

Distributive Justice in Kibbutz Communities that have Changed*

by

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Journal of Rural Cooperation, 32(2), 2004:129-149

Abstract

This article analyzes the structural changes occurring in many kibbutz communities, from a perspective of distributive justice. Distribution of resources is based on two types of redistribution: The first type, by transition from egalitarian to non-egalitarian distribution of income from work, according to the market value of the job, based on role and profession; the second type - by internal, progressive taxation of these incomes, by which the safety net for the needy and pension for retirees, would be financed. The findings regarding the distribution of financial rewards indicate gaps of 1:3 between family net incomes. These gaps are low in comparison with gaps outside the kibbutz, however most of the research participants perceive them as too large. Gaps in the perception of personal influence on the kibbutz are greater than gaps regarding the perception of financial income. Most research participants support a certain limitation on salary gaps, and they also support the continuation of the current safety net. Those having lower income are stronger supporters of the limitation of gaps and of a higher safety net. An overwhelming majority wishes the differential salary to continue. There is however also a significant number of kibbutz members aspiring towards non-kibbutz life styles, and who consider this stage as merely a transitional one. We see different attitudes regarding this issue in various kibbutz communities.

* This article is a follow-up to a previous analysis of the institutional and structural changes, introduced in kibbutz communities at the turn of the last century (Rosner, 1993; 1998).