

Between Collectives and Cooperatives:
The Hutterites settlements in North America

Ran Aaronsohn, Department of Geography - Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The uniqueness of the Hutterian Brethren lies mainly at their communal settlements. This oldest collective movement worldwide, numbers today app. 45,000 members who all live in nearly 500 settlements ("colonies"), scattered over the Canadian prairies and western United States.

Being a very religious christian group, the literature has presumed that in the Hutterites' principles of belief lie the structural and unchangeable basis for their total collective mode of life. This assumption was questioned in a long-term field research, based mainly on extensive participant observations.

The conclusions, briefly presented hereafter, suggest that day-to-day circumstances such as greater interrelations with the 'outer' society and changes in the economic context, may build-up a potential for reshaping the Hutterian communes towards cooperatives.



The Hutterian common dining-room – forever?