COMMUNITY COPING WITH THREAT OF PHYSICAL REMOVAL: THE ISRAELI EXPERIENCE AFTER CAMP DAVID

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In 1979 a political decision was made to evacuate all settlements in the Yamit region of Sinai as part of the Camp David peace agreement. Members of five communities in the region (two kibbutzim and three moshavim) were interviewed for their reactions to the decision. Five basic responses were identified: 1. confusion and despair, 2. accusation, 3. denial of events or consequences, 4. demand for compensation, 5. a pragmatic search for alternatives. Two kibbutzim and one moshav decided to relocate, using formal community decision-making processes. The other two moshavim disintegrated and only some sub-groups, using informal decision-making processes, reassembled to create a new community. Other individual members either bought established farms or moved to the city. Although differences in age and social structure might account for the differences between kibbutzim and moshavim, successful coping with earlier intra-community conflicts accounted for the differences found between the moshavim. Amplification of the disaster by the mass-media and inconsistencies in government policy probably account for the failure to relocate the region en bloc.

The theoretical and practical implications of these results for communities and individuals coping with disasters and emergencies are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Camp David peace agreement in 1978, Israel guaranteed to dismantle within three years all the settlements which had been established during the previous eleven years in the Yamit region of northeastern Sinai. This evacuation was approved by the Israeli Knesset (parliament) in November 1978, a month and a half after Camp David. Without any prior official notification, the inhabitants of these communities, who had settled there with full moral and financial backing by the Government, were now requested to stay put until the actual evacuation date. They were offered either reparations or assistance for relocation after that date by the Government and the Jewish Agency.

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The decision to evacuate the region stirred contradictory emotional and political responses throughout the country. The yearning for peace was accompanied by uncertainty as to Egypt's future intentions, and subsequent apprehension at the fact that the border would now be closer to the center of the country. The issue of evacuating Jewish settlements in the Yamit region and other parts of Sinai, became a focus of nationwide attention. It was regarded as a symbolic "critical event" from opposite perspectives.

The settlers of the Yamit region were caught by surprise and were highly confused. Whereas their official representatives opposed the agreement, speaking of themselves as the "victims of the peace," the reactions of the general Yamit population were unclear.

One potentially analogous situation may be found in the literature on disasters and emergencies. Barton defines a disaster as a "...collective irreversible stress situation in which many members of the social system fail to receive expected conditions of life as safety, protection from attack, provision of food, shelter and income, and the guidance and information necessary to carry on normal activities" (1969:38). A common distinction is that drawn between natural and man-made disasters (Perry, 1983a). Disasters have also been differentiated according to the scope and duration of their impact, the speed of their onset, and the victims' degree of social preparedness (Barton, 1969; Quarantelli, 1978). One could define the present case as a man-made disaster, sudden in onset, long in duration, and with low social preparedness. However, this event had some unique characteristics which make its definition as a disaster questionable: the settlers could assume that most of their "conditions of life" would continue to be provided, property could be transferred, and kin and friendship networks maintained, to a large extent (Perry, 1983a:107). In some ways, a better reference would be the discussion of a disaster with predominantly psychological consequences, like the Three Mile Island accident of 1979: according to Perry the lack of public consensus, together with the fact that there was no precedent, imposed special psychological stress on the people involved (1983b:19). Moreover, different cognitive evaluations of the risk by potential victims may enhance or reduce adaptive behavior. In the present study, a sample of settlers was interviewed to find out if different patterns of evaluations could be found, and if they could be defined in terms of adjustment.

When adjustment to stressful life events is discussed, some researchers emphasize a sequential order of emotional and cognitive reactions. For example, Wolfenstein (1957) found that victims move from orientation towards the past to an orientation towards the future: one must "let-go" of grief and anxiety about the past before the new situation can be realized and managed. Other, more elaborate models maintain a similar sequential approach (Powell and Rayner, 1952; Golan, 1978; Kubler-Ross, 1969). These 'cycle' models have been criticized by Silver and Wortman (1980:332):

> "...Theoretical statements indicate that most people will respond to a crisis with a consensual pattern of response, and many theorists predict that these responses will fall into an orderly sequence of stages. In contrast, the empirical data reveal extreme variability of response and offer no clear evidence of stages. Similarly, while many theorists imply that people will recover from life crises and resume their lives, the available data suggest that the difficulty following a crisis may be experienced indefinitely."

The present study was administered at the beginning of the third and last year of the crisis, and the question was posed if at that stage most of the reactions found would reflect higher realization and better adjustment to the new situation. The interviews

were conducted at two different times, with an interval of six months between in order to find out if any changes could be observed, even within this later stage of the crisis.

What could be a valid behavioral criterion for "better management" in the present study? The salient issue was the future evacuation: how, where to, and with whom? In the literature, evacuation is usually defined as an independent variable according to its timing (pre- or post-impact), period (short term or long term), and whether it is carried out voluntarily or coercively (Perry, 1983a). However, it is assumed that the disastrous agent can be avoided by evacuation, and the question then is to what extent people comprehend this need to move out, or whether there is a need to compel them to move out when they do not comprehend it. In the Yamit case, evacuation was compulsory, insofar as by the end of the three years no Israeli settler would be allowed to stay in that region. On the other hand, settlers had a longer period of time to decide about their future course of life: they could choose to go on their own, and be compensated individually by the Government, or they could decide to relocate their own community, letting the Jewish Agency rebuild it without personal refunding. They could relocate through a decision of the democratic institutions of the community or they could do so individually or in subgroups, in the absence of or in spite of such a process. Therefore, in the present research the choice about relocation was defined as a dependent variable, measuring the potential persistence of the present "conditions of life" (Barton, 1969). When discussing the Buffalo Creek disaster, Erikson (1976) suggested that the combined personal and community destruction resulted in prolonged and wide-scale psychological distress. Others emphasize the importance of prolonged kinship networks (Perry, 1983b). We assumed the possibility of maintaining the present community framework in a new location would be less distressing than breaking up ties and relocating on an individual basis. Therefore the choices settlers made were rated according to the relative persistence of social network and occupation: could different reactions of settlers be identified, and could they account for the differences in settlers' choices about their future, and, if not, would we be able to suggest other variables, individual or social, that might account for these differences?

GENERAL BACKGROUND: HISTORY OF THE YAMIT REGION

In 1970, the Israeli Government (at that time a coalition headed by the Labor Party) decided to implement its concept of "secure borders" on its southern flank, the Egyptian border. This was done by establishing Israeli settlements in a narrow area wedged between the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. This 10-15 mile-wide salient, called Pithat Rafiah, lies between the Arab-populated towns of Rafiah in the northeast and El-Arish, on the southwest, outside Israel's pre-1967 borders. This act was intended to determine the contours of any future border delineation so that even if most of Sinai was returned, the State of Israel would still surround and control the Gaza Strip, with its large Palestinian population.

The Pithat Rafiah area is located along the Mediterranean coast and consists of low sand-dune hills. The area is semi-arid, its low rainfall concentrated in a few winter months. The Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency (the authority in charge of agricultural settlements) decided that the area would be suitable for cultivation of winter crops, a highly profitable agricultural branch. At its peak, the area contained 11 moshavim[1] and 2 kibbutzim[2], with 437 families in all, and the town of Yamit, with 551 families.

METHOD

Sampling of the Communities

Three moshavim and two kibbutzim were selected for the present research by the following criteria:

(a) Their availability for interviewing: the research was conducted during a tense period (January-July 1981), when the issue of Yamit was in public dispute and heavily covered by the mass media. Defensiveness and resistance to participation in the research were anticipated. Hence, an informal manner of approach was chosen; in the moshavim, settlers who were friends and former students of the researchers were asked to approach the formal institutions of their settlements and obtain their approval for the research and interviewing. This approach was successful. In the two kibbutzim, the formal institutions were approached directly, also on the basis of personal acquaintance of one of the researchers. The friends and students involved served as "internal research assistants" throughout the study, and the project could probably not have been conducted, under the circumstances, without these personal links.

(b) Representativeness of the communities: the only two kibbutzim in the region were both included in the sample. The eleven moshavim in the region, however, varied in many respects (type of farming, population selection and characteristics, religious and political affiliation). The only criterion we could employ was seniority. The three moshavim selected represented three degrees of seniority: Sarah[3] was the senior moshav in the region, Nurit represented the middle phase, and Uza represented the younger generation of moshavim, established after the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

Description of the Sampled Communities

The Moshavim — The first settlement, Sarah, was established in 1971, as a moshav. Eighteen families were selected by the Moshav Movement for the "first wave" of settlement. They consisted mainly of ex-kibbutz members with strong ideological motivation, namely attraction to the idea of settling a new region, and were characterized by agricultural and economic know-how. Moshav Sarah was planned and built along the "field-economy model" which means that each family received about 40 irrigated dunams of land, resulting in an extensive land/labor ratio. It involved intensive use of cheap Arab labor (which conflicted with the ideological convictions of the movement to which it was affiliated). The second and third waves (1977) augmented the first settlers to create a moshav of 68 families.

Moshav Nurit was established in 1973, a few months before the Yom Kippur War, about 3 kilometers south of Sarah. Twenty-seven families arrived in the first wave; about half were the second-generation members of moshavim established in the fifties by new immigrants, mainly of Yemenite origin. The second wave in 1974 (15 families) and the third wave in 1975 brought the total number of families to 56. Nurit, too, used the field-economy model.

Moshav Uza was established in 1975 on a very different economic-planning basis, i.e., self-employment of the family. Each family received a 2-dunam greenhouse, later extended for cultivation of export crops. Within three years, a 55-family community was built up.

The Kibbutzim – The two kibbutzim were originally founded as agricultural units in the army framework in the mid-seventies, and became civilian settlements within a couple of years.

Kibbutz Sigal became a civilian community in January, 1977; its young settlers had been members of the same youth movement and had served together in the army for two years. At the time that the interview took place (mid-1981), about 25% of the original group were still living there. This is not an unusual rate compared to other newly-established kibbutzim. The community consisted of 45 members and about 20 non-members or temporary residents, with an average age of 24. Only 18 of the members were of the pre-Camp David population. Most of the population was unmarried (there were only five married couples).

Sigal started with a greenhouse intensive-cultivation model but shifted to the open-field mode, when 2000 dunams of irrigated land were allocated to it (across the Green Line – i.e., pre-1967 border). This land was used mainly for highly mechanized field crops, which did not require hired labor.

The establishment of Kibbutz Chava followed a very similar pattern. It became a civilian settlement a year after Sigal (January, 1978). The membership was 34 (four married couples), and 24 of the members lived there before the Camp David Agreement. The economic structure of the settlement was similar to that of Sigal. The two kibbutzim were adopted by two nearby veteran "guardian" kibbutzim which helped them in economic and social knowhow. This is a common procedure within the kibbutz movement.

Sampling Within the Communities Instruments and Procedures

The "internal research assistants" were asked to select about ten families (in each moshav) or ten individuals (in the kibbutzim) according to the following criteria: (a) they should be representative of the different segments of the community. This could mean place of birth, in one community, or age (and length of residence) in another; (b) they should be representative of the different viewpoints in the controversy on the Camp David decisions; (c) they should be willing to be interviewed by our student interviewers. Twenty-eight moshav families (17% of the total population) and 19 kibbutz individuals (24% of the total population) were selected and approached by this procedure. Only one family, in Moshav Sarah, refused to be interviewed.

Interviewees varied in origin, age, centrality and seniority. In the community, they expressed different, sometimes contradictory, opinions about the main issues, and had different plans for the future, reflecting the local diversity on this issue. This variability of the sample suggests that the criteria were observed by our research assistants. No direct quantification of this representativeness was possible, however.

Our interviewers were 10 students from the undergraduate course in Community and Organizational Behavior at the Behavioral Sciences Department of Ben-Gurion University, Beer-Sheva. Their training for this delicate type of interviewing began with a planned meeting with representatives of the communities, at which the history and present situation of each community was surveyed. They then visited the communities in pairs. Each pair visited a single community 2-3 times during the winter and spring of 1981.

Demographic information was collected through the local authorities for the entire population of the five communities. This data was quantitatively evaluated to test factors that might account for the diversity of the dependent variable – the settlers' decision about resettlement. The interviews underwent qualitative content analysis by the authors. The information about settlers' choices for resettlement was gathered on two occasions by our research-assistants: in July 1981, and in March 1982, a few weeks before the actual evacuation. Each settler was asked: "Where are you going to live after April 1982? How did you decide (alone/with friends/by community decision)? Is your decision definite? "

Quantitative data – (a) Dependent variable: the decision about resettlement. The decision about resettlement was rated by the authors and "internal research assistants" according to its function in prolonging the present organizational and individual "conditions of life": (i) The least change would be to relocate the inhabitants of the region en masse, maintaining the community structure, as was proposed by the Jewish Agency early in the crisis; (ii) Re-establishment of each separate community in a new location, by a democratic decision of the community; (iii) Establishment of a new community by some subgroups from the existing disintegrating communities where democratic decision of the community either was not available or was suppressed; (iv) Individuals or families could decide to go on their own, maintaining their occupation by moving to an established agricultural community; (v) Same as in (iv) but moving to a town, meaning complete dissociation from communal life and from agricultural occupation. Ninety-five percent of the settlers' choices were covered by these five categories of decision.

As the decision unit differed from moshavim (primarily family) to kibbutzim (primarily individuals), the data about the dependent variable were quantified according to decision unit.

(b) Independent variables: Demographic characteristics

i) Settlers' ages and number of children (in the case of families).
ii) Parents' birth place: European-American/Afro-Asian/Israeli.
iii) Former place of residence (before coming to the Yamit region): town/kibbutz/moshav.

(c) Measures of socioeconomic status – Two members of each settlement studied – our "internal research assistant" and another active member – were asked to rate each member on three scales: (i) economic status before settling in the community; (ii) economic success in the community (moshavim only); (iii) social influence in the community. The scale ranged from 1 – "very high," to 4 – "very low." The raters concurred on 85% of the ratings.

Qualitative Data: Interviews – The interviews were semi-structured and included questions about the interviewees' pre-Yamit life and the ways in which the community had reacted to earlier stressful experiences. The 47 interviews were conducted in two phases: (1) 26 in January-February 1981, (2) 21 in June-July 1981. The main topic of the interviews was the attitude toward the Camp David Agreement and its consequences. Details were important, including the interviewees' recollections of their early reactions, their and others' present attitudes and expectations. Some questions were concerned with the perception of inter-community as well as intra-community differences.

Interviewers were asked to record the answers to these questions in the settlers' own words, especially their metaphors or idioms. Tape recording was excluded because of settlers' sensitivity to "being interviewed for the press." The responses were coded in the following way:

(a) Reactions to the crisis. These were coded by two raters unfamiliar with disaster research categorization, leaving room for the possibility that new categories might emerge due to the specific setting. Raters agreed on the categorization of about 80% of the items defined as reactions to the Camp David issue. The numbers in parentheses give the total number of the interviews in which the specific category was identified.

(i) Confusion and despair. (11)

Examples:

"At the beginning I could not go down to the fields. I sat at home and stared at the television set... I could not sleep at night..."

"I had a beautiful garden... When this happened I stopped watering it and all the flowers died..."

"... People stopped caring about their lives... we had lots of accidents and divorces..."

"... Then my daughter asked me: 'Daddy, are we still in Israel? '"

(ii). Denial of events and consequences. (12) There were different degrees of denial ranging from total denial of event and consequences to a denial of certain aspects of it, usually accompanied by some very narrow and concrete views about daily activities. The *house* and *garden* were common symbols in this category as signs of an ongoing reality.

Examples: "... I am staying, and you will see who is right in the end..." "...On the New Year of Trees (Tu Bishvat) we planted a new forest in this place..." "...We both work hard on our farm... that helps us not to think about the rest." "It is like a nightmare; one day we will wake up and it will be over..."

(iii) Accusation of external forces. (24) Reactions of betrayal, anger and mistrust towards the Government, the Jewish Agency, the kibbutz or moshav movements, sometimes the nation as a whole, characterized this pattern. A common symbol was the day of evacuation. Many emotions that could not find a legitimate outlet were focused on this imagined future day, when everything would be over. Some mentioned dreams of transports and resistance, recalling images of pogroms or the Holocaust. The word *if* was very common in the vocabulary of these interviews. So was the word *They* and the crystallization of extremes – *Good* and *Bad* or *Us* and *Them.*

Examples: "...We are the victims of a peace we do not believe in... Where are the Cabinet Ministers who proposed that we should come here in the first place? " "They (the movement) really could do something for us, but they live far away from here." "...I was a quiet citizen till this thing started, but now I want to show everyone what *they* are doing to us..."

(iv) Demand for compensation. (11) By the time our interviews took place, there was already a lot of talk about compensation, mainly financial reparations. Some was realistic, as the Government did indeed start to negotiate with the settlers on this topic, but people talked about compensation as if it were another emotional response to stress. In comparison to the earlier responses there was more orientation towards the future in this pattern.

Examples: "...We deserve (money) ... those who put us here have to help us get everything we invested in this sand out of here." "...This money will bring to light all kinds of hidden things." "People have started to run around with a lot of money... lost some in the stockmarket, and wasted some by going abroad... Once we were quiet farmers..."

(v) Pragmatic search for alternatives. (20) These attitudes dealt basically with the future: where to go and with whom? Some expressed feelings of solidarity. They would move together with others and this diminished uncertainty for them.

Examples: "...I wish this period was over already. I like to work my land and it does not matter to me where." "...Those who have decided where to go, already feel some relief..." "...We had alternatives, but we decided to stick together: these are our friends." "...To leave is difficult. To start again will be a joy..." "...I regret that the idea of resettlement in the Shalom region did not materialize. It was the best solution..."

In most of the interviews more than one category was identified. The categories recognized in this study are similar to earlier classifications of reactions to disaster and loss (Golan, 1978; Kubler-Ross, 1969): despair, anger, denial, realization. Only one category (demand for compensation) was unique for this sample. The first two categories (confusion, denial) dealt basically with the past, whereas the other two categories (demand for compensation, search for alternatives) were more future-oriented (Wolfenstein, 1957). Only one category (denial) was defined as "no-realization," and only one was clearly "positive" on this dimension (search for alternatives).

(b) Information about the community's past experience, perceived differences between the communities, and settlers' perceptions about external intervention. These were very difficult to summarize as these topics were not presented by the interviewer and information varied both in extent and content from one interview to another. Hence only qualitative methods were used to sum up these data; any opinion referring to these subjects was coded, no matter how many people expressed it. On some topics there was a wide consensus (the effect of external intervention), while on others there was no possibility of consensus as some people were not concerned with the question at all. As interviewers themselves held various attitudes about the disputed issues, a special effort was made to avoid imposing answers on the interviewees. At a later stage of the interviews (after May 1981), special attention was focused on the Jewish Agency proposal to transfer the entire population of the region to a new location. The reasons settlers gave for rejecting this proposal were further validated by interviewing the representatives of the Jewish Agency. As most (97%) of the settlers rejected this proposal or were not concerned with it, there was no point in continuing this line of inquiry.

RESULTS

Forty-seven interviews were carried out in two phases and analyzed into five categories and the results can be found in Table 1. A high variability of reactions was found even in the last year of the crisis, suggesting that during the earlier two years little

Table 1. Settlers Reactions to the Camp David Agreement.

Content analysis of interviews												
	Moshavim						Kibbutzim					
	Sarah		Nurit		Uza		Sigal		Chava		Total	
Phase(i)	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
No. of interviews	6	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	26	21
Categories(ii)												
1. Confusion	2	1	1	0	3	2	1	0	1	0	8	3
2. Denial	2	1	3	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	8	4
3. Accusation	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	14	10
4. Demand for Compensation	1	2	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	2	3	8
5. Search for alternatives	1	2	1	2	0	1	3	4	3	3	8	12
Total	9	8	8	8	8	8	8	6	8	7	41	37

(i) – I = phase one: Jan. – Feb. 1981
II = phase two: June–July 1981

(ii) – for full account of categorization, see paper.

realization or adjustment had developed. However, relatively more reactions of "confusion" and "denial" were found in the earlier interviews, and more of the "demand for compensation" and "search for alternatives" responses were recorded at the later interviews, suggesting some move from orientation towards the past to orientation towards the future and better realization within this last year. The accusation category, though dominant in most interviews, did not change with time. Some differences were found between kibbutzim and moshavim, and within the three moshavim. In both early and late interviews in kibbutzim, the "search for alternatives" was predominant. While it was hardly traced in early interviews in moshavim, this trend changed slightly in the later interviews. In the moshavim when compared to the kibbutzim, demand for compensation was more often the main issue. In Moshav Uza, more confusion was recorded and in Moshav Nurit more reactions of denial were recorded. No sex differences were found and age differences overlapped the differences between kibbutzim and moshavim. We could not tell from these results whether the proportions of different reactions in the different settlements were due to the different ways people interpreted their realities, or to differences in the realities themselves.

Quantitative Analysis of Decisions on Resettlement

As it became clear that the regional relocation en bloc would not materialize, data were gathered in July 1981 and March 1982 from the entire population of the five communities to test the other possibilities of relocation. Table 2 summarizes the data of this dependent variable, presenting the frequencies of the March 1982 choices and the changes (in parentheses) when compared to July 1981.

Table 2. Final Decision about Resettlement: March 1982.
(Percentages in parentheses show changes in decision compared to July).

Original community	Moshavim			Kibbutzim	
Destination	Sarah	Nurit	Uza	Sigal	Chava
	Community Decision				
b. Relocating original community	2%(i) (−6%)	60% (−4%)	7% (0)	100%	82% (−5%)
c. New settlement based on groups from disintegrating communities	39% (+3%)	11% (0)	43% (−18%)(ii)		
	Individual Decision				
d. Established farms	28% (+12%)	22% (+3%)	31% (+19%)		
e. Town	25% (+10%)	5% (+3%)	17% (+15%)		18% (+5%)
Other	6% (−19%)	2% (−2%)	2% (−16%)		
N	57	54	42	45	34
No. of decision units	(families) N = 163			(individuals) N = 79	

(i) A change of 8% is significant ($x2 > 5.81$ df = 16, p = .001).

(ii) Including those undecided in the July survey.

Although both kibbutzim decided to relocate, only one moshav, Nurit, made this choice. Some 60% of Nurit's members joined together to build a new moshav north of the Gaza strip. In these settlements, people who joined in waived the right to personal reparation, and let the Jewish Agency build a new moshav for them. The two other moshavim essentially disintegrated; members from both joined in to build a new settlement about 20 km east of their original location. They accepted personal reparations and invested them to build their new settlement privately. In these two communities

there was a shift between the first survey and the second, due to the large proportion of undecided members in the July survey, and to changes of plans: members of both Sarah and Uza tended to prefer private solutions. When we cross-tabulated the interviewed samples' choices for future resettlement with their reactions to Camp David as categorized in Table 1, it was found that 80% of the interviewees who were coded into search for alternatives (5), decided to relocate their community (b) and so did 59% of those with denial (2) reactions. However, we do not know whether these results reflect the relation between reactions and choices or rather reflect intervening variables of community affiliations: all these reactions came from the three communities which decided to relocate. The small sample did not enable us to make any further conclusions.

Table 3. Demographic measures of three moshavim and two kibbutzim in the Yamit Region.

Community	Moshavim			Kibbutzim	
	Sarah	Nurit	Uza	Sigal	Chava
Age (average of adult	37	36	34	23	22
Standard deviation	2.6	2.5	1.6	1.2	1.1
Measures:					
Age (average of adult settlers (years))	37	36	34	23	22
Standard deviation	2.6	2.5	1.6	1.2	1.1
Original Location:					
Moshav	6%	36%	14%	–	–
Kibbutz	42%	32%	35%	5%	7%
City	52%	32%	51%	95%	93%
Ethnic Origin (parents):					
Western	50%	30%	64%	60%	64%
Oriental	25%	39%	10%	15%	29%
Israeli and mixed	25%	31%	26%	25%	7%
N	134	108	84	45	34

Table 3 presents the distribution of the demographic independent variables. A clear difference was found between the ages of settlers in the moshavim (average 33) and those in the kibbutzim (early twenties). This difference probably had an impact on the choice of new locations. Moshav families had an average of three children, and had made a cardinal decision in moving into the Yamit area just a few years earlier. They were therefore inclined to decide on less risky alternatives, whereas the young kibbutz members were mostly still unmarried, so that a move was relatively easier. The kibbutz members were mostly of urban background, whereas the origin of the moshavim settlers was more heterogeneous. Nurit had a slightly different composition of members: 36% were second-generation moshav members from the Lachish region settlements, established in the mid-fifties by new immigrants from Yemen.

Apart from age, which overlapped with differences between moshav and kibbutz, other independent variables, including success in the moshav and centrality in social activity, did not correlate significantly with the dependent variable, and hence could not satisfactorily explain the diversity of decisions about resettlement. The results did not change in any systematic way when we analyzed them by decision units. We therefore returned to our qualitative analysis of the interviews, so as to seek some other possible explanations.

Structural Differences.

The structural differences may help explain the different coping sources available to a moshav and to a kibbutz. In the kibbutz, communal collaboration cuts across all subsystems. A member is part of the community, shares responsibility and accepts communal arrangements vis a vis production, as well as other areas of life. A kibbutz member is either "in" or "out" with respect to the acceptance of community decisions. There are very few degrees of freedom open to the individual to maintain his own decision-making space in the continuum between "in" and "out." Therefore, the decision about the future course is first of all a communal one.

In the moshav, the base for decision-making is the production unit – the family. The family formulates its own considerations, and community decision-making is secondary to that, though both types make policy decisions at the general assembly.

The outcome of these structural differences was that the two kibbutzim, very early in the process, took a formal decision to relocate in the Pithat Shalom area inside the "Green Line." The individual could decide subsequently if he was "in" or "out." This decision had interesting implications since the Government decided to pay reparations to each kibbutz member individually, disregarding the communal structure. But according to the kibbutz ethos, or due to social pressure, most members gave up personal reparations and handed the money over to the community.

Only one of the moshavim (Nurit), took a democratic formal community decision about its future course as a community. The decision to find a new location was taken by the general assembly of the moshav in the first year after Camp David, and the moshav's formal institutions were put in charge of implementing this decision. The coping pattern of the other two moshavim was the sum result of the informal decisions of family units. We were now concerned with accounting for this difference between the moshavim.

Past Community Experience

In the interviews, we tried to find out which were the major events and problems each community had to face in the past and how the community handled these critical events, or how they affected family life. Special attention was paid to the question of differences between the moshavim.

A major problem facing Nurit in its initial stage was the integration of the two main groups: the Yemenites from the Lachish region and the Ashkenazis (of Western origin), mainly from towns and kibbutzim. Though at the beginning this polarization caused many difficulties and tensions, the community as a whole became aware of the problem and tried to cope with it by initiating cultural activities, planning "mixed neighborhoods" and adopting an integrative policy in absorbing newcomers. The outbreak of the Yom Kippur War shortly after the first group had settled, and subsequent mobilization

of many of the men produced intensive mutual-help patterns, in which the community took pride. It created the basis for a cohesive community. As one member said of the relocation decision: "After all we went through together earlier, I will now do whatever everybody else does," describing a sense of pride and identification rather than of submission.

At the other extreme of the history of community experience is Uza. This moshav was established in haste after the Yom Kippur War (because of political considerations at that time), without careful selection of candidates; there was no solid community base. The history of Uza contains several unresolved conflicts. There was some evidence of a sense of helplessness with respect to coping with community conflicts, and no history of achievement or successful overcoming of major difficulties. In addition, the community was not successful economically, and saw itself as the weakest of the group of moshavim surveyed. The "history factor" could explain the failure of the attempts (and a few had been made in the last 2-3 years) to make a democratic community decision in Uza about its future course. These more private and informal subgroupings were actually the only available possibilities for Uza's members.

Moshav Sarah, the veteran moshav in this area, had a history of individual economic success; community energies were directly outward towards the establishment of regional institutions and services to which the members were strongly committed. However, the leadership of Sarah was not apparently strongly committed to the idea of community. The members were basically individualistic entrepreneurs. A committee was nominated by the general assembly at an early stage to search for an alternative site for the moshav, but, after a few tries, it changed its objectives and became a 'personal reparations committee' without any formal decision or debate by the official community institutions. This was perceived by interviewers as somehow typical of Sarah's community decision-making processes. As one member expressed it: "Here the members are all generals without soldiers."

External Intervention

The external intervention in the Yamit case was both formal and informal: among examples of formal intervention were five government committees which were nominated, one after the other, to negotiate with settlers about reparation procedures. The Jewish Agency Settlement Department was mainly active in planning and building new settlements, preparing the new Pithat Shalom region. So were the kibbutz and moshav national organizations and the 'guardian' settlements. Informal intervention consisted of activity by a variety of extreme political groups and parties who tried to use the Yamit case for their own interests.

Most of these examples of external intervention could hardly be defined as successful crisis intervention (Golan, 1978). However, within the limits of our study, this could not account for the diversity between communities in decisions about resettlement, as the "ineffectiveness" of the interveners was perceived equally and extensively by all interviewees.

Reactions to disaster involved much blaming, anger, and hostile reactions towards external factors such as the Government, the Jewish Agency Settlement Department, the Moshav Movement, the kibbutz movements, the media, and public opinion. Government action was perceived as alienating rather than cooperating, and lacking consistency. It promised financial reparation which, later it claimed it could not deliver, thus raising

unrealistic expectations. It remains an open question, however, if a more coherent, consistent and participative policy might have enhanced a sense of community or even stimulated a common regional decision-making process.

The sole external factor which had some differential and positive effect was the existence of a guardian settlement; in the case of kibbutzim, Kibbutz Sigal's 'guardian' was perceived by its members as especially helpful during the critical period.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study had two goals: (a) to provide qualitative data concerning the way people involved in the critical event perceived it and responded to it, and concerning the factors that may have shaped these perceptions and responses; (b) to analyze settlers' choices on future resettlement, with emphasis on the role of those individual and social factors that could account for the variability of these choice patterns. The analysis of community structural factors seemed especially valid since it became clear that certain communities had disintegrated while others had succeeded in maintaining their integrity, reestablishing in a new location.

Selective interviews were conducted with settlers from five communities to clarify perceptions and responses to the hazardous event. Was the Camp David Agreement perceived as a "disaster," and to what extent did this feeling change during the three years from the announcement until actual evacuation? Five patterns of reactions were identified in a qualitative content analysis. These reactions do not differ basically from reactions to a sudden flood or earthquake. As we are dealing with a man-made event, more blame was attributed to external human factors (the "weakness" of the official Israeli stand in the negotiations with Egypt).

The five response patterns identified in the present case study yielded only partial support for the "cycle idea": relatively more confusion and denial responses were found at earlier interviews. Thus a general trend of responses moving from orientation towards the past to an orientation towards the future (Wolfstein, 1957) was found within this limited scope of time (January-July 1981). However, our data were gathered in the last year before evacuation and we do not know what happened within the first two years. The analysis of settlers' reports of their earlier responses does not support the idea of an orderly sequence of stages moving towards realization and adjustments. While some settlers denied the decision about the evacuation all along, others reported that they had responded at an early stage with a pragmatic search for alternatives. More significantly, some responses were more characteristic of one community than another, suggesting a collection rather than individual pattern of reactions.

In what way were the different reactions in the interview "adaptive," in the sense that they helped the settler cope better with the consequences of the crisis? No specific relationships were found between the five verbal patterns of individual reactions identified in the interviews and the dependent variable of settlers' choices about their future resettlement. Aside from the limitations of sample size, this might be due to the fact that people actually did not see themselves in a disastrous situation, or that it is difficult to infer victims' choices about their future from their verbal reactions to the critical event. In the specific case of the Yamit region, it was even difficult to predict which was the more adaptive response; denial of the possibility of evacuation, or the initiation of a pragmatic search for alternatives. The high level of uncertainty throughout the three critical years, from agreement to evacuation, accompanied by an acute political struggle,

created an "illusion of reversibility," which is not found in other, irreversible, disasters: some settlers' "denial" was based on belief that future political developments might change their fate. Therefore both these responses could be classified as "adaptation to reality" till the very end. However, it is our impression that whereas, in the earlier stage, all five patterns were "adaptive" to some extent, i.e. helped the settlers to cope with the unpredictable, in later stages those who had become behaviorally committed to the "denial" pattern had to handle a more complicated situation. Whether those who initiated a more pragmatic search for alternatives very early on will also cope better with the crisis in the long run, or whether their emotional reaction to the crisis was merely delayed to a much later period, remains an open question. It is our impression that a more distinct theoretical concept is needed to differentiate between a variety of individual and collective reactions to critical life events which might be all "adaptive" in terms of cognitive control (Taylor, 1983) and secondary reactions, reflecting individual attributional styles that may predict future behavioral deficiencies (Bar-On, 1981).

If one takes into consideration as well the fact that other external factors (politicians, mass media) were actively trying to exploit the situation for their own interests, together with the indecisiveness of Government policy which also exacerbated stress, one can understand why rational problem-solving was hampered rather than facilitated. This might account for the refusal of the settlers to discuss the Jewish Agency's proposal for unitary regional settlement, which could have diminished considerably the "disastrous" aspect of the evacuation. It is clear that the failure of the scheme put more pressures on the single communities and on individuals or families within them. Therefore, our research focused on the diversity of their decision-making processes and their outcomes. Three communities (two kibbutzim and one moshav) decided officially to relocate, and most of their members joined into this process. The other two moshavim disintegrated; some of their members joined in to build a new moshav and the others moved privately either to established farms or into town. Age, family size, and structural differences were identified as possible explanations for the diversity found between the two kibbutzim and the three moshavim. It seems that even if the age variable had been controlled, these differences would be maintained due to the higher degree of mutual responsibility prevailing in the kibbutz structure, which made the move to a new site an easier process.

The differences among the three moshavim were more complicated to account for: seniority, which could be assumed to promote community cohesiveness, was not found to be a better predictor of common decisions about the future: Sarah, the senior moshav of the Yamit region, was the first to disintegrate as a community. Time, as such, was not a critical factor, but rather what people did with it. The only possible explanation traced in this research for the different patterns found among the moshavim was their community's past experience in dealing with internal conflicts. Neither the statistical analysis of independent demographic variables, nor qualitative analysis of the interviews, suggested any alternative explanation. It would be interesting to examine in the future whether this factor – past community experience in dealing with conflict – will affect the coping pattern of those settlements which have relocated.

The case of Yamit is in many ways a "borderline case" in the literature of disasters. Its similarity to previous disasters lies more in the impossibility of prolonging daily activities in their present location (Barton, 1969), in the psychological stress of public dispute, and in the absence of precedence (Perry, 1983b). However, it poses some interesting questions on both theory and study of future disasters:

(1) Can choices of victims about their future compensate psychologically for the loss of choice due to inescapable discontinuation of present "conditions of life" (Barton, 1969)? Is it possible that, under some conditions similar to the ones in the Yamit case, victims are better off if someone decides with them or for them where to go? Is this the shield of 'community network' under which "*not* to decide, individually, becomes a privilege," as one member of Nurit mentions in the interview?

(2) To what extent are our definitions of successful coping value judgements? For example, in the case of Yamit we defined "success" as the least discontinuation of present community network and occupation. Some settlers might, however, claim that this criterion of success changed with time into "how much money could they make out of the evacuation? " This is usually seen as a "secondary gain," negatively judged in terms of psychological coping strategy (Perry, 1983a). Perhaps we have to find out under what conditions reparation money or other means actually compensate for present "conditions of life" like community networks or occupational consistency, as some researchers invariably assumed (Erikson, 1976).

(3) Is the community network always helpful in coping with sudden disaster? For example, we do not know what happened in the community of Buffalo Creek in previous critical events, and how the management of these events became important under the sudden disaster. It may be that other community networks would provide better future social support when faced with such extreme conditions. Little is known up to now about what the critical variables in community networks are that bind one community together and cause another to disintegrate under the same external disasters. This study suggests that one possible variable is the common management of earlier unexpected or critical events in addition to other explanations (Leviatan, 1975; Weingrod, 1970).

In summary, the Yamit case is an example of social and community disaster, difficult to investigate by the usual social science methodologies. In many natural disasters, we find a confrontation between integrative forces, usually human, and environmental disintegrating forces. In the Yamit case, both forces were essentially human. As it was an unfolding rather than a one-time event, it created, for some of the people involved, an "illusion of reversibility." Though we do not yet know if such an "illusion" is more stressful for the people involved than clear awareness of the irreversibility of an event, it is our impression that it was as a result of this illusion that the settlers failed to mobilize all their resources to cope with the event. It is suggested that under such psychological stress only individuals and social entities with very strong internal structures, forged by previous positive experience with crisis, could leap the hurdle successfully, taking into the future both their integrity and their sense of community.

FOOTNOTES

1 Moshav – a community with family-based agricultural production, where private owners cooperate in purchasing, marketing, using equipment, etc., and the community and its elected committees play a major role in decision-making (Weingrod, 1970).

2 Kibbutz – a collective agricultural settlement, cooperatively owned and managed and organized on a communal basis (Leviatan, 1975). In both types, long-range policy is decided by the general assembly.

3 Fictitious names are used for both moshavim and kibbutzim.

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