

An Examination of Interpersonal Bonds and Support Mechanisms in the Kibbutz

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the connections between social dynamics and emotional well-being in a kibbutz inspired by the works of Israeli author Amos Oz. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the study examines how communal living affects interpersonal dynamics, support systems and collective responsibilities. It critically examines the resonance between Oz's literary depictions and the lived realities within the kibbutz community. Central to this investigation are themes such as communal decisionmaking processes, peer interactions and the historical and cultural underpinnings shaping communal existence, as depicted in Oz's literary oeuvre. The study aims to shed light on the broader implications of communal living that enrich the understanding of Israeli communal life through a nuanced lens.

Key Words : Kibbutz, Social Dynamics, Communal Dynamics, Inter Personal Relationship, Israel, Amos Oz

A kibbutz is a type of collective community in Israel where people live and work together, share resources and responsibilities. Building upon the exploration of communal dynamics, the study examines into the distinctive structure and principles of the kibbutz that boast of being a quintessential example of communal living. In a kibbutz, individuals contribute to the community which provides for their needs through shared property ownership, collective decisionmaking and a focus on equality. The kibbutz a distinctive form of communal living originated in Israel has captivated the attention of scholars and individuals worldwide. Rooted in the ideals of collective responsibility, equality and mutual stewardship of resources, the kibbutz represents a unique social experiment that has endured for decades. Its foundations can be traced back to the early 20th century, emerging as a response to the sociopolitical landscape of the time and the desire to establish cooperative agricultural communities. The kibbutz movement played a pivotal role in the establishment of the State of Israel which embodies a vision of societal harmony and egalitarianism. Over the years, these intentional communities have evolved but at

the same time facing numerous challenges and transformations. As the kibbutz adapts to contemporary dynamics, there is a growing need to delve into the intricacies of its social fabric and the emotional well-being of its inhabitants.

This research endeavours to unravel the complexities that characterize the social dynamics and emotional well-being within the unique context of the kibbutz. Henry Near writes, "The individual kibbutz aims at perfection in the relationships between its members, in economic progress, and in its social and cultural activities... For the kibbutz has always prided itself on its contribution to Israeli society, and considered itself to have earned whatever special status and privileges it has by this contribution" (204-210). By understanding the lived experiences within these intentional communities, the aim is to contribute valuable insights to the broader fields of sociology, psychology and communal studies. Understanding the foundational principles of the kibbutz is crucial for contextualizing its historical evolution. The study traces the journey of these intentional communities from their socialist and Zionist beginnings to their

modernized adaptations. Initially grounded in socialist and Zionist ideologies, these intentional communities were established to promote agricultural development, cooperative labour and shared ownership of resources. Over time, the kibbutzim have adapted to societal changes, transforming from purely agrarian communities to diverse and modernized social entities.

Kibbutz living is based on collectivism, equality and mutual responsibility. Residents share resources, make collective decisions and strive for a communal ethos that transcends individual interests. Understanding the historical context and foundational principles is essential for contextualizing the contemporary dynamics of kibbutz life. The literature on kibbutz living highlights the challenges these communities have faced, including demographic shifts, economic transformations and changing attitudes toward communal ideals. Examining how kibbutzim have adapted to these challenges offers insights into the resilience and flexibility of the communal living model. Ivana Kottasova writes for CNN World, "The community is close knit; ... they eat meals together and share everything, including their salaries, which go into a communal treasury and are distributed equally among all the families" (1). This description encapsulates the essence of kibbutz life, emphasizing the deep sense of unity and mutual support that characterizes these communities.

Amos Oz's works offer profound insights into the emotional landscapes and interpersonal dynamics within kibbutzim. Educated at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Oxford, Oz served in the Israeli army during various periods, including the Six-Day War in 1967 and the conflicts in 1957–60 and 1973. Post-1967, he became actively involved in the Israeli peace movement, advocating for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In addition to his writing pursuits, Oz worked parttime as a schoolteacher and labourer. "At Kibbutz Hulda, where he lived for more than 30 years, he learned his socialist politics. His fellow kibbutzniks inspired many of the characters in his writing and, in return, his royalties went to the common budget" (Pascal 1). Oz's symbolic and poetic novels serve as a reflection of the tensions within Israeli culture. His works explore conflicts between intellect and physical desires, reality and fantasy, rural Zionism and the yearning for European urbanity as well as the values of the founding settlers and the perspectives of their more sceptical descendants. Oz's outlook on Israel differed from the

optimism and ideological certainties of its founding generation and his writings often present an ironic view of life in the country.

His fiction includes *Where the Jackals Howl*, and *Other Stories* (1965), *My Michael* (1968), *Touch the Water*, *Touch the Wind* (1973), *Black Box* (1987), and *The Third State* (1991). *The Same Sea* (1999) is a novel in verse. His memoir *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (2002) received widespread critical acclaim. Other notable works include *Scenes from Village Life* (2009) and *Between Friends* (2012). *The Gospel According to Judas* (2014) examines the nature of betrayal, intertwining a contemporary Israeli dialogue with an alternate history of Judas Iscariot. This novel received the German International Literature Prize in 2015. Oz co-edited "The Seventh Day" (1968), a collection of soldiers' reflections on the Six-Day War. His political essays are compiled in volumes like *Under This Blazing Light* (1979) and *But These Are Two Different Wars* (2002). *How to Cure a Fanatic* (2006) is an English-language collection containing two essays by Oz and an interview. Alongside his daughter, historian Fania Oz-Sulzberger, he co-wrote *Jews and Words* (2012), a collection of meditations on various Jewish texts.

Amos Oz, a prominent Israeli author, has made significant contributions to the portrayal of communal life in his literary works. His works offer a nuanced perspectives on the interpersonal dynamics, ideological conflicts and emotional landscapes within these intentional communities. Oz's literature provides a rich tapestry of themes related to communal living, including the tension between individual desires and collective responsibilities, the impact of historical events on communal identity, and the intricate web of relationships within the kibbutz. Analysing Oz's portrayals enhances our understanding of the emotional nuances that accompany communal existence. Building upon Oz's literary explorations, it is imperative to incorporate the philosophical framework of Martin Buber's 'I and Thou.' This integration promises a holistic examination of interpersonal connections and emotional dynamics within kibbutzim:

Martin Buber's I and Thou (Ich und Du) presents a philosophy of personal dialogue, in that it describes how interpersonal relationship can define the nature of reality. Buber's major theme is that human existence may be defined by the way in which we engage in dialogue with each other, with the world, and with God. According to Buber, human beings may adopt two attitudes toward

The inclusion of Amos Oz's literary works in this exploration adds a nuanced perspective to the

The kibbutz is the clear representative of culture (144). The kibbutz was founded as a framework encompassing every sphere of man's activities. This revolutionary