

Seemingly Charismatic Leaders: Amoral Power Retention by Previously High-Moral Transformational Leaders

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A Short biographical sketch

Dr. Reuven Shapira is a retired senior lecturer of anthropology and sociology at the Western Galilee Academic College in Acre, Israel. He held various executive positions in Kibbutz Gan Shmuel and its industrial plant, acquired managerial, sociological, anthropological, and psychological education, received his PhD from Tel Aviv University in 1984, and has lectured at academic colleges and universities. He authored four books, booklets for managers, and many scholarly articles in both Hebrew and English in both journals and collections. His last book just published by Routledge is 'Mismanagement, "Jumpers," and Morality'.

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Cover Letter

I hereby declare that the submitted article is original of my own creation, has not been published as yet elsewhere, nor is under review in any other publication outlet. I am solely responsible for any mistakes and errors included in it.

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Abstract

The mix ‘charismatic-transformational leadership’ is further criticized by analyzing cases of transformational leaders who with success, organizations’ growth and tenure became dysfunctional, in accord with the ‘Iron Law’ and leadership life cycle theory, practiced amoral self-perpetuating conformism while adopting radical ideology and the posture of charismatic leaders. Students accepted this posture, missing how mid-levelers’ overcame leaders’ dysfunction and how the radical ideology camouflaged elevation of conformist loyalists, suppression of innovators and leaders’ immoral self-perpetuation by charismatic images. Transformational leadership, as the concept originated in the 1970s, is high-moral, while charismatic leadership is morally neutral (Antonakis et al., 2016); the continued mixing the two causes vagueness and assists such camouflages. The findings emphasize the cultural and time dimensions of leadership and the decisiveness of students’ close contact with reality. The leaders’ decades-long deceptive posture calls for new democratic succession norms that would replace such leaders before this becomes impossible.

Keywords: High-moral transformational leadership; seemingly charismatic leadership; oligarchy theory; leadership life cycle theory; high-trust culture; immoral leaders.

Introduction

Neither culture nor leadership, when one examines each closely, can really be understood by itself
(Schein, 1992: 12)

Leadership is an elusive phenomenon and despite much research its constructs remain deeply contested as ‘...leadership is a delicate combination of the *process*, the *techniques* of leadership, the *person*, the specific *talents and traits* of a/the leader, and the general requirement of the *job* itself’ (Gini, 1997: 329; italics original). In fact, this combination is even more delicate and complex due to more factors such as leader-followers processes (Haslam et al., 2010), leaders’ expertises (Collins and Evans, 2007), their relationships with experts (Shapira, 2015) and contextual and cultural impacts (Heifetz, 1995; Schein, 1992). Moreover, the combinations change along leaders’ office terms but the research has barely alluded to the time dimension (Shamir, 2011). Biblical prophets already criticized leaders of corrupting by successes and empowerment, as pointed out by Lord Acton, while Michels’ (1959[1915]) ‘Iron Law of Oligarchy’ analyzed successful radical leaders who became conservative self-perpetuators. Likewise studies of Leadership Life Cycle Theory (LLCT for short; Hambrick and Fukutomi, 1991): sooner or later tenured leaders reach a dysfunction phase (e.g., Boling et al., 2015; Grünh et al., 2017; Henderson et al., 2006; Ocasio, 1994; Wulf et al., 2011; Zwingmann et al., 2016).

Dysfunctional leaders lack achievements to legitimize status, authority and power; they often defend these by immoral means as do other types of ineffective leaders such as incompetents, psychopaths and destructive ones (e.g., Boddy et al., 2010; Fraher, 2014; Padilla et al., 2007). Leaders’ morality and ethics became a major research topic after Enron, Worldcom and other such scandals (Ciulla, 2004; Johnson, 2009; Khalid et al., 2012; Rhode, 2006; Villette and Vuillermot, 2009), though already Riesman (1950) decried American managers’ transition from high-moral serving the social good to

pursuing private ends at others' expense (e.g., Brown and Trevino, 2006; Jackall, 1988; Shapira, 2017). However, Van Knippenberg and Sitkin's (2013) critique of the concept 'charismatic-transformational leadership' missed that this mixes morally neutral charisma (Antonakis et al., 2016) with high-moral transformational leadership, as the concept was originated by Downton (1973) and Burns (1978), and used by Graham (1991), Barbuto (1997), Beyer (1999), Yukl (1999), Shapira (2001), Sendjaya (2005) and Christie and colleagues (2011), but not by many idealizing students of such alleged transformational leaders who were 'protected from close contact with reality' (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2014: 11) and missed the distrusted immoral practices of many of their research subjects, camouflaged/concealed as dark secrets (Tourish, 2013). Yukl (1999: 301) discerned true transformational leaders thus:

'A transformational leader... empower followers and makes them partners in the quest to achieve important objectives. A charismatic leader... emphasizes the need for radical change that can only be accomplished if followers put their trust in the leader's unique expertise'.

Empowering followers means trusting them and their faculties to advance common aims according to the trusted leader's high-moral vision (O'Toole, 1999), while charismatic leaders seek unilateral trust. Often coming as saviours (Khurana, 2002), such leaders distrust locals who fail to cope with their problems, calling them to trust the leader's 'magical gift' and follow her/his unconventional solution (Tucker, 1968). Bass (1998: 173) pointed out that 'Trust is the single most important variable moderating the effects of transformational leadership', but many users of this concept ignored its originators' emphasis on trusting followers, making them partners and elevating their morality by shaping high-trust innovation-prone cultures (Bennis, 1989;

Dore, 1973; Fairholm, 1994; Ouchi, 1981; Shapira, 2012). Such leaders are vulnerably involved in employee problem-solving, exposing their own ignorance of know-how and *phronesis* (Greek for practical wisdom; Flyvbjerg, 2006) which employees acquired in practitioner communities (Orr, 1996), trust employees that this exposure will lead to learning, problem-solving and innovating by everyone contributing intangible resources, not to abuse of leaders' vulnerability (Fox, 1974; Shapira, 2013, 2017; Zand, 1972), facilitating leaders' transformation efforts (Bennis, 1989; Guest, 1962; Thomas et al., 2008). Likewise, 'true leaders' and 'socialized leaders' are mutually trusted, versus false leaders and personalized leaders distrusted due to selfishness and evasion of employees' interests contrary to talk of advancing common aims (Haslam et al., 2010; Poulin et al., 2007). With employees' information true leaders discern competent trustworthy and committed employees whom they promote while suppressing, demoting and firing bluffers, fools, impostors, ingratiators and the like. Those elevated cope effectively with routine problems, letting the leader deal with non-routine ones (Shapira, 2017).

The 'charismatic-transformational leadership' mix bred charismatic leadership literature which missed Weber and Etzioni's insight that charisma is about wisdom, and that its explanation requires attention to the tensions involved in its emergence (DiTomaso, 1993). Tension causes dependency of leaders' wisdom on subordinates' intangible resources, as

'...all the important decisions (original emphasis), draw on information possessed by more than one man. ...on the specialized scientific and technical knowledge, the accumulated information or experience and the artistic or intuitive sense of many persons. And this is guided by further

information which is assembled, analyzed and interpreted by professionals... The final decision will be informed only as it draws systematically on all those whose information is relevant' (Galbraith, 1971: 69-70).

Earlier, Simon (1957: 227) pointed to managers' dependency on subordinates providing them with premises of decisions, and others emphasized employees' exclusive tacit know-how and *phronesis* acquired in communities of practitioners (Orr, 1996; Townley, 2002). But charismatic leaders often prefer 'adoration, idolization and unquestioning obedience' (Howell and Shamir, 2005: 107) rather than followers' partnership in problem-solving, and avoid exposing their ignorance of employees' tacit know-how and *phronesis* to defend belief in their unique expertise (Shapira, 2015); they build an image of expertise superiority and charisma by avoiding openness and by distancing themselves from followers (e.g., Zúquete, 2011: 299).

It is no accident that until the present social scientists failed to define and measure charisma (Antonakis et al., 2016); many smart shrewd leaders adopted charisma images, led people to false visions, wrongs, failures and disasters (e.g., Boddy et al., 2010; Fraher, 2010; Padilla et al., 2007; Shapira, 2016a;). Howell and Shamir (2005: 107) proposed that 'the more the [charismatic] leader felt empowered, the more he or she will engage in charismatic behaviours, such as displaying self-confidence and presenting a challenging vision', but challenging visions may also empower leaders who reach a dysfunction phase. Such leaders may adopt the challenging vision, narratives and idols of the radical ideology of a distant secret polity for empowerment through legitimizing democracy-curtailling rules, much as authoritarian rulers who democratically advanced to top jobs, like Turkish President Erdogan who was cited as saying: 'Democracy is a

train, when you reach your destination you get off” (e.g., Jay, 1969). Can extreme ideology and charisma attributed to such leaders camouflage their dysfunctional conservatism for decades, dominating large radical communal movements despite violating the very democratic and egalitarian principles which they preach? How can one explain success, growth and movements’ ramification when prime leaders are dysfunctional for so long? Can high-moral transformational leadership by mid-leveellers explain these by enhancing leaders’ charismatic image? How could these leaders retain charismatic image after the idolized exemplar of their extreme ideology proved a bluff, deceiving both followers and scholars even after death? What role did societal support for their movements played in their power prolongation?

Analysis of the leadership of the two largest Israeli kibbutz movement federations, each with more than 80,000 members and supporters at their height, will try to answer these questions.

The Israeli Kibbutz Field Uniqueness and Its Leadership Research

The kibbutz was the world’s largest and most successful communal movement; in 1985, just before its major crisis which cancelled much of communality, the kibbutz field (e.g., Lewin, 1951) encompassed 269 kibbutzim (plural of kibbutz) with some 129,000 inhabitants, and some 250-300 inter-kibbutz organizations (hereafter: I-KOs) with some 20-22,000 hired employees (Near, 2008; Niv and Bar-On, 1992; Shapira, 2008; I-KO numbers are inexact due to a lack of research; see below). 4000-4500 kibbutz members called *pe’ilim* (activists; singular: *pa’il*) administered I-KOs; they were subject to a *rotatzia* (rotation) norm which formally limited tenures to 3-5 years but in reality was

violated by powerful I-KO heads who continued dozens of years while their loyalists continued by ‘jumping’ from one managerial job to another (Shapira, 1995, 2005, 2017). Prime leaders headed the three federations which were the largest I-KOs, called ‘The Movements’, with some 2,400 *pe’ilim* (Near, 1997). Hundreds of scholars studied kibbutzim for 77 years; their literature consists of 6,000-7,000 publications but mostly this literature has used a mistaken paradigm which missed kibbutz uniqueness: Contrary to other successful communal societies which insulated themselves from their surroundings (e.g., Pitzer, 1997), the kibbutzim were highly involved in their surroundings through I-KOs (Near, 1997, 2008). But I-KOs were conformist autocratic bureaucracies; exposing this could have spoiled the kibbutz image of a progressive egalitarian and democratic society, hence kibbutz leaders co-opted researchers and these evaded I-KOs, ignoring Lewin’s (1951) field theory, I-KOs’ integrality to kibbutz society and their contrary cultures to kibbutz ones (Shapira, 2001, 2005, 2008, 2016b).

Kibbutz prime leaders for half a century were Yitzhak Tabenkin of the Kibbutz Meukhad federation (KM) and Me’ir Yaari of the Kibbutz Artzi federation (KA), which consisted of some 80% of kibbutzim up to 1951 and subsequently of 65%. In accord with the ‘Iron Law’ and LLCT, after 12-14 years at the helm and enormous growth and success of their movements, both leaders became self-perpetuators, defending their power against competing leaders by adopting Stalinism against which they had previously successfully fought (Shapira, 2016a). Their movements gradually followed them after the Stalingrad 1943 victory until, in early 1948, Stalinism was officially adopted when the national parties affiliated with KM and KA merged with the Mapam party, which identified with the Soviet bloc (Zait, 1993). USSR communism became

leaders' vision and job dysfunction no longer harmed their authority as they became 'mediators or executors representing the greater cosmic powers which grant them "natural rights" to prevail in society', as Wolf (1999: 284) explained extreme regimes (see below). They were likened to Admors (acronym of 'our lord, teacher, and Rabbi') in Hassidic courts, spiritual leaders and prophets of Leninism and deceptions, such as Tabenkin's assertion that ideological faith was more important than truthful knowledge (Kafakfi, 1992). Reverence of the USSR became irrational after the 1956 exposure of Stalin's horrors and brutal repression of Hungarian democracy, but while Western socialist and communist leaders dissociated from the USSR the two leaders did not, revering it up until 1967 as explained below (Halamish, 2013; Near, 1997; Shapira, 2016a).

As mentioned, kibbutz research avoided I-KOs, hence only historians studied leaderships but without alluding to 'Iron Law' and LLCT. Due to 16 years of managerial experience in my kibbutz factory and managerial and anthropological education the Kibbutz Research Institute assigned me to ethnography 20 kibbutz internal plants while studying industrial regional I-KOs for my MA and PhD degrees. Realizing the evasion of I-KOs by the institute, I left to study the kibbutz field independently. For 20 years I interviewed, spoke to and observed some 550 kibbutz members and hired employees in 24 kibbutzim and 7 I-KOs, conducted participant observation at an I-KO, read I-KO documents and other publications and engaged in semi-native anthropology: a native anthropologist studies her/his own community, while I as a kibbutz member studied leaders and managers of other kibbutzim and I-KOs' *pe'ilim*. My background resembled that of many of my subjects, I knew some of

them personally prior to my studies and I knew their context, the kibbutz system. Anthropologists usually lack such knowledge (Yanow, 2004) and rarely studied executives (Welker et al., 2011). I approached interviewees as their peer and interviews became discussions of common managerial and leadership problems. Moreover, as a kibbutz activist I participated from 1960 to 1995 in many of KA's political struggles, became acquainted with many critics of old guard leaders and learned from them about the leaders' immoral conservatism underlying the charismatic image.

One proof that all the above enabled a valid explanation of the kibbutz field and its leaderships, was that it was never criticized by any seminal publication.

Leaders' Early High-Moral Transformational Non-Charismatic Leadership

Both popular authors and scholars depicted Tabenkin and Yaari as charismatic leaders (Argaman, 1997: 216; Ben-Rafael, 1997: 45; Niv and Bar-On, 1992: 221; Rayman, 1981: 268; Rosolio, 1999: 23), but close scrutiny disproved this: until the late 1930s both leaders were high-moral transformational; only young Yaari charismatically dominated two groups of Zionist pioneers aged 19-20 consecutively in 1920-1 for several months each. As an ex-WW I officer aged 23-24 he imaged a charismatic saviour to desperate impoverished youngsters who came from Poland to build the new Jewish homeland promised in the Balfour Declaration but encountered unemployment and temporary public works at minimal wages with little prospect of settling the land. Yaari preached irrational ideas, organized nightly confession sessions which often became a collective hysteria, until one night an opposing leader stood up and accused him of cruel despotism over these youngsters, and others joined and forced Yaari's

departure. He soon replaced his irrational ideas with Marxist socialist ideas, joined a commune of young pioneers in Tel Aviv with his new wife, humbly laboured like all members, modelling authentic high-morality (e.g., Gardner et al., 2005) by travelling by bus after work to preach his ideas in communal *kvutzot* (groups) of Hashomer Hatzair youth movement graduates (Shapira, 2016a). He managed to convince four of them to federate and in 1927 their 286 members established the KA; soon other *kvutzot*, now called 'kibbutzim', joined (Halamish, 2009; Near, 1992).

Tabenkin had no early charismatic leadership phase. A decade older than Yaari, he was a member of Kvutzat Kineret, a small commune established in 1910 on the shores of the Lake of Galilee. He joined Ben-Gurion and Berl Katzenelson's leadership in 1919 to establish the socialist party Akhdut Haavoda (United Labour) and in 1920 to establish the Histadrut General Labour Union. In 1921 he left Kineret to join 200 young pioneers who established impoverished Kibbutz Ein Harod, of which he became the prime leader but was frequently criticized by members, hence up to the 1950s he did not enjoy charismatic leader status (Kanari, 2003; Maletz, 1945). His joining in 1921 was a humble act by a high-moral leader personally modelling integrity (Simons, 2002) and commitment to his vision of a large kibbutz, instead of settling the land by small intimate groups as Kineret, Degania and other *kvutzot* had attempted since 1910 with minimal success. He abandoned his family, a wife and three small children and Kineret's better standard of living to join followers in establishing a large growing kibbutz which by economy of scale, job specialization, advanced agronomy and mechanization would enhance yields, efficiency and economic viability unattainable by many other Zionist settlers. In 1923 he furthered this vision by founding a loose

federation of several kibbutzim called Kibbutz Ein Harod Artzi which reorganized and became the Kibbutz Meukhad (KM) federation in 1927 (Kanari, 2003; Near, 1992).

Effective high-moral transformational leaders Tabenkin and Yaari advanced the rational vision of federatively organized egalitarian and collectivist kibbutzim as a highway to Jewish nation building, developing I-KOs to fulfil functions requiring economy of scale (Niv and Bar-On, 1992). The two encouraged innovations, overcame internal and external oppositions, modelled commitment to tasks and trusted empowered followers to advance innovatively Zionist aims (Halamish, 2009; Kanari, 2003; Near, 1992; Spiro, 1983; e.g., Yukl, 1999: 301). Their leadership bred enormous success and growth: from 8 impoverished kibbutzim with a thousand members in 1927 KM and KA grew to include 71 kibbutzim, the oldest all prosperous, with 17,355 inhabitants, in 1939 (Near, 2008: 262). The Movements and other I-KOs staff reached hundreds, including a hundred emissaries who educated in 1939 some 100,000 youth in Europe and other countries to be kibbutz pioneers.

The fiercest internal oppositions came from leftists who revered the USSR despite its objection to Zionism and suppression of Russian Zionists. Without charismatic images, each leader suppressed leftism in his movement and many leftists either left or were expelled (Near, 1992: 140-3; Shapira, 2016a). Until 1933 both KM and KA were very democratic: each was controlled by a quasi-parliament of kibbutz delegates which convened every two or three months for 2-3 days, decided major issues and chose Movement secretariats. The two leaders proved high-moral commitment to their vision also by prolonged tours abroad to educate youngsters for kibbutz pioneering while paying the high personal price of minimal amenities for them and their families. Unlike

comfortable life of competing Mapai leaders in Tel Aviv, they lived humbly in abstemious kibbutzim that settled arid and/or malaria-ridden marshlands. Despite dependence on Mapai leaders in Tel Aviv and the Zionist non-socialist establishment in Jerusalem for obtaining resources to settle kibbutzim, KM and KA headquarters were established in the leaders' kibbutzim, Ein Harod and Merhavia (respectively), indicating that egalitarian closeness to members in kibbutzim preceded the closeness to national leaders (Halamish, 2009; Kanari, 2003).

Leaders' proximity to members, trusting them and encouraging their innovations minimized charismatic images (Shamir, 1995), signalled high-moral transformational leadership, as did their democratic struggle with leftists' adoration of Stalinism. These struggles were lengthy, as the leaders aimed for followers' trust and formal moves involving expulsion of leftists came only after long debates and approval by vote of kibbutz members, no leader fiats (Shapira, 2016a; Tzachor, 1997: 153). Another negation of charismatic leadership: the two did not appear as magic saviours in crises but rather gained trust by painstakingly solving problems causing them, building I-KOs by coping with their problems, modelling commitment to tasks and promoting trustworthy deputies who were given much discretion (Halamish, 2009; Kanari, 2003; Near, 1992; Shapira, 2008).

Leaders' Gradual Change to Oligarchic Rule & Charismatic Image

Emergence

Untangling and explaining leaders' change from high-moral transformational to amoral self-perpetuating dysfunctional requires deep-digging of the triangle: leader, followers

and contexts (Fraher, 2014), discerning leadership phases and the practices used in each, and explaining changes (Shapira, 2017). Unfortunately, leadership students rarely did this:

‘Most leadership studies are, however, protected from close contact with reality as it can only to a modest degree be represented in questionnaire forms or even in interviews with single persons supposed to be capable of telling how the leadership relations ‘really’ is like’ (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2014: 11).

Worse still, uninterested in the time dimension (Shamir, 2011), the process of change to dysfunction, which required overcoming the defences of leaders’ effectiveness images remained unexplored. A one-time formal survey research may not penetrate the delicate complex changing leadership combinations and their processes, while loyalists and co-opted/ shallow students and observers may attribute charismatic leadership to her/him, missing subterfuges which camouflage self-perpetuating conservatism (Shapira, 2016b). A successful tenured leader who presides over a federation of thousands of followers in many dispersed units is physically and organizationally distant from almost all followers; even if s/he initiates dialogic meetings with some of them to keep them ‘partners in the quest to achieve important objectives’ (Yukl, 1999: 301; Raelin, 2013) s/he may fail as s/he knows little about them as they do about her/him (Collinson, 2005). If circumstances and/or followers’ initiatives cause successes s/he may be revered as a charismatic leader though practicing conservatism. A distant charismatic leadership is very different from a close one (Shamir, 1995), and ‘The dynamics of the influencing process differ depending on how “close” or “distant” followers are from their leader’ (Antonakis and Atwater, 2002: 674). Leaders control

this distance: until recently, corporate CEOs' distancing helped mass media adoration and designating them charismatic (Ailon, 2013; Villette and Vuillermot, 2009), helped by prestige tendency to go to those who already have it (Goode, 1978). Distance conceals who is responsible for which outcome; mid-levellers may achieve successes, while deputies who are aware of the leader's dysfunction either leave or loyally conceal it, keep it a dark secret by conspiracies of silence (Dalton, 1959; Griffin and O'Leary-Kelly, 2004; Linstead et al., 2014; Shapira, 2015).

After 1942 no sign of previous innovative leadership was found; after Tabenkin's 19 years at the helm and Yaari's 15 years they no longer coped with major problems innovatively, nor encouraged deputies to do so, a dysfunctional conservatism contrary to innovative kibbutzim. For instance, kibbutzim coped with WWII's economic downturn and the stoppage of citrus exports, the main income source of many kibbutzim, by establishing 126 plants and workshops (Shapira, 2008: 137). An astute leader when dysfunctioning can use his power to enhance his own prestige and supposedly charisma by usurping the prestige of a subordinate's innovation that revived the organization, adopting it as his own and ignoring the innovator (Mehri, 2005: 142; Shapira, 2017: 85). An amoral leader may not even actively do this because prestige tends to go to those who already have it (Goode, 1978) hence a leader's loyalists attribute successes to his visionary leadership. This is often aided by the firm's size: distance from a leader prevents mid- and low-ranks from knowing who really deserves prestige, so they accept loyal deputies' attribution, while the leader may enhance his/her charismatic image by keeping a distance from them (Shamir, 1995; Zúquete, 2011: 299). Only if her/his dark secrets are exposed, probably after passing away, the truth

about mid-levellers' decisive successes may emerge and disprove the charismatic leadership image (Shalem, 2000; Shapira, 2011).

Public critique of Tabenkin and Yaari in the kibbutz press was impossible until the 1970s, until Tabenkin passed away, Yaari was disabled by sickness and the kibbutz press gradually became free of their loyalists' control (e.g., Shapira, 1979, 2016b; Adar, 1975; Ron, 1978). Then, despite sociologists' misgivings, historians and anthropologists critically studied the kibbutz field and untangled the two leaders' first autocratic moves in 1933 and 1935, respectively, years before signs of dysfunction appeared: KM and KA's democracies were curbed by replacing the quasi-parliaments of kibbutz-chosen delegates with leaders' nominee councils and deferring the convening of councils at first for months and later up to a year or so. In the KM this council was called the Extended Secretariat and established in 1933, and in the KA it was called the Executive Committee and established in 1935 (Shapira, 2008: 73). Then the leaders prolonged the tenures of loyalist Movement officials. At KM's 1936 Yagur Convention, delegates accused Tabenkin of violating egalitarianism as KM *pe'ilim* retained their jobs for a decade (Kanari, 2003: 389-91). At the Yagur Convention Tabenkin was accused of authoritarian rule, while in the 1939 Naan Convention he himself boasted 'Bolshevist' imposition of KM Secretariat decisions on kibbutzim. Yaari on the other hand centralized KA politically-ideologically (Tzachor, 1997). This became decisive with another empowering move by both leaders, the 180-degree turn in 1937 (Tabenkin) and 1939 (Yaari) from critique of Stalinism to its reverence which legitimized their autocratic changes (e.g., Near, 1997: 361; Zait, 1993: 71).

Wolf (1999) found that extreme ideology can empower a leader by radically

changing followers' cosmic worldview, making her/his superiority independent of job functioning:

'It is better to deal with such foundational ideas in terms of their functions in society. They can be shown to be legitimate and justify forms of rulership. At the same time, these functions anchor rulership in a cultural structure of imagining, which... postulates cosmologies; cosmologies in turn, articulate with ideologies that assign the wielders of power the role of mediators or executors on behalf of the larger cosmic forces and grant them "natural" rights to dominate society as delegates of the cosmic order' (Wolf, 1999: 283-4).

As 'delegates of the cosmic order' leaders have unequalled high and unique status; they are believed to have a charismatic 'magic gift' that sets them apart from followers, encouraging unquestioned obedience to their decisions whose logic only they fully understand (Tucker, 1968). This 'gift' legitimizes cancelling the party/movement's democracy in the name of efficiency, while leaders may emphasize their uniqueness by tripping up critical ascenders through their suppression and/or ousting, thus becoming indispensable for the movement/ party (Ansell and Fish, 1999).

Both leaders sought empowerment as their positions were threatened: Tabenkin was threatened from 1935 by Mapai leaders, Ben-Gurion and Katzenelson, who tried to demote him, by uniting KM with the Mapai-leaning third smaller Movement Hever Hakvutzot, which would have made Tabenkin's supporters a minority within the united Movement (Kanari, 2003: Ch. 21). In Yaari's case co-leader Hazan was docile up to 1937 but then due to the context of Arab revolt he became a threat to Yaari's primacy. Stalinism empowered Tabenkin by barring the unification effort, and empowered Yaari by proving his supremacy over Hazan (Shapira, 2016a). In 1940 both leaders retreated

from their endorsement of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as its true nature was exposed; Tabenkin called the USSR 'Imperialistic' and Yaari called it 'Machiavellian' (Kanari, 2003: 478; Zait, 1993: 121). In 1942 Yaari renewed his Leftism and in 1943 he overcame Hazan's objections after the Stalingrad victory, when also Tabenkin resumed his leftist initiatives. Both leaders were opposed by many *pe'ilim* and members for a decade, a clear sign of their non-charismatic status up to the 1950s. Opposition subsided in 1947 after Stalin declared support for Israeli statehood, but resumed in 1950 after Stalin resumed anti-Semitism and adopted anti-Israel policy. Then one-third of KM kibbutzim and members who opposed Tabenkin's Stalinism abandoned KM in favour of Hever Hakvutzot, and a quarter of the other KM kibbutzim split after bitter struggles between pro- and con-Stalinists, causing mass attrition and devastation (Near, 1997: Ch. 8).

However, this was only the first in a series of crises which signalled a loss of members' trust in dysfunctional leaders whose self-empowering practices violated kibbutz principles and caused problems for kibbutzim, for instance *pe'ilim*'s privileges annoyed other members (Maletz, 1945; Ron, 1978; Tzachor, 1997: 180). As cited, Tabenkin was criticized about *pe'ilim*'s prolonged retention in KM jobs according to personal loyalties rather than competences (e.g., Hirschman, 1970). The retention of loyalist *pe'ilim* negatively impacted local kibbutz democracies, which the leaders evaded while moving Movement headquarters to Tel Aviv and affording themselves and senior loyalists privileges such as company cars, which kibbutz members were not entitled to use even when they stood idle (Adar, 1975; Shapira, 1979; Shure, 2001). Other I-KOs followed suit and likewise did some kibbutz factory managers; these

privileges empowered *pe'ilim* and factory managers, elevated their status and prestige and turned many of them into informal kibbutz oligarchic rulers who distracted kibbutz managers from creative problem-solving required to keep radical communal principles amid success and growth (Fadida, 1972; Inbari, 2009; Kressel, 1974; Topel, 1979; Shapira, 2001, 2008; e.g., Brumann, 2000; Stryjan, 1989).

Leadership is a delicate combination (Gini, 1997), hence defining one's leadership type and phase in the LLCT model is problematic: the two leaders introduced autocratic practices that violated democracy preaching after 8-10 years on the job; 4-6 years later they turned to Stalinism that legitimized autocracy and after another 4-6 years did they cease innovative problem-solving and become dysfunctional, less socialized and more personalized leaders (Poulin et al., 2007). They succeeded due to the creativity of local kibbutz leaders' solutions to major problems, members' support of the critique of Mapai's leaders and other contextual effects: USSR victories, its support of Israeli statehood and reverence of Stalinism by Western socialist leaders. Reverence of Stalin's dictatorship contrasted with kibbutz principles; many opposed it but the dysfunctional leaders who knew the truth from Movement members who fled Siberia and ex-partisans who suffered Stalin's commissars in east-European forests, censored the kibbutz press (Shapira, 2016a). However, Stalin reverted to anti-Semitism in 1950 and both KM and KA suffered major crises. Additional causes of crisis were the new state taking over some of the kibbutzim's Zionist tasks, the disbanding of the sectorial society (Yatziv, 1999), grave financial problems about which the leaders did nothing (Shapira, 2011) and leaders' conservatism that interfered with initiatives to help innovatively national efforts to absorb a million immigrants (Kafkafi, 1992; Kynan, 1989). Near (2008: 467)

summed up leaders' failures:

'The total balance of this chapter in kibbutz politics was completely negative. The leaders... managed an utterly erroneous policy. ...The excessive engagement of their Movements in [national] politics distracted them from other major problems on the [Israeli] agenda... especially the absorption of [mass] immigration and kibbutz [movement] relations with "second Israel".'

'Second Israel' was the hundreds of thousands of impoverished and unemployed Eastern Jewish immigrants living in refugee-like camps due to Mapai's failed capitalist absorption policy, while KM and KA did not initiate major socialist absorption methods as done thirty years previously when Tabenkin initiated the 'large growing kibbutz', Yaari the 'organic kibbutz' and many others initiated urban co-operatives during a fairly similar crisis in 1925-30. This ineptness furthered critique, distrust and attrition of up to 60-80% of members in many kibbutzim (Shapira, 2008: Ch. 14-15; Leviatan et al., 1998: 163). Leaders' oligarchic rule also discouraged creative solutions by elevating conservative *pe'ilim* who dominated their respective kibbutzim as privileged prestigious I-KO officials, promoted conformist loyalists to their management and then to I-KO offices and suppressed radical high-moral local young leaders, another reason for kibbutzim's ineptness in the 1950s immigrant absorption crisis (Shapira, 2001, 2008: Ch. 12-15, 2016b).

Crises and Charisma Attribution; Mid-Levellers Revitalized the Field

Near (2008: 467) asserted that the leaders failed due to excessive engagement in national politics, but in view of their dysfunction since 1943 the opposite explanation is more probable: inability/unwillingness to cope with kibbutz problems encouraged this

excess activity on the outside to camouflage the dysfunction inside. But up to 1955 KM and KA's Mapam Party remained outside the government as a powerless Knesset (parliament) opposition, while Ben-Gurion's Mapai Party ruled through coalitions with right-wing and clerical parties as crisis after crisis devastated Stalinist KM and KA: KM's split, Stalin's resumed anti-Semitism hit Mapam hard in the ballots (ibid: 414) and the 1952-3 Prague anti-Zionist show trials in which a prominent Mapam official was caught, convicted of high treason and jailed. Then in 1954 the KM left Mapam and established its own competing party objecting Yaari's promotion of leftist KA *pe'ilim* to dominate Mapam staff (Izhar, 2005; Kanari, 2003: Ch. 30; Near, 1997: 220-2).

This dire situation invited seeking innovative saviours, but talented critically-thinking ascender deputies who seemed potential successors were suppressed and left or became docile since 1937 (Kanari, 2003: 190; Shapira, 2016a; Tzachor, 1997: 164). The leaders' position was enhanced by the ideological-political nature of the 1950s crises: as they specialized in this action domain and as it was the prime subject of kibbutz conventions' debates, leaders from other domains such as economic I-KO heads seemed implausible successors. The latter kept kibbutzim and I-KOs viable and, 'riding' on their successes (e.g., Shapira, 2017: 69), the leaders barred succession by other powers:

1. From the 1930s no open competitive elections were held for Movement leaderships,
2. Castrated democracy and centralized rule enhanced leaders' dominance,
3. The leaders censored Movements' publications, which were members' prime reading material,
4. The supposedly egalitarian *rotatzia* (rotation) norm legitimized early demotion of

critical *pe'ilim*, while loyalists were promoted or retained by circulation (Shapira, 2005),

5. Stalinism empowered them: A) Revolutionary rhetoric suited their specializing in oral and written discourse, masked their conservatism by a facade of radicalism.

B) USSR practices legitimized oligarchic autocratic castration of democracy. C)

The USSR's cosmic worldview made leaders' supreme independent of their deeds.

As the USSR was considered the centre of Socialism and its highest form, the yardstick of kibbutz communism, both kibbutz field successes and its unsolved problems were demoted to secondary significance. Leaders' authority was little harmed by ineptness concerning these problems, as they were likened to Admors in Hassidic courts, supposedly above mundane Movement problems, though, in practice, they made every major decision and Yaari interfered in minor ones as well; they sent low-prestige, problematic tasks to aides whose failures did not harm their image, while strengthening their supremacy (Ron, 1978; Shure, 2001; e.g., Hughes, 1958). In accord with Lord Acton, the ample power corrupted the leaders. For instance, as cited in the 1940s, they and a few deputies were given company cars for their sole use. This was a major privilege, as abstemious kibbutzim had no cars, only trucks, pickups and jeeps, while public transport was often minimal (Adar, 1975; Shapira, 2008). In the early 1950s Yaari and his co-leader Hazan obtained fancy large chauffeured American cars, similar to Cabinet ministers, that contrasted even more with the egalitarianism they preached (Tzachor, 1997: 180). These and other privileges, such as apartments in Tel Aviv where they stayed on most weekdays, dissociated leaders from ordinary members and changed their self-concept: In 1951, Yaari publicly declared himself the personification of the

KA and its affiliated party: 'I, Me'ir, am Mapam. I am Hashomer Hatza'ir. I am the expression of Hashomer Hatza'ir's historical way' (Kynan, 1989: 190). Quite similar was Tabenkin's self-glorification: A deputy who criticized his decision to split Mapam in 1954 resigned and did not answer his letters. Tabenkin came to his kibbutz, angrily broke into his house, took a chair and, banging it on the floor, broke it, shouting: 'What do you, think I am [more] important to our Movement than Lenin was to Russia!' (Kanari, 2003: 745).

Leaders' reverence of the USSR became irrational after the 1956 exposure of Stalin's horrors and brutal repression of Hungarian democracy; it conflicted with members' beliefs and distanced the leaders from them, encouraging charisma attribution (Shamir, 1995). Distance was also enlarged by Yaari's suppression of a group of new generation critical leaders who called the USSR a bluff and demanded democratization of KA and Mapam (Beilin, 1984; Tzachor, 1997), and by financiers' critique of leaders' indifference to their plight. In the 1950s kibbutzim suffered major credit shortages; the banks either refused to finance their growth and innovations or used their desperate need for credit to profit; kibbutzim paid over 11% of their revenues as interest on loans. The two leaders did nothing about this financial distress while Avraham Brum, a KM *pa'il* who was a Ministry of Agriculture official, joined a few mid-level *pe'ilim* and a bank executive to initiate a scheme that solved the problem in the 1960s; kibbutzim and I-KOs resumed growth and in 1970 they paid only 3% of revenues as interest on loans (Shapira, 2011; Shalem, 2000).

In the 1960s both kibbutzim and I-KOs became successful due to Brum's scheme and other innovators (Barkai, 1977; Near, 1997; Niv and Bar-On, 1992; Shapira, 2008),

while the two dysfunctional conservative leaders enjoyed a false charismatic image retained long after their disappearance (e.g., Rosolio, 1999: 23).

Summary, Discussion and Conclusions

Historical study plus semi-native ethnographies of both kibbutzim and I-KOs found that initially high-moral transformational leaders of democratic communal movements became within 15-19 years 'Iron Law' conservative dysfunctional for three decades, as in LLCT, but they were grasped by all as charismatic leaders despite conservatism and suppression of innovators. At first, as transformational leaders they humbly, democratically and high-morally led high-trust innovative-prone communes, achieving exceptional success and enormous growth while suppressing rival ideologists, but after 8-10 years on the job they curbed I-KOs' democracy, centralized control and prolonged loyal deputies' tenures, contrary to egalitarianism preached. Then, threatened by empowered competing leaders and members' diminishing trust, they gradually became conservative self-perpetuators and further violated egalitarianism by using conformist low-moral practices in I-KOs they headed, and other I-KO heads followed suit. They also overcame threats to power by turning to USSR reverence, which legitimized autocracy, but they soon suffered a contextual backlash and retreated, and only after 4-6 years resumed their autocracy- supporting reverence. Later on, Stalin's anti-Semitic turnaround hit hard their Stalinism and major crises emphasized their error, but despite the devastation of many kibbutzim, mass attrition, brain-drain and the 1956 calling of the USSR bluff, they retained jobs due to their charismatic image, loyalists' support, oligarchic rule of large I-KOs, Knesset (parliament) membership and control of kibbutz

press, while enjoying members' aversion to Mapai's pro-capitalist politics. By covertly or overtly suppressing and/or ousting talented critical innovative ascenders who were potential successors they created the image of indispensable leaders (Ansell and Fish, 1999). They also maintained trust in their leadership by personal humbleness, aside from Yaari's chauffeured American car that by distancing him from members enhanced his charismatic image (e.g., Shamir, 1995).

Mid-level transformative *pe'ilim* and innovative kibbutz managers filled the leadership vacuum created by leaders' dysfunction, similar to local initiatives by the Allied Forces' mid-level officers, which overcame the Germans in the 1944 Normandy invasion (Grint, 2014), and similar to mid-levelers who rescued failing plants of regional I-KOs (Shapira, 2017). These high-moral innovators rejuvenated the kibbutz field with the help of national organs since I-KOs and kibbutzim filled societal functions considered essential. They achieved major successes, industrialization, growth and ramification that doubled the kibbutzim's population within two decades. However, these successes enhanced leaders' charismatic image and helped their keeping jobs despite the dysfunctioning.

The findings support Gini's (1997) warning against missing the delicacy and complexity of leadership combinations and followers' role in the shaping of leadership processes (Haslam et al., 2010; Hollander, 2009): for dozens of years everyone depicted conformist dysfunctional leaders as charismatic although refuted by their conservatism. Social scientists missed this refute by evading the study of I-KOs, while historians who studied I-KO leadership but lacked social science theories missed the change from high-moral committed transformational leaders to amoral oligarchic self-perpetuators, as well

as how the Stalinist turn legitimized it (Shapira, 2016a). This reminds us of Kurt Lewin's dictum 'there is nothing more practical in science than a good theory'. A good theory requires clear concepts; social scientists both ignored Lewin's (1951) field theory and I-KOs' integrality to the kibbutz field and lacked clear charismatic leadership concept, seemingly due to the 'charismatic-transformational' mix. Van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) justly criticized it but did not emphasize its major source of vagueness: mixing high-moral transformational leadership with morally neutral charismatic leadership (Antonakis et al., 2016). Thus, in the 377 publications that cite this article according to Google Scholar (on 7.9.2017), many miss this decisive distinction.

Moreover, numerous authors idealized charismatic leadership without alluding to Weber and Etzioni's insight that charisma is about wisdom, which leaders' Stalinism clearly lacked, without students' attention to this contradiction, nor to the tensions involved in the emergence of charismatic leadership (DiTomaso, 1993), tensions that came with the two leaders' distancing themselves from members and enhancing their charismatic image. The leaders misled both students and members by a half-true concept of the kibbutz, which evaded I-KOs and with it the field theory and analysis of the kibbutz field (Shapira, 2008). This evasion also enhanced leaders' radical image, refuted by I-KOs' conformism. Historians studied I-KO heads, but without Lewin's (1951) field theory and Michels' (1959[1915]) 'Iron Law' they missed social scientists' mistakes. Further, students did not explain leaders' adhering to Stalinism after the 1956 calling of this bluff, while untangling their dysfunction explains it: aside from the aversion to admit mistake they lacked achievements to their name; this bluff helped

their image as charismatic leaders and defended their supremacy in accord with Wolf's (1999) explanation.

The analysis of half-a-century leaderships emphasizes the time dimension of leadership and leaders' power to mislead students who lack cultural analysis and close contact to reality. Without the time dimension, students missed the gradual 10-year erosion of high-moral transformational leadership and its transformation into a conservative oligarchic autocracy camouflaged from members by Stalinism reverence. After a series of crises, kibbutzim resumed their success due to mid-levellers' initiatives, helped by contextual factors, but this facilitated the charismatic leadership image and office entrenchment. A lack of cultural analysis of the kibbutz field led to missing leaders' empowerment by shaping low-moral low-trust cultures in oligarchic I-KOs, which by empowering leaders encouraged immorality. Leaders' immorality diminished high-trust innovative cultures characterized by honesty, integrity, humbleness, goal commitment and knowledge sharing, but with the resumed success and growth replacing the leaders seemed redundant to many, especially as by social, organizational and spatial distancing from members with loyal deputies' help, leaders concealed their inability to advance common aims such as financial viability required for development, while subterfuges camouflaged their immorality and power abuses. Contrary to a true charismatic leader who seeks major change, these seemingly charismatic leaders camouflaged conservatism as radical communism. The findings suggest that such camouflage can succeed if innovative mid-levellers fill the leadership vacuum, while leaders' distancing from the rank and file helps convince them and observers of the charismatic image.

The study supports LLCT research findings that successful innovative leaders sooner or later reach a dysfunction phase, but its timing may vary for up to two decades hence no any mandatory term length can timely replace leaders, ensuring their shortest dysfunction phases (see a proposed solution below). The studied cases also indicate that LLCT ignored oligarchy theory at its peril: a process of becoming dysfunctional oligarchic may be lengthy as leaders may adopt autocratic and oligarchic practices one by one, and trust by followers who stay for whatever reason may not dwindle if mid-levelers fill the leadership vacuum. The study also shows that LLCT operationalization of leaders' dysfunction phases as commencing when firms' results start dwindling may miss the beginning of the leader's negative change by years.

This time lag is a major problem of democracies: leaders of democratic organizations may start promoting autocracy relatively early and despite some critique it may not cause succession efforts since the leaders are still effective and seem trustworthy. Later, leaders' growing dysfunction deepens distrust, while competing leaders and contextual pressures threaten their position, encouraging entrenchment by further autocracy, immoral practices and subterfuges and possibly ideological change. However, efforts to bar these changes and to replace leaders may fail due to earlier autocratic changes and other empowerment means such as prolonging loyal deputies' tenures, to which only few may object if these deputies are talented and competent, chosen by the leader when still effective. Unfortunately, these few may include prospective successors and their supporters who leave disappointed, weakening resistance to the leader entrenchment (Hirschman, 1970). When s/he reach dysfunction phase and most followers distrust her/him and seek succession, entrenchment by previously introduced oligarchic

autocratic practices and the lack of promising successors interferes and often bars succession. This problem also calls upon leadership research to pay more attention to followership processes (Haslam et al., 2010; Hollander, 2009).

One practical conclusion is that those who choose leaders would do a better job by probing candidates' previous managerial practices: whether they trusted employees, exposed their own ignorance of employees' unique know-how and *phronesis* and tried to learn from them and with them while allowing them much discretion for creative problem-solving (Bennis, 1989), or used distancing to conceal their ignorance and job-dysfunction while 'riding' on mid-leveillers' successes that facilitated their false image of successful leaders (Gardner et al., 2005). A good choice requires careful listening in a trustful climate of openness to critical former colleagues and subordinates of candidates who best know their dark secrets (Tourish, 2013; Shapira, 2008, 2017).

Secondly, a new anti-oligarchic succession leader norm is needed. Mandatory terms like kibbutz *rotatzia* failed to prevent dysfunctional leadership wherever these were attempted, from ancient Athens to current kibbutzim and US and Israeli armed forces (Bowra, 1971; Wilson, 2011; Shapira, 2008; Vald, 1987). 'Golden Parachutes' succession is mostly oligarchic; these are often too lavish in order to eliminate dysfunctional CEOs (e.g., Johnson, 2008). Successes of democratic firms (Erdal, 2011; Semler, 1993; Shapira, 2008; Whyte and Whyte, 1988) suggest that a democracy which includes knowledgeable insiders in succession decisions side by side with directors can timely succeed dysfunctional leaders by periodic tests of trust, say every four years like the re-election test of US presidents. However, the leader cases studied and many other cases of successful leaders who managed to function effectively for more than eight

years (e.g., Boling et al., 2015; Wulf et al., 2011) support allowing leaders more than two 4-year- terms. This is plausible by allowing up to four terms for those trusted by ultra large majorities, over 66% for a third term, and over 88% for a fourth term, barring tenures of longer than 16 years which make leaders democratically irreplaceable (Shapira, 2013: 24).

Findings concerning kibbutz members' reactions to veteran leaders' entrenched autocracy support this solution. Ethnographies explain members' minimal opposition to such autocracy by selective attrition: talented, educated, critically-minded members and members empowered by some marketable proficiency, left autocratically-led kibbutzim and those who remained mostly became docile (Shapira, 2008) in accord with Hirschman (1970). If, however, these critics and especially ascenders who were promising successors could have seen clear succession prospects due to the above proposal they would have had a strong incentive to remain and wait for forthcoming successions due to dysfunctional incumbents' failure to achieve 66% or 88% majorities.

Studies of leaders' changing practices are required to explain their changing delicate combinations throughout tenures. The findings show that by longitudinal ethnographies of multiple units with different cultures (e.g., Parker, 2000) research can enjoy the critical power of the practice lens (Gherardi, 2009) and untangle leaders' practice changes and their dark secrets, explaining the complex processes instigated by these and other internal and contextual variables; then leadership processes are comprehensively explained (Shapira, 2015, 2017) and research becomes relevant and practical for both leaders' education and practicing leaders. Such longitudinal studies do not have to take decades but they must be much longer and extensive than usual organizational

ethnography, and they must be phronetic, seeking a concrete, practical and ethical answers to major troubling questions concerning leaders of one's society, much as the Aalborg Project was for Flyvbjerg (2006) and the study of kibbutz society for myself (Shapira, 2008).

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