfavorable to leaders. Exposure of this exclusion is not simple, as it requires identifying the contexts of a field’s cultures and their incoherences (Bourdieu 1990:86). One must analyze the existential needs each of the field’s cultures met (Vaughan 1996:64); their problems, technological alternatives, and plausible alternative solutions (Perrow 1970; Hawthorn 1991); the concepts and meaning structures that support or subvert a chosen alternative; and the power structures and actors’ interests that explain the choice. How the high morality of Kochav’s patrons explains its creativity was discerned only against the background of low-morality, conservative, capitalist imitators in the three other kibbutzim. My four ethnographic studies were groundbreaking after so many prior works aimed at “understanding at the expense of seeing” (Linstead et al. 1996:7). Bourdieu (1990:16) wrote:

scientific practice never takes the form of an inevitable sequence of miraculous intellectual acts. . . . It is not easy . . . to describe the long effort applied to oneself, which little by little leads to the conversion of one whole view of action and the social world that is presupposed by ‘observation’ of facts that are totally new, because they were totally invisible to the previous view.

A different habitus might have enabled a shorter route to exposure, but additional support for the hypothesis that even this would have been very long stems from Whyte’s (1992) claim that motivation for social action is essential for generating good social theory. Such a motivation is often born in a non-academic setting, involving the search for a deeper understanding of problems in order to find radically better solutions, rather than academic capital that can be gained by other means (Bourdieu 1988). As a latecomer, I had to invest much work to catch up and to overcome predecessors’ mistakes by integrating my findings with those of critically minded students of all disciplines. Furthermore, this habitus did not prevent costly mistakes, but rather provided a different perspective and motivation to continue, despite failures and little support from academic institutions.

Nobel laureate Herbert Simon (1992) supports this assertion from another angle: The great complexity of modern organizations requires lengthy research, like zoologists who have studied the complexity of animals for centuries. Lengthy investment is also needed because of the reflexivity and epistemological robustness required: Science is a collective enterprise; criticism of one’s work by colleagues is essential for making the researcher reflexive to the social and intellectual unconscious embedded in one’s analytical tools (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), yet critique may induce defensiveness. Anthropology is capable of overcoming these impediments, provided one is motivated to complete the many ethnographies of various organizational “species” of a complex

field, as well as extensive learning of findings by all social sciences and the humanities, in order to find a new theory which overcomes gross mistakes embedded in an older one, leading to a social action theory hitherto deemed implausible (Whyte 1992).

CONCLUSIONS

“Nothing is more practical in science than a good theory,” stated the psychologist Kurt Lewin. A good theory of stratification would be especially relevant for explaining the kibbutz, the product of a social movement that seeks both equality and growth, which tends to inequality. In every known society, careers are chosen in order to gain prestige and status (Goldschmidt 1990), but kibbutz researchers missed elite members’ careers by avoiding study of federative organizations and other outside hierarchies, through which their careers were advanced. Evasion maintained the communal society paradigm at the expense of a social movement paradigm, and the neglect of theories of large organizations and elites. Also missed were the surrender of kibbutz egalitarianism to federative organization stratification; *rotatzia*’s turning into circulation and enhancing oligarchy; the corrosion of trust and democracy by power and by tangible and intangible capital accumulated in outside jobs; continuity of leaders owing to the Iron Law engendering capitalist norms, conservatism, and autocracy (Brumann 2000); leftist reverence of Stalin’s dictatorship enhancing autocracy; *rotatzia* encouraging negative selection of radicals for promotion (Hirschman 1970), and “parachutings” that inhibited the creative innovation so vital for democratic work organizations (Stryjan 1989). Without a paradigm suited to this complex organizational field, each study found a different type of stratification explained by a different etiology, and none tried a comprehensive comparison of all findings in their search for an overall explanation.

The significance of this cannot be exaggerated. Stratification was sought in the flat organizational structures of kibbutzim with short-term office tenure, while ignoring the oligarchic federative organizations and other bureaucracies which stratified kibbutz elites. The dynamics of the kibbutz social field and its various cultures were wrongly explained, its strata and their interests misconstrued, as were patronage and cliques, the brain-drain and the decline in trust, egalitarianism, and democracy. Researchers did not connect the lowering of leaders’ morality with extended job tenure owing to the Iron Law of Oligarchy, ineffectiveness, loss of faith in the kibbutz ethos, and introduction of capitalist elements. The sociologists’ task is to penetrate formal definitions and probe what is hidden behind fronts presented by social entities (Berger 1966: chap. 2), but kibbutz sociologists evaded this task. Instead of problematizing the conflicting cultures of federative organizations and kibbutzim, and asking how *pe’ilim* worked within these two separate cultures simultaneously, scholars evaded these problem domains by adhering to the formal status of federative organizations as external to kibbutzim. Without penetrating this formality, research went astray, the debt crisis was not anticipated, nor was the adoption of capitalist norms it caused. I did not anticipate its scope and exact timing, but I believe I have correctly identified the process and its rate.

The predictive capacity of this theory has resulted from the study of my own society, by methods that have proved capable of penetrating the problems that intrigued me owing to my executive habitus, enabling me to combine “information gathered by . . . scientific inquiry with the profound intuitions gained from personal familiarity” (Bourdieu 1988:3). I studied a heretofore ignored part of the field, and thus cultural differences between federative organizations and kibbutzim brought new insights (in accord with Hazan 1995). These insights caused my marginalization and fewer research opportunities, yet they encouraged further fieldwork (at the expense of publishing), out of my interest in an action theory. Continued fieldwork triangulated critical questions, made possible an integrative view of the field, exposed its contradicting gravities,

and enabled interpretation of its cultures. Thus, a new paradigm emerged and exposed blindness to stratification.

This ability to uncover is thus explained by aiming at the betterment of one's own society, rather than aiming for academic capital which can be gained by other means (Bourdieu 1988), and by analyses that expose various effects, without an integrative theory of a field and its embeddedness in societal contexts (Marx 1985; Wallerstein 2004). The eminent scholar Whyte (1992) is right: creation of such a theory requires research striving for the type of explanations that promote action (e.g., Hammersley 1992). It means integration of the many factors playing in a complex field, and accounting for coherences, incoherences, and negations within and among its cultures' various practices. Exposing the dynamics of its cultures requires more than interpretation of a set of structures of meaning, which are "control mechanisms . . . for the governing of behavior" (Geertz 1973:44); each of its cultures has another set of structures, owing to different practical needs and different collections of solutions engendered by different histories and contingencies, but the control mechanism used by leaders, whether trust or coercion, is indeed the decisive factor (DePree 1990; Dore 1973; Fox 1974; Guest 1962; Shapira 1987). Trust is expected of leaders in democracies, but economies of scale engender bureaucracy, where coercion is mostly camouflaged: managers' self-serving decisions are masked as serving public aims and explained by objective requirements (Dalton 1959), while unwanted, yet more plausible solutions are concealed or rejected as unrealistic (Hawthorn 1991). Bringing these solutions to light, with their advantages for the public compared to managers' choices, exposes the reason for coercion: distrust of and resistance to self-serving managers' solutions.

Managers who seek personal interests tend to hierarchy and coercion, to conservatism or imitation, while seekers of effectiveness, efficiency, and advancement of public aims by new solutions tend to lead by trust, egalitarianism, sincerity, and openness toward subordinates (DePree 1990; Graham 1991; O'Toole 1999; Shapira 1987, 1995b; Sieff 1988). In a complex organizational field, one must study social action by the main actors in depth—heads, officers, and experts, whose power creates obstacles to research (Dalton 1964), but such research is essential since they make critical decisions, create, imitate or bar solutions, dominate discourses, and shape a field's cultures. Their real aims, hopes, and fears are crucial (Maccoby 1976), and exposing them requires viewing the world through their eyes. As the sages of old said: "Do not judge others until you are in their position." Ethnographers cannot take the place of leaders, but they can come close, and may penetrate their secrets if enough cultures in a complex field are studied. Since professionalism leads to restricted vision and a rigid paradigm (Kuhn 1962:64), one must extensively consult other disciplines in both the social sciences and the humanities (Wallerstein 2004), aiming at epistemic reflexivity and robustness (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Even then he may not gain a predictive capacity, but only a proper clinical inference (Geertz 1973:26), but this will prevent master blindness to reality as that of kibbutz research.

Bate (1997) is right: the cultural "polyphony" of organizations must be unraveled, but it is the powerholders who orchestrate the "polyphonies" that must be understood. Without penetrating their secrets one cannot fully understand a "polyphony," while their power and capital are major obstacles for penetration and require a much greater effort than usual ethnography. As shown here, explaining the variety of cultures in a complex organizational field of large and powerful social movements can require an even greater investment than the twenty years invested by Van Wolferen (1989) in exposing power in Japanese society. As fields of organizations, social movements, and power elites are becoming more and more complex, and the danger of blindness is only but growing, avoiding blindness requires new measures for encouraging and rewarding such huge investments. Scholarly careers must be viewed differently, seeking new career types that encourage periods of

social action in which collaboration with non-academic innovators is enhanced (Whyte 1992). My findings support a critique of anthropology (see Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Hammersley 1992; Van Maanen 1995), and Wallerstein's (2004) critique of disciplinary divisions among social sciences and the humanities. These divisions in the study of the kibbutz have hindered scientific progress, enhanced continued dominance of functionalists despite ample findings by critical students who disproved them, and helped to prevent publication of critical works by respectable outlets. Hence, a revision of the practices of publication decision-making to diminish the suppression of radical critical thinkers by dominant scientific coalitions is needed.

NOTES

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2. Admor is the Hebrew acronym for "our lord, teacher and rabbi" (Jewish religious master). The courts are based on Eastern European Jewish (Hasidic) models.

3. The General Labour Federation, the umbrella organization of socialist Zionist movements and labor unions.

4. The full list is much longer; Sack 1999 alone mentions over 50 KM subsidiaries.

5. Numbers are imprecise owing to the lack of available data.

6. The Jewish Agency is the operative bureaucracy of the World Zionist Organization.

7. Kochav is a fictitious name I gave to a large and successful veteran kibbutz (Shapira 1990, 2001).

8. Better clothes were worn by ordinary members only after work (Spiro 1955:163).

9. First elucidated by the German sociologist Robert Michels, the Iron Law of Oligarchy states that large, complex organizations eventually develop a leadership that tends toward oligarchy as it becomes more interested in preserving its own power than in further the goals of the group. Michels says that this tendency is supported by the fact that delegation of authority and decision-making is necessary in any organization, but that it leads to the development of bases of knowledge, skills, and resources within the leadership which serves to entrench the leaders in office. He sees an inherent tension between the equality of democracy and the specialization of bureaucracy.

10. Emanuel Marx [had to remind me of the significance of this category of kibbutz members](#).

11. Tnuva was the national agricultural products marketing federative organization owned by all kibbutzim and moshavim (agricultural cooperatives).

12. Salaries of cabinet ministers, Knesset members, Histadrut officials, etc., were paid to Movements' coffers; senior *pe'ilim* did not enjoy them personally.

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