"All the Flesh Kindred that Ever I See": A Reconsideration of Family and Kinship in Utopian Communes

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My gospel relations are dearer to me
Than all the flesh kindred that ever I see:
So good and so pretty, so cleaver they feel;
To see them & love them increases my zeal,
  O how pretty they look!
  How pretty they look!
  How cleaver they feel!
(. . .)
Of all the relation that ever I see
My old fleshly kindred are furthest from me,
So bad and so ugly, so hateful they feel
To see them and hate them increases my zeal.
  O how ugly they look!
  How ugly they look!
  How nasty they feel!
———From the Shaker song *Gospel Relation*
(Andrews 1940: 20)

INTRODUCTION

As demonstrated by the above lyrics, the Shakers (known officially as the "United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing") were not favorably disposed toward the bonds of marriage, family, and kinship. Started as a Quaker splinter group under the charismatic leadership of Ann Lee in Manchester, they emigrated to the United States, gathered further adherents there, and became a communal sect in 1787. Within the next sixty years, they grew to more than 4,000 members in sixteen villages in New England and the Midwest.[1] True to their view of God as androgynous, and their founder as the female equivalent of Jesus Christ, women had a comparatively strong position in

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[1] Stein 1992:87–89.

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the sect, and there were equal numbers of male and female office holders on all hierarchy levels.[2] Genders, however, were strictly separated, and celibacy was obligatory in the "gospel relations" between members.[3]

Under their charismatic leader John Humphrey Noyes, the roughly contemporary Oneida Community in New York State—adherents of the Perfectionist creed that a life without sin is possible for true believers—arrived at an altogether different interpretation of heavenly love. This group formed what it called "complex marriage," meaning that most members engaged in heterosexual relations with a great number of other members in a centrally supervised way. The practice of "male continence," *coitus reservatus*, was to save women from unnecessary childbirth, and indeed the group had few children[4] until, after more than two decades, a eugenic program to produce offspring was started. Sexual activity was centrally registered, and any instance of exclusive emotional attachment between two particular members ("special love") was punished by their separation. The community had up to 306 members[5] during the almost forty years of its existence.[6] As among the Shakers, every member was supposed to share equally in the love that true Christians were due each other. And although the two groups chose radically different ways to express this love, they agreed that monogamous marriage and the monogamous family had to be abolished in order for their groups to flourish.

Both groups were utopian communes, that is, they were formed intentionally and voluntarily by men and women who were not exclusively kin, and who lived and worked together and shared their property. In such groups, members' private property is highly limited and does not include productive assets.[7] The

[2] The question of how much gender equality existed among the Shakers is subject to some debate. The division of labor as well as many gender stereotypes remained conventional (Brewer 1992), and after the death of the initial leaders Ann Lee and Lucy Wright, male members dominated the leadership (Stein 1992:132–33, Brewer 1986:51) until they became a small minority in the later years (Stein 1992:339). Brewer concludes that true gender equality was not achieved, nor even aimed at (1992). Compared to their female contemporaries, however, "Shakeresses" were able to keep their private lives free from male interference to a considerable degree (Humez 1991). Besides, male Shaker complaints about "pettycoat government" do not only suggest a patriarchal striving for power, as Humez argues (1991), but also the imperfect realization of these tendencies. Female Shakers also made important contributions to the early women's rights movement (Stein 1992:258–68, 310–12).

[3] Brewer 1986; Stein 1992. [4] Carden 1969:51. [5] Robertson 1981:23.

[6] Carden 1969; Dalsimer 1975; Kern 1981; Parker 1973; Robertson 1972; 1977; 1981.

[7] Utopian communes are thus distinct from a number of similar social phenomena. Kolkhozes and people's communes were ordered by the state rather than voluntary, and in traditional cases of shared property (for example, in hunter-gatherer groups), community of goods follows established practices and is not an intentional, voluntary deviation from the societal norm. Catholic and Buddhist monasteries and those Hinduistic ashrams that share their property are also excluded; first for usually being restricted to one gender, and second for enjoying an elite status within their respective religious traditions and ambient societies. This does not mean that persistence is no problem at all for these institutions, yet in terms of material contributions by outside lay believers, candidates for recruitment, or patronage by the rich and powerful, they certainly have—or at least for a large part of their history had—an advantage over utopian communes that

adjective "utopian" indicates that most such communes, including the Shakers and Oneida, are idealistically motivated—members strive to implement an improved or even perfect societal framework, and they often expect it to be adopted by the surrounding society in due course. Even when common property is adopted to cope with difficult situations—for example an overseas migration—the groups that choose such solutions are always idealistically motivated. Having almost all things in common, utopian communes are among the most extreme forms of human cooperation. Given their voluntary and communistic nature, both the use of force and any offer to members of individual material incentives are ruled out. Cooperation must arise through other means, and communes should thus be particularly vulnerable to what has been called the "tragedy of the commons,"[8] namely the gradual spread of free-riding and its devastating consequences when individuals' uses of, and contributions to, a collective good are not controlled.[9] And indeed, free-riding has undermined many communes,[10] and a majority disband within a few years, if not months. Some, however, have carried on for decades or even centuries, and the search for the factors responsible for their survival has been a long-standing concern in their social scientific study.[11] If one realistically expects most humans to be rational

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are more often found on the margins of society. Monasteries are also less independent than utopian communes, subject as they often are to state or church orders. While a closer comparison might be instructive, it is beyond the scope of this article. Contrary to what is sometimes assumed, the Amish do not have common property beyond the family level, and the Mormons were communal only for a very short period in their initial years. Communes are also often termed "communal groups," "communitarian groups" (Hostetler 1974b), or "intentional communities" (Andelson 1996) although common usage of these words is not always restricted to cases where property is shared.

[8] Hardin 1968.

[9] It may be argued that classic examples of commons such as pastures and fish grounds are—within certain limits—self-sustaining resources that, unlike a commune, do not have to be actively built up and may even have users who are entirely unaware of the negative effects of their own depletion of the resource. As soon as there is an awareness, however, or more so still when explicit norms about the conditions of use are established, a Prisoners' Dilemma payoff structure arises: when everyone uses the resource circumspectly, its future profitability is assured. Irrespective of what others do, however, the individual user profits most when exploiting the resource as fully as possible. If everyone follows suit, however, the resource will be fatally depleted, damaging everyone's profits. This is not in principle different from the situation a commune member faces: irrespective of their own contribution to the common good, they will be given to equally or according to need rather than ability. The tacit premise for assuming a "tragedy of the commons" in both cases, however, is the total absence of moral qualms and of mechanisms of social control; in reality, this almost never occurs. For ethnographic contributions that cast doubt on the validity of Hardin's thesis, see McCay and Acheson (1987).

[10] Erasmus 1977:154–62.

[11] Research on communes and intentional communities—both in the stricter and the looser sense (see note 1)—has had a surprisingly large number of dedicated adherents, chiefly in the fields of history and sociology. It thrived especially in the 1970s when the thousands of communes that were founded in Europe, North America, and Japan provided inspiration, but has hardly subsided since then. There is a Communal Studies Association (CSA) in the United States (http://www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/CSA/) and an International Communal Studies Association (ICSA) which is presently based in Israel (http://www.ic.org/icsa/). Both associations organize confer-

egoists at least part of the time, cases of cooperation that endure without force or individual incentives cannot simply be seen as emanating from some innate propensity to sociality. Rather, they call for explanations, that do not simply assume unusually high levels of altruism among the cooperators. In any case such an assumption is unnecessary since it has been demonstrated in game-theoretical models that, with a sufficiently long perspective of future interaction, contingent cooperation ("I cooperate since I see that you also do") can arise even among rational egoists facing a Prisoners' Dilemma structure.[12] Starting from a similar theoretical stance Ostrom[13] has argued that comparison of empirical examples of cooperation with differential degrees of success, in search of institutional "design principles" that make the difference, is a promising path toward a general theory of cooperation. I believe that communes offer a privileged empirical vantage point for such a research agenda: those factors that work in these environments where sharing is taken to such extremes should be robust, and should cast light also on other, less encompassing forms.

It is interesting that, with regard to marriage, family, and kinship and their relation to communal persistence, most researchers have followed the zero-sum reasoning of the Shakers and Oneida that assumes communal strength to be based on the weakness of familial ties. Thus in an influential comparative study of nineteenth-century American communes, Kanter has found celibacy or "free love" (group marriage) to be associated with longevity.[14] This view has remained uncontested in a number of applications and re-studies of her "commitment" theory,[15] and most authors in the field[16] have followed Kanter in arguing that these two social forms, radically different though they may appear, have the same beneficial effect on a commune's survival prospects. By erasing the family as a potential competitor for members' loyalties, they strengthen the larger social unit of the commune. This hypothesis has proved "good to think," and it has been questioned only rarely,[17] with more emphatic rejections found only in remarks by Shenker, and Van den Berghe and Peter about the kibbutzim and the Hutterites.[18] The following attempts a more systematic rebuttal, based on comparison of a broader range of cases. I argue that, contrary to the received view, communes that acknowledge monogamous family arrangements and wider kin ties are most successful in terms of longevity.

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ences and issue regular newsletters; CSA also publishes the academic journal *Communal Societies*. The University of Southern Indiana houses a Center for Communal Studies and has recently initiated a master's program.

[12] Axelrod 1984; Hechter 1987; Schüßler 1989; Taylor 1982; 1987:82–108.

[13] Ostrom 1990. [14] Kanter 1972:82, 87, 92.

[15] Aage 1974; Gardner 1977; Hall 1988; Hechter 1987:146–67.

[16] E.g. Barrett 1974:42; Coser 1974:137; Muncy 1973:229–31.

[17] Lauer and Lauer 1983:56; Oved 1988:413; Wagner 1986:176.

[18] Shenker 1986:220–27; Van den Berghe and Peter 1988.

COMMUNAL SURVIVAL REASSESSED

Table 1 lists forty-three communes of the last three centuries in the order of their durations, including both historical cases and communes that continue today.[19] This sample includes all of the well-described cases that I could find.[20] At first glance, the zero-sum hypothesis appears to be confirmed: Among the fifteen communes continuing for sixty years or longer, eight are celibate and another two are monogamous with substantial celibate tendencies, meaning that celibate members have a higher status and/or that an unusually large portion of—

[19] Where no end-date is given, the respective case continues at present; where no date for the fall below the one-third limit (discussed below) is given, this was either coterminous with the dissolution or has not yet occurred. The Hutterites have repeatedly taken up and abandoned community of goods during their history of almost five centuries. The founding date given refers to the last communal period beginning with their migration to the United States. In cases where the formation of the group was not coterminous with the adoption of common property, dates refer to the latter event, making for deviations from other accounts. Where there is no unambiguous date of dissolution, I chose as end date the earliest year for which there are clear hints that community of goods had been abolished. In Woman's Commonwealth, the third-to-last member died in 1940 (Kitch 1993:110), so what can meaningfully be called a communal *group* ended at this time. Where groups moved to a new location, merged with other groups, or split into two halves, I have concentrated on continuity in a social sense, so that, for examples, the commune at Putney, Vermont (1844–1848), and the commune at Oneida (1848–1881) are taken to be the same group. For a detailed discussion of the dates given, see Brumann (1998a:33–71).

[20] "Well described" means that in almost all cases there is scholarly literature and/or at least one—scholarly or non-scholarly—monograph dealing with the respective group. For the ethnographic literature I have used, see Brumann (1998a:33–71). I conducted short-term field research in the Japanese communes in 1990 and 1993 (Brumann 1992; 1996; 1998b). In a few other cases, I have exchanged letters and emails with members for supplementary information.

It is a common lament in the literature on communes that the precise scope of the phenomenon is hard to determine. Many communes do not want to be known about or simply do not attract public attention, so that listings beyond very limited areas and time periods are inevitably incomplete. Since the likelihood of being detected and described increases with age, this is less of a problem for the longer-lived communes for which I believe my sample to be at least close to complete. Communes that I know of but lack good descriptions of were excluded from the sample, but all of them are very similar to at least one of the communes that I have included, so much so that the latter can be taken to represent them. This means that the non-statistical results presented here apply for the less well-described cases as well.

A number of cases have more than a single settlement and some more than a hundred. It might be argued, therefore, that the life span of the single Hutterite colony, kibbutz, or Shaker village provides the more appropriate unit of analysis. These single settlements, however, are not independent social institutions. Instead, they are bound by decisions taken jointly with the other settlements or by some overarching leadership body, and they also redistribute members and resources. This takes place especially during emergencies or when closing specific settlements, but often also on a fairly routine basis. Thus, I consider it best to view all of the settlements within such larger organizations as one single communal unit, with such branch structures being one more variable that influences survival in its own, independent way (Brumann 2000). Accepting this, it could still be argued that the three—since October 2000 only two—kibbutz federations and the three Hutterite *leut*, representing the major units for inter-settlement cooperation, should be treated separately. Significant internal differences with respect to marriage, family, and kinship are not reported, however, and most ethnographic descriptions refer to a non-specified "average" kibbutz or Hutterite colony, and I do not systematically explore inter-federational differences—I collapse them into a single case each, with conclusions applying to all federations and *leut*.

TABLE 1
Durations and Marriage Forms of the Forty-Three Utopian Communes

Case	*start*	*end*	*absolute duration*	*1/3-limit reached*	*"active" duration*	*marriage form*
Shakers (USA)	1787	—	214	<1900	<113	C
Hutterites (Canada/USA)	1874	—	127	—	127	M
Abode of Love (England)	1840	1958	118	1929	89	C
Harmony (USA)	1804	1905	101	~1851	~47	C
House of David (USA)	1902	—	99	<<1963	<<61	C
Snowhill (USA)	1798	1889	91	<1872	<74	C
Kibbutzim (Israel)	1910	—	91	—	91	MC
Amana (USA)	1843	1932	89	—	89	M
Ittô-en (Japan)	1913	—	88	—	88	M
Atarashiki mura (Japan)	1918	—	83	—	83	M
Bruderhof (USA/England)	1920	—	81	—	81	MC
Zoar (USA)	1819	1898	79	—	79	M
Koreshan Unity (USA)	1880	1947	67	1904	24	C
Ephrata (USA)	1732	1797	65	1778	46	C
Woman's Commonwealth (USA)	1877	1940	63	1908	31	C
Shinkyô (Japan)	1939	—	62	—	62	M
Riverside (New Zealand)	1941	—	60	—	60	M
Koinonia (USA)	1942	—	59	—	59	M
Ajisai mura (Japan)	1946	—	55	—	55	M
Arche (France a.o.)	1948	—	53	—	53	M
Icaria (USA)	1849	1898	49	1863	14	M

Point Loma (USA)	1897	1942	45	<1941	<44	M
Reba Place Fellowship (USA)	1957	—	44	—	44	M
Yamagishi-kai (Japan)	1958	—	43	—	43	M
Bethel/Aurora (USA)	1844	1881	37	—	37	MC
Oneida (USA)	1844	1881	37	—	37	G
Twin Oaks (USA)	1967	—	34	—	34	M
Fukuzato tetsugaku jikkenjô (Japan)	1970	—	31	—	31	M
Spirit Fruit Society (USA)	1899	1930	31	—	31	MG
Alpha Farm (USA)	1971	—	30	—	30	M
Llano Colony (USA)	1914	1939	25	—	25	M
Aiyetoro (Nigeria)	1948	1972	24	—	24	MG
Renaissance (USA)	1968	<1992	<24	—	<24	M
Bethlehem (USA)	1741	1762	21	—	21	MC
Kerista Village (USA)	1971	1992	21	—	21	G
AAO (Austria a.o.)	1973	1991	18	—	18	G
Bishop Hill (USA)	1846	1860	14	—	14	MC
Bohemia Manor (USA)	1684	1698	14	1690	6	M
The Farm (USA)	1971	1983	12	—	12	MG
North American Phalanx (USA)	1843	1855	12	—	12	M
Peoples Temple (USA/Guyana)	1972	1978	6	—	6	M
Brook Farm (USA)	1841	1847	6	1846	5	M
Rajneeshpuram (USA)	1981	1986	5	1985	4	G

Note to table 1: C = celibacy, G = group marriage, M = (strict) monogamy, MC = monogamy with celibate tendencies, MG = monogamy with group-marriage tendencies; > = greater than/after, < = smaller than/before, << = much smaller than/much before, ~ = approximately; reference date: 2001

or even all—members are celibate for part of the commune's existence. None of the strictly celibate communes last for less than this time span. In contrast, only five of the fifteen longest-lived groups, and only one among the top five, are unambiguously monogamous, whereas monogamous cases in communes with a short duration are numerous. So while group-marriage communes or monogamous communes with group-marriage tendencies clearly fail the predictions of the zero-sum hypothesis—Oneida's thirty-seven years have already set the record for these cases—celibacy does indeed appear to be a better fundament than is monogamy for communal longevity.

Communal survival, however, is more than the sheer persistence of an institutional shell. A commune may live on as a thriving and active social body or it may do so as a tiny group of people who have ceased to achieve much but are still held together for lack of alternatives, or by sheer luck. Thus, communal survival should be qualified by introducing some measure for communal stability. In the following, I take the development of membership figures as such an indicator. While this is certainly a rough measure, relative membership figures do mirror the general condition of a commune at a given time, with sufficient closeness in all cases, meaning that rising or stable numbers coincide with periods of florescence, and persistent membership losses with periods of general decline.[21]

Figure 1 contrasts the membership development of the longest-lived strictly celibate and strictly monogamous cases, with the hundred-percent mark equivalent to the maximum population ever reached by the respective commune.[22] The membership curves of the strictly celibate communes show a consistent pattern: they reached their maximums relatively early—six during the first third of their life spans, two more around the middle period—and then entered a period of protracted decline, although they continued even when their numbers had been greatly reduced. Thus, the Shakers are still a functioning commune today although they have had less than 10 percent of their membership maximum for more than eighty years.[23] There are presently only four members, and only one of the former eighteen settlements is still in operation.[24] As early as 1874 they were described as "a parcel of old bachelors and old maids," suggesting that they had clearly passed their prime.[25] Harmony, founded by members of a German Protestant sect known as Separatists, survived for more than a century, but here as well we find that decline set in after only one-third of the total life span. After sixty years membership had fallen below one-sixth of the

[21] Population figures are patchy for a number of cases, but they are still more widely available than the information required for calculating activity indices such as the one proposed by Gardner (1978:260). For the membership figures used and their sources, see Brumann (1998a:309–31).

[22] Absolute size as such is not a meaningful indicator of communal success. There appears to be an upper limit for membership size since the biggest communes with populations of more than 750 persons per settlement either had a relatively short life or ran into problems precisely at the time when they became so big (Brumann 1998a:93–96).

[23] Stein 1992:252. [24] Stein 1992:252, 435–36. [25] Stein 1992:230.

former maximum of at least 750,[26] and after eighty-six years the fewer than twenty members who were left—most of them rather aged—needed more than 300 outside employees to run the communal enterprises in their stead.[27] In the end, only three members remained to undertake the commune's dissolution.[28] The later years of the other strictly celibate communes present similar pictures—a drawn-out stagnation period made possible only by of the lasting organizational and economic achievements of an initial period.[29] Only the Shakers and House of David still exist today, each with just a fraction of their former memberships and vitality.

By contrast, decline started later in the monogamous communes, not only relative to their total life span but also in absolute terms: Whereas with the one exception of Abode of Love, all celibate communes peaked during their first forty-five years, often much earlier; the longest-lived monogamous communes—with the exception of Koinonia—reached their maximums later. Moreover, all the monogamous communes still exist today, and at least three of them continue to grow. Let us tentatively define the moment when a commune falls below one-third of its former membership maximum—the 33 percent mark in the diagrams of figure 1—as the end of its "active" life span; justified by the fact that this was a clear symptom of decline, one that proved irreversible in almost all cases.[30] When we measure durations in this way, the monogamous communes fare much better (see Table 1).

The celibate communes stayed together until they virtually died out because for the remaining members there was no alternative social unit to fall back on. Thus, celibacy is highly effective for the conservation of a given state of communal development, and may help a group to live much beyond its time, so to speak. But it terms of successes beyond the mere freezing of past achievements, monogamous marriage has proved to be the more solid foundation.

THE MOST ENDURING COMMUNES

This reassessment receives further support when one focuses attention on the Hutterite colonies, the kibbutzim, and the Bruderhof communities. This focus is warranted because these three cases continue to grow at present, show no clear signs of imminent decline,[31] and have to be considered as more success-

[26] Carpenter 1975:163. [27] Arndt 1971:189. [28] Arndt 1971:301–3, 318–37.

[29] Fogarty 1981:120–28; Kitch 1993:110–12; Landing 1981:13–14; McCormick 1965:149–69 (for Abode of Love); Treher 1968:84–103.

[30] There are three exceptions where the fall below the one-third limit either, as in the Bruderhof, occurred during the formative period (Zablocki 1973:73–74; Eggers 1985:92–96)—before the commune had really got started, so to speak—or was due to unusually harsh external conditions partly or totally outside of the commune's control. Examples are Koinonia's persecution by racist neighbors that frightened away most members around 1960 (Lee 1971:176, 179), and the Pacific War that reduced Atarashiki mura's numbers through the draft as well as general hardships. In all these cases, recovery followed quickly.

[31] Objections might be raised here. One of the three traditional federations of the Hutterites has recently split apart (Miller 1993), and symptoms of moral decline among the Hutterites have been

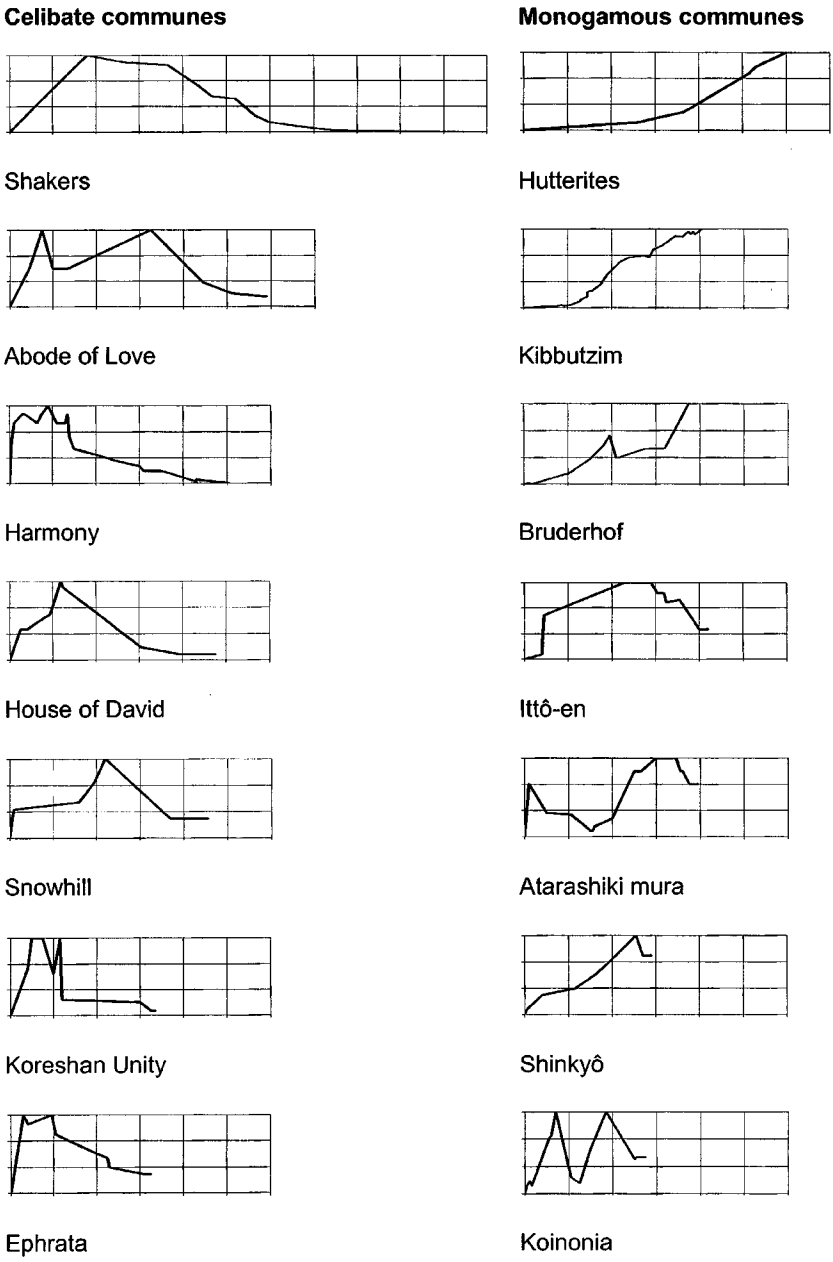

Figure 1. Membership Development of the Most Durable Communes Compared

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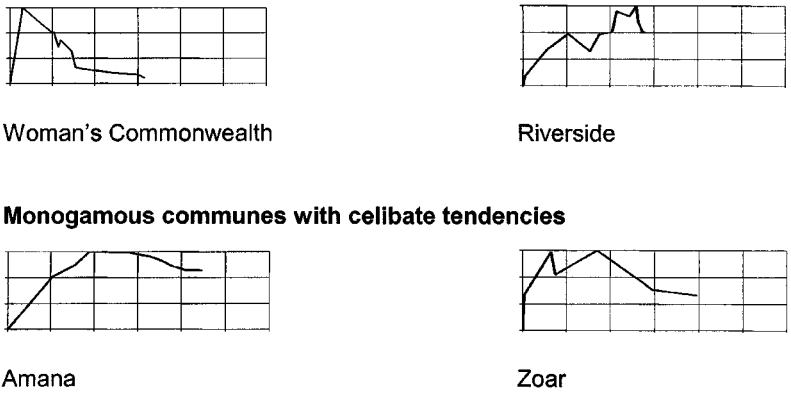

Figure 1. Continued

deplored by the Bruderhof communities (Arnold 1995). Illicit private property, however, does not seem to exceed a level that has been fairly standard for many decades (Hostetler 1974a:223–24). We must therefore expect that community of goods in these two groups will continue for the foreseeable future.

For the kibbutzim, a caveat must be added. According to Livni (2000) and to information gathered from a number of senior kibbutzniks during the 2001 conference of the International Communal Studies Association in Belzig, Germany, most kibbutzim are currently revising their property arrangements in order to overcome serious financial difficulties. This includes the introduction or expansion of private property, differential salaries, charges for services rendered, and property shares. The arrangements vary widely from kibbutz to kibbutz, so in order to tell how many kibbutzim can still be legitimately regarded as utopian communes in the sense defined here, detailed data would have to be collected among them all, in a situation that remains volatile. What is referred to as the "communal stream," an informal network of twenty-two kibbutzim (November 2000) determined to retain the old common-property arrangements, has also formed, involving kibbutzim from all major federations. Since these "classic" kibbutzim tend to be among the economically more successful ones, there is no reason to assume that fully property-sharing kibbutzim will disappear soon. It cannot be ruled out, however, that the kibbutzim in their entirety have dropped or are about to drop under the one-third level, thereby ending their "active" duration.

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ful in terms of active survival[32] than any other commune after a similar timespan.[33] Descriptions of these communes are also more numerous and detailed than for many other cases, allowing a more thorough scrutiny of the ethnographic account.

The Hutterites were founded in the sixteenth century in Bohemia and, as a consequence of recurring religious persecution, migrated in 1874 from the Ukraine to the Great Plains area of the United States, and after World War I also Canada. Their religion is characterized by an adherence to rules that are often centuries old, and it is opposed to most North American mainstream values; their German dialect has set them off as well. For their mostly agricultural businesses, technological innovations are amply used, but everyday life and material culture are governed by conservatism and austerity. Presently, there are about 30,000 Hutterites living in some 400 colonies.[34]

The Bruderhof communities were founded in Germany in 1920 and were also forced to migrate repeatedly, via England and then Paraguay to the United States. They have tried to emulate the model of the Hutterites, but instead of rule-conformity they emphasize a unity with the divine spirit. This has encouraged a rather turbulent history with frequent crises and reorientations. Their historical relationship with the traditional Hutterites has been similarly turbulent, and is currently severed.[35] The communities are also criticized by a self-help organization of former members. Today there are about 2,500 members of eight *bruderhofs*—six in the northeastern United States, and two in England—which produce toys and equipment for handicapped children.[36]

The kibbutzim were a product of the migration of European Jews to Palestine, where the first one was founded in 1910. They were ardently patriotic, and played a pioneering role in the establishment of the state of Israel, but they have since had recurring difficulties in defining their position therein. Currently, there are around 270 kibbutzim with almost 130,000 members[37] that engage in a wide range of agricultural and industrial enterprises.[38]

[32] I hasten to add that continuity is not the only, let alone the best, way to measure the success of a communal experiment (see also Wagner 1985). But because even those communes that satisfy whatever their members regard as more important goals must often struggle for continuity, the latter cannot be regarded as a peripheral problem.

[33] The Shakers and Abode of Love must be included here because after the eighty years the Bruderhof has now existed, they showed clearer symptoms of decline (Brewer 1986:156, 163; Stein 1992:200–1, 203–4, 234; McCormick 1965:149–54) than any of the three present-day cases did at that time.

[34] Hartse 1994b:110; for overviews see Bennett 1967; Hostetler 1974a; Peter 1987; Stephenson 1991.

[35] Arnold 1995.

[36] For overviews see Eggers 1992; Mow 1990; Zablocki 1973; and the Bruderhof's internet web site at http://www.bruderhof.org. The views of dissidents are expressed in Bohlken-Zumpe 1993; Pleil 1994; and at http://www.perefound.org/kitinfo.html.

[37] Malan 1994:121.

[38] For overviews see Ben-Rafael 1988; Bowes 1989; Melzer and Neubauer 1988b; Spiro 1972; Tiger and Shepher 1975.

The ideological and cultural differences between these three groups are vast indeed. While Hutterites and Bruderhof members are Anabaptist Christians, all but a small portion of kibbutzim are secular and socialist in orientation, and they reject the religious ingredients of Jewishness.[39] The members of the two Christian groups are strict pacifists who reject any kind of armed service, whereas kibbutzniks have made a point of placing themselves on the front lines of their country's defenses. The three communes also differ greatly in terms of authority patterns, gender roles, and relations with outside society and the state, with the kibbutzim taking a more egalitarian and open position. Despite these differences, the three groups are remarkably similar with regard to marriage, family, and kinship: While emphasizing the superiority of the commune over any other social attachments, just as the Shakers or Oneida did, they (1) are strictly monogamous; (2) regard marriage and family as a natural stage in the life cycle leading to full adult status; and (3) take the family as the standard unit for dwelling, leisure, and consumption. Furthermore, in all three (4) wider kin ties are important; (5) members stay in the commune because of their family and relatives; and (6) the commune is reproduced primarily from among the members' children. Let me take up these points one-by-one.

(1) *Strict monogamy*: Despite some early sympathies for free love and contempt for the bourgeois family,[40] the alternatives of group marriage and celibacy have never been seriously considered in the kibbutzim. The degree of marital infidelity among kibbutzniks does not deviate from that of mainstream Israeli society.[41] The Anabaptist Hutterites and Bruderhof communities believe in the sanctity of the indissoluble monogamous marriage bond and regard extramarital affairs as a grave sin.[42]

(2) *Marriage and children as a natural stage in the life cycle leading to full adult status*: Kibbutzniks marry early, and people still single at the age of twenty-five are already considered problematic.[43] According to older data, less than 5 percent of all adults remain unmarried.[44] Among the Hutterites as well, adults over thirty years of age who have never married do not exceed 5 percent of the total.[45] Average marriage age has increased in recent years but is still below the mid-twenties.[46] Information about the Bruderhof communities, while not precise, suggests similar conditions for this group. In 1965, three-fourths of the adults in the central settlement Woodcrest were married.[47] Since the remainder must have included some young adults who would eventually marry, the proportion of permanently single people would probably have been fairly low.[48]

[39] Bowes 1989:129–41. As does most of the ethnographic literature, I will concentrate on the socialist kibbutzim in what follows. For the religious kibbutzim, which comprise only a small minority, see Fishman 1992.

[40] Bowes 1989:122–23; Spiro 1972:112–13. [41] Bowes 1989:91.

[42] Hostetler 1974a:146; Zablocki 1973:117. [43] Bowes 1980:672–73.

[44] Tiger and Shepher 1975:223. [45] Hostetler 1974a:203.

[46] Stephenson 1991:107; Peter 1987:161. [47] Zablocki 1973:240.

[48] I tried to gather more recent demographic data directly from the Bruderhof. In a personal let-

In all three communes, members acquire full social status only after marriage. Singles are socially marginal,[49] and leadership offices are usually held by married members. In the Bruderhof communities, singles are incorporated into families with whom they share leisure time, meals, and celebrations.[50] While this blurs concrete family boundaries, the family's status as the normal and "natural" living unit is nonetheless emphasized.

In all cases, married couples tend to rise together into influential, often complementary positions in the communal hierarchy. The wife of a Hutterite colony "householder," the economic manager, often fills the highest female office of head cook.[51] The wives of Bruderhof office holders such as "servants of the word," "witness brothers," and "stewards" are often "housemothers," the only office reserved for women.[52] In the kibbutz "Har" observed by Rayman, husband and wife have often held important positions simultaneously.[53] It is likely that emphasizing marriage in this way raises its legitimacy in all three groups.

(3) *Family as standard unit for dwelling, leisure and consumption*: While collective childcare and a traditional gender division of labor separates couples and families during most of the day, there are no restrictions on joint activities outside working and worship hours in any of the three groups. Couples and families live together in the same apartment; thereby casting doubt on Kanter's assumption that communal longevity is promoted when families are not the exclusive dwelling unit.[54] Kibbutz and Bruderhof families have undistracted time reserved for themselves every day, including in the case of the Bruderhof breakfast and several other meals.[55] Work-free days are filled with joint family activities. Moreover, the family is acknowledged as the economic unit to which allowances are distributed, and the kibbutzim too have switched from individual to family allowances in recent years.[56] Housework in a family's apartment is done by its female members. Hutterites and Bruderhof members have to promise to place the loyalty toward the commune over that to their family,[57] and must sometimes participate in sanctions such as ostracism even against their own family members,[58] but in none of the three cases do we find principal restrictions of family ties—as long as family life does not deviate from the commune's norms, it is regarded as a private affair. Members are also expected to choose their own marriage partners.

In the kibbutzim, children used to live and sleep in children's houses, meeting their parents for no more than a few hours on weekends. But by the 1960s the daily "hour of love" had been introduced, in which parents could visit their children,[59] and in the 1980s and 1990s children's houses were discontinued al-

ter, however, one member informed me that such data are not collected and that any analysis based on them will fail to grasp the essentially religious significance of the commune.

[49] Bowes 1989:85–86; Peter 1987:74; Zablocki 1973:121. [50] Zablocki 1973:122.
[51] Bennett 1967:145–46. [52] Zablocki 1973:203. [53] Rayman 1981:138.
[54] Kanter 1972:90–92. [55] Zablocki 1973:46–49. [56] Liegle and Bergmann 1994:33.
[57] Peter 1987:39; Zablocki 1973:267. [58] Shenker 1986:224; Zablocki 1973:196–99.
[59] Spiro 1972:278; Tiger and Shepher 1975:227.

together in almost all kibbutzim and children began sleeping in their parents' homes. The necessary extensions to apartments have plunged many kibbutzim into heavy debt,[60] but other than this no negative effects on their social fabric have been reported thus far. On the contrary, birth rates have gone up, so that the number of potential future members (see below) has increased.[61]

(4) *Family and kin ties acknowledged and important*: In none of the three communes do we find kinship ending at the boundaries of the nuclear family. Every Hutterite is kin-related to every other, a situation caused by endogamy and by the minuscule number of converts the colonies have attracted from outside. Indeed, all present-day Hutterites are descendants of the 443 individuals who emigrated from Ukraine in 1874.[62] Thus, although first-cousin marriage is avoided, the average married couple in the 1970s were more closely related than second cousins.[63] Because of virilocal preferences, colonies often consist of only a few sets of brothers with their families, and in extreme cases an entire Hutterite colony of between 60 and 180 people may consist of a single ancestor couple, its descendants and their wives.[64]

Kinship provides an important resource for individual agency. Personal help is first sought among relatives.[65] Kin groups, especially groups of brothers, often form factions that try to corner important offices,[66] and inheritance of such positions from father to son is not uncommon.[67] Even deviance can appear to be kin-based when specific families are regarded as especially vulnerable for defection to outside society.[68]

In the kibbutzim, especially the older ones, large groups of relatives numbering up to twenty-five serve as power blocks lobbying for the interests of their members.[69] There is even a special word for these kin groups, *hamula*, interestingly an Arab word for patrilineally extended families.[70] It appears as if large kin groups—although now a common feature of kibbutzim—are still a somewhat "foreign" idea to a society that never thought of building itself on kinship in the first place.

Detailed kinship data on the Bruderhof communities are not available, but endogamy, the importance of the nuclear family, and the high number of children (discussed below) make it very likely that this group is also interwoven by

[60] Melzer and Neubauer 1988b:30–31; Liegle and Bergmann 1994:33.

[61] Nurseries and kindergartens have now been discontinued in some Hutterite colonies, with the mothers now taking care of their infants and smaller children. Signs of declining discipline have been reported and attributed to this development (Peter 1987:65–66), but so far nothing definite can be said about the social effects of these innovations.

[62] These emigrants were already well-connected by kin ties, descending from ninety-two individuals who had married endogamously since 1760 (Peter 1987:128–29).

[63] Hostetler 1974a:265. [64] Bennett 1967:108, 116, 119, 121. [65] Bennett 1967:131–32.

[66] Peter 1987:45–46, 80; Bennett 1967:257. [67] Shenker 1986:225–26.

[68] Hostetler 1974a:273.

[69] Bowes 1989:102; Maron 1988:225; Tiger and Shepher 1975:40; Liegle and Bergmann 1994:32.

[70] Tiger and Shepher 1975:40.

abundant kin ties. It has been reported that the family members of office holders often receive privileged treatment, even against their own wishes.[71] Kinship has also played a crucial role in the succession of the group's leadership. When the charismatic founder Eberhard Arnold died early and suddenly in 1935, a power struggle ensued, with Eberhard's three sons pitted against their two sisters' husbands. The in-laws prevailed, and went so far as to temporarily expel the sons from the commune. But the sons had their comeback and took over the leadership in a tumultuous, drawn-out crisis that was accompanied by substantial purges around 1960. In spite of accusations of instituting a "royal family,"[72] the founder's son Heinrich Arnold became the new "elder" of the commune, whereas his main opponent and brother-in-law was charged with adultery and expelled.[73] When Heinrich died in 1982, his son Christoph Arnold succeeded him, again after a crisis.[74] All of these events were clearly disruptive for the Bruderhof communities, and one may question their functionality for the commune's survival. It must be conceded, however, that the crises resulted in greater unity among those members who stayed.[75] Moreover, the Bruderhof has always been suspicious of fixed rules and procedures, and instead emphasizes the harmony with the divine spirit, so that repeatedly, basic policies have been completed reversed. It can therefore be argued—and has been argued also by observers sympathetic to the Bruderhof[76]—that with almost everything else subject to change, the Arnold patriline has provided the crucial element of stability.

None of this emphasis on kinship has any ideological foundation in the three communes. Officially, all members are to be treated alike, membership is an individual affair that requires a conscious decision, and nepotism is frowned upon.[77] Therefore, one has to assume that there are members who feel powerless and excluded when strong kin groups dominate communal affairs, and it can not be ruled out *a priori* that the overall balance of cohesion among a part of the members and alienation among the others may become negative for the commune. But at least for the Hutterites it has been observed that colonies with many kin groups are more prone to factionalism on the basis of kinship than those with just a few kin groups.[78] Marriage ties also strengthen inter-colony bonds since they often go along with economic cooperation.[79] Furthermore, male members from culturally deviant or economically weak colonies will have difficulties in finding marriage partners.[80] Although the refusals are informal and based on individual members' decisions, they function as a powerful sanction, forcing the respective colonies back into line. Case studies of one colony

[71] Pleil 1994:57, 226, 267; Zablocki 1973:271. [72] Mow 1990:305.
[73] Zablocki 1973:104–12; Mow 1990:109–51. [74] Eggers 1992:160; Mow 1990:289.
[75] Cf. Zablocki 1973:111. [76] Goeringer 1995.
[77] Peter 1987:45–46; Blasi 1986:112; Zablocki 1973:28, 228. [78] Peter 1987:62.
[79] Bennett 1967:124–25; Hostetler 1974a:241 note 9.
[80] Hostetler 1974a:271; Shenker 1986:164.

in crisis[81] and of another that has been excommunicated[82] show that the impossibility of finding wives is one of the most demoralizing consequences that deviant colonies must face.

(5) *Family and relatives important reason to stay*: At least in one sense, family and kin ties are clearly functional for communal longevity in all three groups, since for the members involved in them they are an important reason to stay in the commune. What has not been reported and is difficult to imagine is an equally strong trend for those members not involved to leave precisely because of the strength of family and kin relations among the others.

Family and relatives are usually what Hutterite defectors miss most and what brings many of them back into the commune, often in spite of serious doubts about the way of life and the religion. Many more members are said to refrain from leaving for the same reason.[83] In the Bruderhof as well, defectors suffer from being separated from their relatives, and re-establishing contact with the latter is an objective pursued by the former members' support organization.

Among kibbutzniks, the presence of family and relatives is one of the most important reasons not to leave the commune.[84] In a 1993 survey, almost 90 percent of the members gave as a reason to stay the opportunity to enjoy one's family life, whereas only about 50 percent mentioned official values such as cooperation and equality.[85] It seems that family and kinship are replacing ideology as the central motivation to be a kibbutznik, or at least it is no longer considered inappropriate to admit this openly.[86]

(6) *New members recruited from among members' children*: A remarkably high fertility rate is a common feature of these three cases. The Hutterites once were the fastest growing human population, with annual increases of more than four percent around 1950.[87] Although these rates have declined considerably,[88] they still lie around two percent,[89] with natural growth far exceeding the increasing but still small number of permanent defections.[90]

Most kibbutz families reach three or four children,[91] and the average in 1975 was 2.8.[92] Among the Jewish population of Israel, the kibbutzim had the highest birth rate of 1.8 to 1.9 per annum in 1980–1985.[93] While more than one-half of children now leave for good,[94] many of the rest bring in marriage partners from the outside.[95] About two-thirds of new members have grown up in

[81] Peter 1987:146–48. [82] Holzach 1982:174–77.
[83] Peter 1987:106–7; Shenker 1986:162, 227. [84] Shenker 1986:227; Spiro 1972:227.
[85] Liegle and Bergmann 1994:33–34.
[86] Interestingly, kibbutzniks may take in their aging parents or relatives even when these do not want to become full members (Kibbutzstatuten 1982:170–71), so that here, at least, the priority of parental over communal ties also receives official endorsement.
[87] Peter 1987:154. [88] Nonaka et al. 1994; Peter 1987. [89] Peter 1987:155–56.
[90] Fragmentary data (Peter 1987:226 note 1; Hartse 1994a:70; Shenker 1986:159) suggest that the permanent defection rate does not exceed ten percent.
[91] Ben-Rafael 1988:4. [92] Tiger and Shepher 1975:223.
[93] Van den Berghe and Peter 1988:526.
[94] Ben-Rafael 1988:131; Liegle and Bergmann 1994:73. [95] Ben-Rafael 1988:4.

the kibbutz,[96] and without this supply total membership would have been decreasing for many years now.

Again, no exact demographic data are available for the Bruderhof. Birth control, however, is not practiced,[97] and large families of eight to ten children were fairly common at the end of the 1960s,[98] and continue to be so today.[99] According to one former member, women are encouraged to have many children,[100] and recent population data for the two Bruderhof communities of Spring Valley and Darvell, where only one-half of members are classified as "adult,"[101] indicate that this policy has succeeded in its objective. Until 1965, 75 percent of children stayed in the commune as adults,[102] and today it is still one-half.[103] The reliable source of new members provided by their own children is probably the primary factor that permits the rather rigorous policy of temporary and permanent expulsions. The Bruderhof communities have never hesitated to use these sanctions against deviant members, making them an important instrument for maintaining the group's spiritual balance.

Of course, the formation of large kin networks among individuals who have joined a commune independently takes time and thus presupposes a certain degree of stability. In the early periods of the kibbutzim and the Bruderhof, wider kin ties and to some extent also the nuclear family were less important, and therefore the social bonds thus created cannot account for the initial success. Where changes did occur, however, these were more in the direction of familism than not, and today, marriage, family, and kinship clearly help to ensure the persistence of these communes.

The monogamous communes that follow on the next ranks in table 1—except Riverside, as discussed below—closely resemble the three cases I have discussed. Wider kin ties and the biological reproduction of membership, however, are less important, and in many there are more single members.[104] Shinkyô's members have agreed not to have children on account of the many mentally handicapped members who otherwise might end up neglected. But other than this, none of these groups has implemented an alternative family policy. They all respect the monogamous family and take it as the "natural" building block for their communal setup, without any of the loyalty conflicts that the "zero-sum hypothesis" predicts.

MONOGAMOUS COMMUNES WITH CELIBATE TENDENCIES

Marriage, family, and kinship were also very important in several long-lived communes that officially favored celibacy. Zoar, a settlement of German immigrants adhering to Protestant Separatism, was strictly celibate until 1828 or

[96] Van den Berghe and Peter 1988:526. [97] Zablocki 1973:115, 117; Eggers 1992:145.
[98] Zablocki 1973:115, 117. [99] Pleil 1994:277, 279, 291. [100] Pleil 1994:225, 362–63.
[101] Fellowship for Intentional Community 1995:206, 342. [102] Zablocki 1973:268.
[103] Kruse 1991:22.
[104] Day 1990:119; Lee 1971:172–73, field research among the Japanese cases.

1830,[105] and members paid lip service to the supremacy of celibacy until its the dissolution.[106] Most of them, however, lived in monogamous families, and the children's houses that had been introduced for a time were closed in 1845.[107] The Inspirationists of Amana—immigrated German Protestants as well—had much respect for celibacy in the beginning when an unusually large portion of members remained single and when these singles were preferred for leadership positions. Until almost the end, members were temporarily demoted in the rank-order after marriage or childbirth, and elders and school teachers had to remain unmarried if that was their status when they were nominated. The majority of members, however, did marry and lived and received their allowances as families,[108] and there is ample evidence for the importance of wider kinship[109] also in the choice of marriage partners[110] and in the allocation of influential positions.[111] Thus, Amana was much closer to the kibbutzim and the Hutterites than its official preference for celibacy would suggest. Moreover, both in Zoar and in Amana it was the children and grand-children of founding members who still lived in the commune in its later years.[112] Clearly then, compromising with celibacy improved the survival chances of these communes that praised it but stopped short of its strict enforcement.[113]

When we contrast Amana and Zoar with strictly celibate communes with a similar absolute life span, it becomes clear that they remained active social institutions for a longer time, held back a larger portion of their members, and could have lived much longer if the option to dissolve the commune had not existed. (As figure 1 shows, membership curves for Amana and for the Shakers who existed more than twice as long, are almost identical, until Amana's curve breaks off.) Since Amana and Zoar consisted of monogamous families, however, there was an alternative social unit for the members. Moreover, the care for the future well-being of one's children, which could not be guaranteed by a commune in dire straits, was an additional motivation to disband, even for those members who might have opted otherwise had it been for their personal sakes alone.

FAMILY AND KINSHIP IN COMMUNES THAT TRIED TO SUPPRESS THEM

Even the most determined opponents of the monogamous family, Oneida and the Shakers, cannot be said to have been entirely free of the workings of family and kinship, and even they may have profited from them, all told. John

[105] Randall 1971[1899]:20. [106] Carpenter 1975:205. [107] Randall 1971[1899]:46.
[108] Andelson 1974:44, 107–8, 164, 202–3, 341, 439–42. [109] Barthel 1984:43–45.
[110] Yambura with Bodine 1961:176–77. [111] Andelson 1974:64–69, 171, 176–78.
[112] Cf. Andelson 1974:329, 448–49; Randall 1971[1899]:48.
[113] Even strictly celibate Harmony profited from the approximately four to seven children born annually in the first two decades when—with couples and families living in the same household—infringements still occurred (Arndt 1965:418). These children stayed on and kept the group alive in the end (Arndt 1971:105).

Humphrey Noyes, the charismatic leader of Oneida, made his first and most loyal converts among his own siblings[114] and initiated marriages between these and other important but unrelated followers in order to consolidate the group.[115] It was only afterwards that he introduced "complex marriage" and denounced "philoprogenitiveness," his word for nepotism.[116] Less successful were Noyes's much later attempts to institute his son Theodore Noyes as his successor, a logical consequence of his belief in "the superiority of his family line,"[117] a belief that led him to father nine[118] or ten children instead of the one or two permitted to ordinary male members.[119] Theodore proved incompetent for the leadership office and also held grave doubts about his father and his religion, and the ensuing opposition contributed to the demise of the commune.[120] The breakup was preceded by a surprisingly swift and easy return to monogamy. After John Humphrey Noyes had suggested abolishing the experiment in 1879, members formed thirty-seven monogamous couples in addition to those who had already entered the commune as such. Most of the marriages took place within the following three months, although because many adults had children with several different members, sixteen women—twelve of them with children—remained single.[121]

While there were never more than very occasional infringements against celibacy among the Shakers, "flesh kindred" nonetheless played an important role, especially in the formative period. In the early years, numerous large, often extended families joined the commune.[122] In some of the residential units that were themselves called "families," and numbered between 30 and 100 people, almost one-half of members had the same family name,[123] suggesting that families were not separated after joining. Families also rose together: some last names appear with significant regularity among prominent Shakers of the first period; for instance members of the related Wells and Young families held many important positions. For a while, the two male members of the central ministry, the topmost leadership body, had the same last name of Bishop, and may have been brothers.[124] According to Brewer, "The stability that these kinship networks provided was considerable, and was a key factor in the early success of the sect."[125] She also believes that kinship was more important than can be demonstrated with the remaining sources.[126] The other major historian of the Shakers agrees that " 'natural relations' [. . .] still counted in the world of Believers."[127]

[114] Carden 1969:18–19, 21. [115] Dalsimer 1975:33; Parker 1973[1935]:93, 95.
[116] Robertson 1981:75–76. [117] Carden 1969:63. [118] Parker 1973[1935]:257.
[119] Carden 1969:61–63. [120] Robertson 1972.
[121] Carden 1969:103–4, 118–19; Parker 1973[1935]:286; Dalsimer 1975:282.
[122] Brewer 1986:23, 31–32, 35–36; Paterwic 1991:27–28, 29–30.
[123] Brewer 1986:69. [124] Stein 1992:31–32, 54, 92, 122. [125] Brewer 1986:23.
[126] Brewer 1986:36, 138. [127] Stein 1992:92.

COMMUNES FROM LIBERALLY MONOGAMOUS AND NON-MONOGAMOUS BACKGROUNDS

The evidence presented so far might be taken to suggest that there is a natural tendency toward monogamy and nepotism in humans, so communes that try to suppress this tendency can not last long. However, it must be emphasized that almost all of the forty-three cases are from ambient cultures that take the monogamous family very much for granted. It is therefore worthwhile to have a closer look at the exceptions.

On the one hand, these communes were strongly influenced by the Euro-American countercultures that flourished from the late 1960s. While they are considerably younger than many of the aforementioned cases, their present stability should carry them through at least several more decades, to durations similar to those of the historical cases just discussed. Most of the members of Twin Oaks, a rural commune in Virginia,[128] have educated middle-class backgrounds, liberal or leftist political leanings, and critical attitudes toward many establishment concepts and institutions. Their ideas about love, partnership, and family are generally more tolerant and flexible than those in mainstream U.S. society. Due to the egalitarian nature of the commune, "If any one constant does exist, it is that the absence of even a subtle group pressure allows everyone the freedom to explore their sexual natures more fully than most other contemporary settings."[129]

Members' love-lives are regarded as their private affairs. As one member put it, "People do what they can for themselves, and government keeps its hands off."[130] Legal marriages are rare, and the ideal of a life-long relationship plays only a minor role for many members. Yet despite some homosexual and occasional multiple relationships, the majority of members live as couples in stable heterosexual relationships.[131] Within the last decade, children have never made up more than one-fifth of the membership, and families with children have always been a minority.[132] The special needs of members with children are acknowledged when educational costs are paid by the commune, and caring for one's children is creditable to one's personal work-load. However, communal childcare ceased a few years ago, and less than half of the several large households accept children.[133] Despite explicit efforts to integrate families, Twin Oaks remains a commune primarily of and for singles, who often choose communal life as an alternative to ordinary family life in the ambient society. This is rarely a terminal decision, and despite a growing determination on the part

[128] Kinkade 1973; 1994; Komar 1983. [129] Komar 1983:262–63.
[130] Kinkade 1994:186.
[131] Kinkade 1994:117, 177, 180, 183–84, 186; Komar 1983:264, 268; personal communication by a member.
[132] Fellowship for Intentional Community 1995:208; Kinkade 1994:2.
[133] Personal communication by a member.

of many members to stay, the average time spent in the commune has not yet risen above 7.6 years.[134] Thus, communal membership is for many little more than a life cycle stage, which may be preceded or followed by a more conventional family life. Twin Oaks has never attempted to raise its children as future members, and so far only one person who grew up in the commune has joined it as an adult.[135] This means that any investment in child care and education hardly pays off in terms of institutional survival, since continuity so far has depended on the commune's capacity to attract single adults who are willing to engage in lasting relationships only as long as they are personally rewarding.

The agricultural commune of Riverside in New Zealand has already existed for more than half a century and its condition at present remains promising. It was originally founded by Christian pacifists and was no less strictly monogamous than, for instance, the Hutterites or the Bruderhof communes, even going so far as to refuse membership to a divorced candidate. In 1971, however, the former religious requirements were dropped, and in the following years most new members came from counter-cultural backgrounds. While marriage and family are still more important than in Twin Oaks, single and single-parent households have become a majority, and this trend is also reflected in members' general attitudes toward partnership and family life.[136]

I found only one well-described case with a non-monogamous background: Aiyetoro in Nigeria.[137] This commune was formed in 1948 by a splinter group from an indigenous Yoruba-Christian church, and supported itself with fishing, ferry services, and small-scale manufacturing. Owing to its syncretistic Christian background, members were expected to live in strict monogamy, while the polygynous marriages of ordinary Yoruba society were reserved for the leadership. Moreover, men and women lived in separate quarters and were only allowed to visit each other, while children were taken from their parents when they reached school age to be raised by unrelated foster parents.[138] Twice in its history the commune went so far as to abolish marriage completely, and lovers could be chosen freely. These abolitions continued for periods of only one year, and three years, after which the group returned to strict monogamy.[139] When decline set in after 1966, married couples began to live together again, and children returned to their parents. However, polygynous marriages were most sought after now, not monogamy.[140]

CONCLUSION

My intent has not been to suggest that celibate or group-marriage communes do not work. They do, often for a long time: the Shaker village Sabbathday Lake

[134] Personal communication by a member. [135] *Leaves of Twin Oaks*, Winter 1995:15.
[136] Rain 1991:51–52, 56, 94–95, 143–44, 153, 156, 160; personal communication by a member.
[137] Barrett 1974; 1977. [138] Barrett 1974:24–25, 31–33, 65.
[139] Barrett 1974:23–24. [140] Barrett 1974:24–25, 31–33, 65.

continues today after more than two centuries of Shaker history,[141] and Oneida's "complex marriage" lasted for almost four decades, with more than 80 percent of the adults who joined in the beginning either dying in the commune or staying on until the end.[142] Both groups prospered and were admired by their contemporaries. When it comes to active long-term survival, however, communes built on monogamous marriage have proved more successful, and it is the three most impressive present-day communes—the Hutterite colonies, the kibbutzim, and the Bruderhof communities—that show the strongest sense of family and kinship. Moreover, the most promising alternative family policies are pursued by those contemporary groups that—owing to the influence of alternative culture—leave the question of partnership and family up to the members, and refrain from enforcing any unusual arrangements, but are still mainly monogamous. There is no shortage of short-lived monogamous communes; thousands of them have been founded only to fall apart within the course of a few years or even months, as did most celibate and group-marriage communes. Moreover, other factors also affect a commune's survival prospects, such as group size, charismatic leadership, branch structures (Brumann 2000) and the nature of the religious or secular beliefs held by members (Brumann 2001). But the greater success of monogamy over celibacy and group marriage, among those utopian communes that continue to a certain age, is a factor independent of these other variables, as is made evident by the most durable monogamous cases with their widely diverging ideologies.

Since systematic empirical research on the monogamous family and kinship in communes is rare, even for the best-researched cases,[143] and many of the sources I have quoted devote only scant attention to it, one can only speculate about the reasons for the patterns I have described. It seems that marriage and the family fulfill certain emotional and sexual needs efficiently, without necessarily provoking the conflicts predicted by the zero-sum hypothesis that postulates a finite amount of loyalty which family and commune must compete for. It rather appears that the two units feed on each other: the smaller, more intimate unit may allow members to find the occasional relief that may be necessary to remain a committed supporter of the larger unit, while the latter takes over burdens of economic responsibility from families, relieving them of an important source of stress found in conventional society. In any case, the examples of the longest-lived and most vital communes demonstrate that family and kinship need not be obstacles to communal longevity, and indeed can serve as building blocks for it. And even in those communes that make a concerted effort to do away with the "old fleshly kindred," familism and nepotism frequently crop up, nevertheless.

We must resist drawing conclusions too hastily, however, since almost all of

[141] Stein 1992:435–36. [142] Carden 1969:77.
[143] " . . . ethnographic study of kibbutz kinship is lacking . . . " (Bowes 1989:155).

our cases come from cultural backgrounds in which the monogamous family is the norm. Aiyetoro has shown that monogamy does not work with every cultural background, and Twin Oaks and Riverside have done well with their laissez-faire arrangements. Yet when one takes into account that Twin Oaks's and Riverside's members have a very specific class and educational background, even these three communes support the conclusion that the highly cooperative and innovative societal arrangements of a property-sharing commune benefit from being combined with those marriage, familial, and kinship patterns members are used to. Apparently, the lure of the conventions in which at least the founding members have been raised is very strong, and safeguarding the continuity of a communal institution while maintaining unusual marriage, familial, and kinship arrangements is a most difficult task. It seems that here, at least, Utopia is well served by being not too utopian.

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