

Prolonged Dysfunction of Ex-Trusting Transformational Leaders and Its Amoral Camouflage by Charismatic Postures

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Abstract

Leadership is an evasive phenomenon and its constructs remain deeply contested. One reason is that leadership is a delicate combination of elements often typified without alluding to changes over time. Students grasped as charismatic the two half-a-century leaders of the largest Israeli kibbutz movements, but research finds them initially trusting transformational; then their restricting of democracy and diminishing job-effectiveness curbed members' trust, competing leaders threatened their power, and they defended it by adopting an extreme ideology, which they had previously rejected, that legitimized autocracy. Extremism led to crises that caused distrust and mass attrition. Then the leaders adopted a self-serving charismatic posture which convinced followers only when innovative mid-levelers filled the leadership vacuum created by leaders' dysfunction, resuming movements' success. This deluded scholars into believing in these postures, helped by the vague concept of charismatic leadership and by co-opted students who ignored leaders' oligarchic dominance as irreplaceable movements' heads. The study emphasizes the changing combinations of tenured leadership, the need for clear concepts when building leadership theories, the essentialness of researchers' close contact with reality to discern leaders' morality changes and followers' trust changes, and the vital role of field theory in analysis. Suggestions for further research are offered.

Keywords

Trusting Transformational Leadership, High-Trust Culture, Charismatic Leadership Posture, Oligarchy Theory, Leadership Life Cycle Theory, Self-Perpetuating Leaders

1. Introduction

“Democracy is a train, when you reach your destination you get off” (Israeli TV reporter citing Turkish authoritarian President R. T. Erdogan).

Leadership is an evasive phenomenon (Brocato et al., 2011) and despite extensive 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: p. 329; italics original). In fact, this combination is even more delicate due to additional factors such as leaders’ morality (Bass, 1998; Hosmer, 1995; Rhode, 2006), leader-followers processes (Haslam et al., 2010), leaders’ dependency on followers’ knowledge and expertises (Bennis, 1989; Simon, 1957, Heifetz, 1995; Schein, 1992), and more.

Moreover, the combinations change during leaders’ tenures but leadership research has evaded the time dimension (Shamir, 2011), often typifying leaders without alluding to their changing types and strategies (Burns, 2004; Kunisch et al., 2017). Biblical prophets criticized leaders for corrupting by their successes, as pointed out by Lord Acton. Michels (1959 [1915]) analyzed how radical leaders became conservative self-perpetuators with success, tenure, and parties’ growth, while in Leadership Life Cycle Theory (LLCT for short) tenured leaders sooner or later reach final dysfunction phases (Boling et al., 2015; Hambrick & Fukutomi, 1991; Wulf et al., 2011), as found also by leaders’ emotional exhaustion research (Zwingmann et al., 2016).

Tenured leaders in dysfunction phases lack achievements to legitimize status, authority, and power which they often maintain by deluding immoral subterfuges (Boddy et al., 2010; Fraher, 2016; Jackall, 1988; Lipman-Blumen, 2006). Such subterfuges contradict the high-moral trustworthiness of transformational leaders, a concept created by Downton (1973), and Burns (1978) (also: Barbuto, 1997; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; O’Toole, 1999; Shapira, 2012). Later, the “charismatic-transformational leadership” concept appeared which Van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) criticized. Yukl (1999: p. 301) clearly discerned the two leadership types:

“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.”

Both transformational and charismatic leaders transform organizations, but only the formers empower followers due to trusting their active helping transformation; charismatic leaders tend to distrust followers, grasped as inept as they failed solving their problems, but this distrust is rarely mentioned (e.g., Antonakis et al., 2016; Tucker, 1968). Thus, the right concept of Downton (1973), Burns (1978), and followers is “trusting transformational leadership,” leadership which creates ascending trust spirals (Fox, 1974) that enhance collaborative innovative

problem-solving efforts and achieve transformation (Barbuto, 1997; O'Toole, 1999; Shapira, 2012). Transformational leadership literature often missed this feature, and scholars who were “protected from close contact with reality” (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2014: p. 11) also missed Weber’s and Etzioni’s insight that charisma is about wisdom, hence its explanation requires paying attention to the tensions involved in its emergence (DiTomaso, 1993). Tensions generate the dependency of leaders’ wisdom on employees providing them with premises of decisions (Simon, 1957), and tacit know-how and *phronesis* (Greek for practical wisdom; Flyvbjerg, 2006), acquired on the job in practitioner communities (Klein, 1998; Orr, 1996). They provide these intangibles only to a trustworthy leader who proves trust in them by vulnerable involvement (Zand, 1972). Charismatic leaders avoid this, seeking “adoration, idolization, and unquestioning obedience” (Howell & Shamir, 2005: p. 107) by projecting an image of superior expertise, distancing themselves from followers (Zúquete, 2011) and often adopting a radical vision which radiates charismatic image (Howell & Shamir, 2005). The “charismatic-transformational leadership” concept is a misnomer as it confuses morally neutral charisma (Antonakis et al., 2016) with the high morality of a trusting transformational leader (Barbuto, 1997; Downton, 1973; Burns, 1978).

Many smart shrewd leaders have used power achieved by various means to radiate charismatic images with no real wisdom and led people to false visions, wrongs, failures, and disasters (Boddy et al., 2010; Chang & Halliday, 2005; Lipman-Blumen, 2006; Montefiore, 2003). Howell and Shamir (2005: p. 107) proposed that “the more the leader felt empowered, the more he or she will engage in charismatic behaviors, such as displaying self-confidence and presenting a challenging vision,” but likewise can self-empower a past transformational leader who had weakened due to dysfunction in accord with LLCT (Leadership Life Cycle Theory); a charismatic image can help her/him defend power: by adopting a challenging vision, preferably of a distant and secretive seemingly successful organization/polity, such leaders display a charismatic image, using authoritarian practices legitimized by this example to camouflage their self-perpetuating conservatism, suppressing ascending talented innovators (Beilin, 1984; Rifkin & Harrar, 1988: Ch. 10; Shapira, 2016a). Such a vision of an extreme ideology may empower a leader by radically changing followers’ cosmic worldview:

“... [it] anchors rulership in a cultural structure of imagining... cosmologies [which] ...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: pp. 283-284).

An extreme ideology gives leaders an unequalled high and unique status which radiates charisma while calling on followers to obey their decisions, whose logic only the leaders fully understand (Tucker, 1968). However, can a radical vision, extreme ideology, charismatic posture, and subterfuges camouflage leaders’

dysfunctional conservatism for decades, perpetuate the heading of radical movements while violating the very democratic and egalitarian principles they preach? How can one explain success, growth, and such movements' ramification while their formal leaders are dysfunctional conservatives? How could these leaders retain their charismatic image despite conservatism? Which role did mid-levelers play in this power prolongation?

Analysis of the changing leadership practices of the two leaders of the largest Israeli kibbutz federations called "The Movements," each with more than 80,000 members and supporters at their peak could provide the answers to these questions. I studied them as an inside-outsider (Gioia et al., 2013: p. 19), a kibbutz member ethnographer, after studying other I-KOs (inter-kibbutz organizations), kibbutz factories for the Kibbutz Research Institute, and kibbutzim independently (Shapira, 2008, 2016b).

The article has 6 sections:

- 1) The Israeli kibbutz field uniqueness
- 2) Leaders' early high-moral trusting transformational non-charismatic leadership
- 3) Growth, distance, dysfunction, and distrust: Threatened leaders' turn to extreme ideology
- 4) The 1950s crises: Failed USSR reverence and leaders' dysfunction
- 5) Mid-levelers resumed success enhanced the charismatic leadership posture
- 6) Summary, conclusions, and discussion

2. The Israeli Kibbutz Field Uniqueness

The kibbutz was the world's largest and most successful communal movement. In 1985, just before its major crisis and commencing abandon communalism, the kibbutz field (e.g., Lewin, 1951) encompassed 269 kibbutzim (plural of kibbutz) with some 129,000 inhabitants, and about 250 - 300 I-KOs with some 20 - 22,000 hired employees that fulfilled functions requiring economy of scale and represented kibbutzim in national organizations (Near, 2008; Niv & Bar-On, 1992; Shapira, 2008) I-KO numbers are inexact due to a lack of research; see below). Kibbutz members numbering 4000 - 4500 who were 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 remained for decades, their loyalist deputies continued 10 - 15 years, and lesser loyalists "jumped" from one managerial job to another (Shapira, 1995, 2005, 2017). Prime leaders headed the three Movements which were the largest I-KOs with some 2400 *pe'ilim* (Near, 1997; Niv & Bar-On, 1992; Shapira, 2005). Hundreds of scholars studied kibbutzim for eight decades but almost all of their 6000 - 7000 publications have missed kibbutz uniqueness: Contrary to other successful communal societies, which insulated themselves from society (e.g., Pitzer, 1997), the kibbutzim were highly involved in their surroundings through I-KOs (Near, 1992, 1997), but I-KOs were conformist autocratic stratified bureaucracies; exposing this could have spoiled the

kibbutz image of a progressive egalitarian and democratic society, hence kibbutz leaders co-opted researchers who then avoided the study of I-KOs, ignoring Lewin's (1951) field theory, I-KOs' integrality to kibbutz society, and their cultures negating democratic egalitarianism of kibbutzim (Shapira, 2001, 2005, 2008, 2016b).

3. Leaders' Early High-Moral Trusting Transformational Non-Charismatic Leadership

Kibbutz prime leaders for half a century were Yitzhak Tabenkin of the Kibbutz Meukhad (KM) Movement and Me'ir Yaari of the Kibbutz Artzi (KA) Movement, which together consisted of some 80% of kibbutzim up to 1951 and subsequently of some 65%. Close scrutiny unraveled that until the mid-1930s both leaders were high-moral trusting transformational; only the young Yaari charismatically tried leading two groups of Zionist pioneers aged 19 - 20 consecutively in 1920-1 for several months each, failed twice, and was rejected. Then he joined a Tel Aviv commune of young pioneers with his new wife, humbly labored like all members (e.g., Ou et al., 2018), modelling authentic high-moral leadership (Gardner et al., 2005) by travelling by bus after work to preach the values of federation in communal *kvutzot* (groups) of Hashomer Hatzair youth movement graduates, and in 1927 four groups established the KA Movement; soon other *kvutzot*, now called "kibbutzim," joined (Halamish, 2009; Near, 1992).

Tabenkin was a decade older than Yaari and a member of Kvutzat Kinneret, a small commune established in 1910 on the shores of the Lake of Galilee. In 1921 he left Kinneret to join 200 young pioneers who established the impoverished Kibbutz Ein Harod, of which he became the prime leader although not a charismatic one as proven by the defeats he suffered in the kibbutz assembly and the public critique (Kanari, 2003; Maletz, 1945). His joining Ein Harod in 1921 was a humble act by a high-moral leader who personally modelled integrity and commitment (Ou et al., 2018; Simons, 2002) to his vision of a large kibbutz, instead of settling the land by small intimate groups as attempted by Kinneret, Degania, and other *kvutzot* since 1910 with minimal success. He abandoned his family, wife and three small children and Kinneret's better standard of living to join followers in establishing a large kibbutz which by economy of scale, job specialization, advanced agronomy, and mechanization would enhance yields, efficiency, and economic viability unattainable by other Zionist settlers (Landshut, 1944; e.g., Shapira, 2004). In 1923 he furthered this vision by founding a loose kibbutzim federation called Kibbutz Ein Harod Artzi, which was reorganized to become the KM Movement in 1927 (Kanari, 2003; Near, 1992).

The two leaders effectively advanced the vision of egalitarian and collectivist kibbutzim organized in federations and other I-KOs which cared for common interests (Niv & Bar-On, 1992). They recruited *pe'ilim* to establish and manage new I-KOs according to competences, critical thinking, and innovativeness rather than loyalty, thus modelling a high-moral commitment to kibbutz goals

(Near, 1992; Shapira, 2008). Moreover, the two proved their trusting transformational leadership by encouraging deputies' initiatives, although their successes elevated potential successors.

In 1928 Yaari accepted deputy Shenhabi's proposal to raise money from rich European Zionists to build the boarding school Mossad Mishmar Ha'emek; from 1932 hundreds of KA youths were educated there, managed by two educators which the KA had sent to Berlin and Vienna to learn progressive education (Zait, 2005; Paltek, 1989). Then Yaari sanctioned a number of Shenhabi's additional major initiatives, such as rescuing European Jews' capital before the Nazis confiscated it and using these funds to establish kibbutz factories (Zait, 2005). Leaders' deputies led some 100 *pe'ilim* emissaries to Europe, who taught kibbutz pioneering to over 100,000 teens (Kanari, 2003; Near, 1992). In 1931 Tabenkin backed KM's economic *pa'il* Benari's proposal to establish a fund to finance kibbutz projects avoided by Zionist funds (Sack, 1999). In 1934 he supported KM's emissaries to Europe who organized illegal immigration to Palestine in defiance of British restrictions; after WW II this developed into the heroic struggle of some 80,000 Jewish refugees against the British blockade that led to the 1947 UN resolution to establish Israel (Hadari, 1985; Near, 1997). In 1938-9 both leaders agreed to initiatives by the Movements' poets, authors, and scholars to establish publishing houses (Kanari, 2003; Tzachor, 1997), and supported educators initiative to establish a kibbutz teachers college (Segal, 1992). In 1942 Tabenkin supported the underground army *Palmakh* initiative by KM's veteran fighters against Arab terrorism, financed it by placing its soldiers in kibbutzim where they worked three days a week and engaged in military training for another three days. *Palmakh*'s 5000 troops led the winning of Israel's 1948 War of Independence (Kanari, 2003; Near, 2008).

Initiatives bred challengers: Tabenkin's authority was challenged in 1936 by two deputies who previously headed successful KM youth movements in Poland and Germany (Kanari, 2003: pp. 389-391), and Yaari's authority was challenged in 1939 by co-leader Hazan (Shapira, 2008: pp. 162-163). Nevertheless, up to 1942 the two leaders encouraged innovative *pe'ilim*, taking the moral high ground preferring movements' goals and interests over their own (Halamish, 2009; Kanari, 2003; Near, 1992; e.g., Hosmer, 1995; Johnson, 2012).

Similarly were other high-moral practices: Until 1933 both KM and KA were very democratic as each was controlled by a quasi-parliament of kibbutz delegates which convened every two or three months for two to three days to decide major issues and choose the Movements' secretariats. The two leaders made prolonged tours abroad to educate youngsters for kibbutz pioneering at a high personal cost to them and their families due to the minimal amenities. Unlike the comfortable life of competing Mapai leaders in Tel Aviv, they lived modestly in abstemious kibbutzim. Despite kibbutzim dependence on the Mapai leaders and the Zionist non-socialist officials in Jerusalem for obtaining resources, KM and KA headquarters were established in the leaders' kibbutzim, indicating that an egalitarian proximity to kibbutz members preceded the closeness to national

leaders (Halamish, 2009; Kanari, 2003). The leaders' proximity, their trust and encouragement of members' innovations minimized charismatic images, signaled trusting transformational leadership.

Both leaders faced fierce internal oppositions of Leftists who revered the Stalinist USSR despite its rejection of Zionism and suppression of Russian Zionists (Inbari, 2009). Each leader democratically suppressed Leftism in his respective movement by lengthy debates aimed at gaining followers' trust; these debates lacked any sign of leaders' adoration, and Leftists were expelled after long debates and approval by a vote of kibbutz members, with no charismatic leader fiat (Near, 1992: pp. 140-143; Tzachor, 1997: p. 153; Shapira, 2016a).

4. Growth, Distance, Dysfunction, and Distrust: Threatened Leaders' Turn to Extreme Ideology

Untangling and explaining leaders' change from high-moral trusting transformational type to amoral self-perpetuating dysfunctional conservative type requires digging deeply into the triangle: leader, followers, and contexts (Fraher, 2016), while discerning and explaining the practices used in each phase and their changes (Burns, 2004; Carroll et al., 2008; Shapira, 2015, 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 & Alvesson, 2014: p. 11).

Worse still, uninterested in the time dimension (Shamir, 2011), researchers left unexplored the process of change to dysfunction which required penetrating leaders-built effectiveness image camouflages. A one-time formal survey research may not penetrate the delicate complex process of changing leadership practice combinations which may stretch over decades as in the present cases. The early trusting transformational leadership of Tabenkin and Yaari 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: p. 262). The Movements and other I-KOs staff reached hundreds, including a hundred emissaries to Europe. Growth on this scale changes leadership combinations; the leader is physically and organizationally distant from almost all her/his followers; even if s/he initiates dialogic meetings (Raelin, 2013) to keep them “partners in the quest to achieve important objectives” (Yukl, 1999: p. 301) she/he may meet only some of them and may fail influencing many because she/he knows little about them as they do about her/him (Collinson, 2005). Her/his successes may create a charismatic image, but a distant charismatic leadership is very different from a close one: “The dynamics of the influencing process differ depending on how ‘close’ or ‘distant’ followers are from their leader” (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002: p. 674;

Shamir, 1995). Distance often conceals who is responsible for which result; a dysfunctional leader may appropriate mid-levelers' successes (Mehri, 2005: p. 142; Shapira, 2017: p. 66), while deputies who are aware of her/his dysfunction often either resign or loyally conceal it (Shapira, 2015; Shure, 2001).

Thus, scholars explained Tabenkin and Yaari's continued dominance by their charismatic leadership (e.g., Argaman, 1997: p. 216; Ben-Rafael, 1997: p. 45; Niv & Bar-On, 1992: p. 221; Rayman, 1981: p. 268; Rosolio, 1999: p. 23), similar to *Admors* (acronym for "our lord, teacher, and Rabbi") in Hassidic courts, spiritual leaders, and quasi-prophets, but major facts refute the misleading charismatic image and explain its successful creation by the leaders:

1) Until the 1950s they enjoyed no "adoration, idolization, and unquestioning obedience" (Howell & Shamir, 2005: p. 107) characteristic of charismatic leadership.

2) Their turn to Stalinist ideology in 1937 (Tabenkin) and 1939 (Yaari) aimed at no major change/innovation, contrary to the charismatic leadership concept.

3) It took them a decade and Stalin's radical shift to support of a Jewish state to convince *pe'ilim* of Stalinism, testifying to a lack of charismatic power.

4) Keeping of power by defeating competing leaders and suppressing innovators made them indispensable (Ansell & Fish, 1999) and enhanced charismatic image attribution.

5) Self-aggrandizement camouflaged their dysfunction, while loyal *pe'ilim* helped silence criticism and conceal empowerment by I-KOs' oligarchic practices.

6) Co-opted scholars did not study I-KOs, helping leaders conceal their own empowerment and that of loyal *pe'ilim* by I-KOs' conformist autocratic practices.

Charismatic leaders do not need bureaucratic powers to defend their authority as their followers' adoration defends it; the two leaders lacked such adoration until the 1960s, when mid-levelers' innovations resumed kibbutzim's success (Barkai, 1977; Kressel, 1974; Shalem, 2000; Shapira, 2011), hence they silenced critique by bureaucratic powers and concealed these powers by concealing I-KOs' autocratic oligarchic cultures. Concealment commenced by leaders' and loyalists' rejection of Landshut's (1944) seminal book that criticized the KM, rejection that caused kibbutzim to ignore the book. Then Professor Buber wrote (1947 book, English version 1958: p. 141): "... the truly structural task of the new Village Communes [i.e., kibbutzim] begins with their federation, that is their union under the same principle that operates in their internal structure." He ignored the Movements' and other I-KOs' unionizing of kibbutzim under anti-kibbutz principles, served leaders' efforts to conceal this empowering contradiction, and they celebrated the book making it a heat in kibbutzim.

A dysfunctional astute leader lacking prestigious achievements can use her/his power to enhance her/his own prestige and supposed charisma by usurping the prestige of a subordinate's innovation, adopting this as her/his own and ignoring the innovator (Shapira, 2017: p. 85). A leader may not even initiate such a move because loyalists attribute successes to her/him (Goode, 1978). Organizations'

large size help: distance from leaders prevents followers from knowing who really deserves prestige for successes. From the late 1930s, members mostly learned about leaders' functioning from *pe'ilim* loyalists and the leader-controlled kibbutz press, while the leaders enhanced charismatic images by distancing from members (Shamir, 1995; Zúquete, 2011: p. 299), e.g., moving Movements' headquarters to Tel Aviv. Only after Tabenkin passed away, Yaari was disabled by sickness, and the kibbutz press became independent of their loyalists' control, did critique of I-KO conformist practices that empowered leaders and *pe'ilim* appear in this press (Adar, 1975; Ron, 1978; Shapira, 1979).

Then, despite sociologists' misgivings, historians and anthropologists studied the kibbutz field and untangled the two leaders' autocratic empowering moves started in the mid-1930s: 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 for up to a year (Near, 1992). 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: p. 73). Then the leaders prolonged the tenures of loyal Movement *pe'ilim*. At the KM's Yagur Convention in 1936, delegates accused Tabenkin of violating egalitarianism by deputies retaining their jobs for a decade (Kanari, 2003: pp. 389-391) and by authoritarian rule, while in the 1939 Naan Convention he himself boasted about the "Bolshevist" imposition of KM Secretariat decisions on kibbutzim. Yaari centralized KA only politically-ideologically (Tzachor, 1997), but both leaders soon legitimized growing autocracy by a complete reversal in 1937 (Tabenkin) and 1939 (Yaari) from criticism of Stalin's USSR to its reverence (Shapira, 2016a).

Kibbutz research missed/misunderstood this turnaround, not having studied I-KOs' autocratic hierarchic cultures (Shapira, 2016b). Curbing Movements' democracy in 1933-35 gained them more control of decision-making but contradicted their democracy preaching; it caused distrust and their positions were soon 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 smaller Movement Hever Hakvutzot, which would have turned Tabenkin's supporters majority of some 60% in the KM into a minority within the united Movement (Kanari, 2003: Ch. 21). In Yaari's case his co-leader Hazan was docile up to 1937 but then he became a threat to Yaari's primacy empowered by the Arab terror contradicting Yaari's seeking agreement with the Arabs. Stalinism empowered Tabenkin by barring the unification effort, and empowered Yaari by proving his supremacy over Hazan in KA's 1939 debate over endorsing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (Tzachor, 1997: p. 164). In 1940 both leaders retreated from this endorsement as the Pact's true nature was exposed; Tabenkin called the USSR "Imperialistic" and Yaari called it "Machiavelian" (Kanari, 2003: p. 478; Zait, 1993: p. 121). In 1942 Yaari renewed his Leftism and in 1943 Hazan's objections to Leftism ceased after the Stalingrad victory when also Tabenkin resumed Leftism. Many *pe'ilim* and members opposed them

for a decade, including KM's ex-General Secretary Idelson (Shapira, 2016a: p. 25), signaling a lack of charismatic power.

Leaders' Leftism was controversial and diminished trust in them but they enjoyed members' support for their criticism of Mapai's capitalist conformity and other contextual supports such as USSR victories over Hitler and Western socialist leaders' reverence of USSR. However, both members and scholars missed how Leftism legitimized the autocratic means of leaders' self-perpetuation: cancelling Movements' democracy by centralizing control, suppression voice, censoring publications, promoting loyalists-only, prolonging their tenures, privileging them, and obstructing innovations which might have elevated successors (Beilin, 1984; Kynan, 1989; Shure, 2001; Shapira, 2005, 2016a). Concurrently, kibbutzim coped with WW II's economic downturn and the halting of citrus exports, a main source of income for many kibbutzim, by establishing 126 factories and workshops with no leader involvement (Shapira, 2008: p. 137). Another example: Yaari no longer allowed Shenhabi to innovate in the KA, thus he turned elsewhere and initiated the national Holocaust Memorial Yad Vashem in Jerusalem (Shapira, 2008: pp. 183-184).

The turnaround to Stalinism against which the two leaders had previously fought for some 15 years caused distrust by many who remembered the leaders' critique of Stalinism. Worse still, leaders' integrity was questioned by many members' awareness of the leaders concealment the truth about Stalinism known to them due to Movements' members who fled from Siberia and ex-partisans who had survived Stalin's commissars in the European forests in WW II. Yaari even erased the chapters on the commissars' horrible deeds from kibbutz member ex-partisans' memory books (Porat, 2000: p. 178). Opposition to Leftism subsided only in 1947 after Stalin made a turnaround from anti-Zionism to supporting Israeli statehood; in early 1948 Stalinism was officially adopted when the KM's and KA's affiliated parties merged to form the Mapam party, which identified with the Soviet bloc (Zait, 1993).

5. The 1950s Crises: Failed USSR Reverence and Leaders' Dysfunction

Then a series of crises hit KM and KA. Stalin's renewed anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli policy in 1950; then one-third of KM kibbutzim left it to join the Hever Hakvutzot Movement, which supported the anti-Stalinist Mapai party, and a quarter of the other KM kibbutzim split after bitter struggles between pro- and con-Stalinists (Near, 1997: Ch. 8). In the 1951 elections Stalin's anti-Semitism hit Mapam hard in the ballots (Near, 2008: p. 414), and in 1952 Stalin purged Prague leaders by show-case trials in which a prominent Mapam and KA official was also arrested, convicted of high treason, and imprisoned. KA leaders rejected the verdict protesting their comrade's innocence, but avoided accusing Stalin of the show-case trials hence many young Leftist KA members accepted the Prague verdict and confronted the leaders, resulting in splits, expulsions, and mass attrition in many KA kibbutzim.

In 1954 Mapam split and the KM left to establish its own party (Izhar, 2005; Kanari, 2003: Ch. 30; Near, 1997: pp. 220-222), and in 1956 the disclosure of Stalin's horrors and brutal repression of Hungarian democracy furthered distrust of the two leaders by many who rejected USSR's adoration. Yaari reacted by suppressing the new generation's successful innovative leaders who criticized the USSR and demanded democratization of the KA (Beilin, 1984; Halamish, 2013; Tzachor, 1997; Shapira, 2016a).

The crises and growing distrust of dysfunctional leaders led to massive attrition; only the absorption of youth movements' graduates and increased fertility prevented population decline (Leviatan et al., 1998: p. 163; Near 1997: p. 364). Beside crises and leaders' dysfunction Movements' low moral practices that violated kibbutz principles aroused discontent and distrust, for instance, *pe'ilim's* privileges annoyed other members (Ron, 1978; Tzachor, 1997: p. 180). These privileges were not so annoying if tenures were short due to *rotatzia*, but as cited, above Tabenkin already in the 1930s extended terms of office of loyal *pe'ilim* and with the growth and ramification of I-KOs many more *pe'ilim* continued I-KO privileged managerial jobs for decades (Shapira, 2005; e.g., Sack, 1999). In the 1940s the leaders and senior *pe'ilim* afforded themselves small apartments in Tel Aviv and company cars, which kibbutz members were not entitled to use even when they stood idle in kibbutzim's yards, thereby distancing socially *pe'ilim* with cars from the rank-and-file (Adar, 1975; Shapira, 1979; Shure, 2001). Other I-KOs followed suit, as did many kibbutz factory managers, and privileged tenured senior *pe'ilim* and factory managers mostly became local informal oligarchs of their kibbutzim backed by the leaders whose dominance they enhanced while furthering members' distrust by violating democracy and egalitarianism (Rosolio, 1999; Shapira, 2001, 2005; Shure, 2001; Topel, 1979; e.g., Brumann, 2000; Stryjan, 1989).

Leaders' ineptness in the national arena furthered distrust and deepened crises. From 1948 the new Israeli state took over some of the kibbutzim's Zionist tasks, while mass immigration of Jews to a war-devastated Israel in 1948-1951 resulted in hundreds of thousands of impoverished and unemployed immigrants living in refugee-like camps and suffering deprivation. KM and KA did not initiate any of the socialist absorption methods employed during fairly similar crises in the 1920s. Tabenkin agreed to two absorption experiments that failed, while Yaari's negative attitude to Kibbutz Gan Shmuel absorption solution prevented other kibbutzim from following suit (Kynan, 1989; Shapira, 2016a: p. 26). Ben-Gurion used this ineptness to call on kibbutzim to employ immigrants as wage laborers contrary to their socialist ideals and many KM and KA kibbutzim acted accordingly despite the leaders' objection (Kafkafi, 1992; Kynan, 1989; Shapira, 2001, 2008).

An additional reason for distrust was the leaders' indifference to the credit crunch initiated by the government to try to stop inflation. The crunch plus kibbutzim's minimal realizable assets deterred banks from financing their growth and innovation, using the desperate need of kibbutzim for credit to give

it against promissory notes (IOUs) at a very high interest rate (Shalem, 2000: p. 88). Throughout the 1950s kibbutzim paid 11% of their revenues as interest on loans to banks while the leaders and their deputies as Cabinet ministers and parliament members ignored this problem; a few mid-level *pe'ilim* and a bank official solved it in the early 1960s, enabling resumed growth and success (Shapira, 2011).

Near (2008: p. 467) summed up the leaders' failures in the 1950s:

“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’.”

6. Mid-Levelers Resumed Success, Enhanced Charismatic Leaders Postures

Near (2008: p. 467) explained the leaders' failures of the 1950s by their excessive engagement in national politics, but in view of their dysfunctional conservatism since 1943 the opposite explanation is more probable: instead of innovative solving of kibbutzim's problems excess external activity camouflaged leadership dysfunction, while Ben-Gurion's Mapai Party ruled through coalitions with right-wing and clerical parties, leaving KM's and KA's Mapam party as a powerless opposition. This dire situation called for transformational leaders who would trust followers “partners in the quest to achieve important objectives” (Yukl, 1999: p. 301), but the two leaders ceased such leadership in the early 1940s. The ideological-political nature of the 1950s crises empowered them: As they specialized in this action domain, leaders from other domains such as economic I-KO CEOs seemed implausible successors. Stalinist revolutionary rhetoric suited the leaders specializing in oral and written discourse, it masked their conservatism with a facade of radicalism, it legitimized autocratic castration of democracy and its cosmic worldview made leaders' reign supreme (e.g., Wolf, 1999). Tabenkin even asserted that Stalinist ideological faith was more important than truthful knowledge (Kafkafi, 1992). Moreover, the leaders' authority was little harmed by ineptness concerning kibbutzim's problems as they were likened to Admors in Hassidic courts, supposedly above solving mundane problems (Halamish, 2013; Shapira, 2008; Shure, 2001).

The leaders emphasized their uniqueness by toppling critical ascenders through their suppression and/or ousting, thus becoming indispensable for their movements (Ansell & Fish, 1999). Barring competitive elections for Movements' leaderships they castrated democracy as cited above while the supposedly egalitarian *rotatzia* (rotation) norm legitimized the early demotion of critical *pe'ilim*, unlike loyalists who kept offices for decades or circulated among such jobs (Shapira, 2005). In accord with Lord Acton, the ample power corrupted them; in the 1940s they were given company cars for their sole use; this was a significant

privilege, as abstemious kibbutzim had no cars, only trucks, vans, 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: p. 180). These and other privileges that distanced them from ordinary members 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: p. 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 that deputy’s 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: p. 745).

The progression towards oligarchic dominance and the emergence of charismatic images was gradual: the two leaders introduced autocratic practices after 8 - 10 years on the job; four to six years later they turned to Stalinism that legitimized autocracy and then after another 4 - 6 years did they cease innovative problem-solving and become dysfunctional, less socialized, and more personalized leaders (Poulin et al., 2007) while gradually distancing themselves from members. Together with the other control means mentioned above and use of low-moral subterfuges such as concealing I-KOs’ conformism they kept power despite crises. Then in the 1960s they enjoyed the prestige of the successes of local kibbutz innovators and similar *pe’ilim* who entered the leadership vacuum, and thereby solved major problems such as the credit crunch (Shalem, 2000; Shapira, 2011). The dysfunctional leaders “rode” on their successes (e.g., Shapira, 2017: p. 69), presenting charismatic postures which all scholars accepted as true as they were “protected from close contact with reality” (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2014: p. 11) of I-KOs’ dysfunctional conservative conformism (Shapira, 2001, 2008, 2017).

7. Summary, Conclusions, and Discussion

Initially non-charismatic trusting transformational leaders led humbly, high-morally, and democratically innovative-prone two kibbutz movements that settled uncultivated arid and/or marshlands while overcoming rival ideologists. But after a decade of success and fast growth they proceeded to curb democracy, centralize control, and prolonged loyal deputies’ tenures, violating the egalitarianism and democracy they preached. This violation diminished members’ trust and helped competing leaders’ threats to their power. Defensively, they adopted USSR reverence which they had previously rejected as it legitimized autocracy, and soon became conservative dysfunctional oligarchic for three decades, in accord with Michels’ (1959 [1915]) “Iron Law” and LLCT. USSR reverence, I-KOs’ oligarchization, and *pe’ilim*’s promotion and retention according to personal

loyalty, empowered the leaders but furthered distrust, brain-drain, and a lack of critically thinking deputies, major reasons for Stalin's anti-Semitic 1950 turn hit their movements so hard, causing major crises. But despite the crises, mass attrition, brain-drain, and the calling of the USSR's bluff in 1956, they retained their power and fostered a charismatic image with loyal deputies' and coopted scholars' help, while keeping their indispensable leader status by suppressing potential effective successors (Ansell & Fish, 1999) up to their biological end in the 1970s.

The 1960-1970 successes were achieved by mid-levelers who 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 I-KO plants (Shapira, 2017). Trusting transformational mid-levelers rejuvenated the kibbutz field with the help of national organs since I-KOs and kibbutzim filled societal functions deemed nationally essential. Their successes doubled the kibbutzim's population within two decades, but the leaders' oligarchic domination barred them from succession; yes-men deputies who lacked critical thinking succeeded the leaders in accord with Hirschman (1970) and led to the mid-1980s major crisis and abandonment of communalism (Shapira, 2008).

Gini's (1997) warning about the delicate nature of leadership combinations is justified as is Mohr's (2013) warning against leaders' deluding facades; researchers' co-optation by the leaders caused evasion of Lewin's (1951) field theory and of I-KOs that served leaders' concealment of empowering I-KO conformist cultures, which helped typify the leaders as charismatic, ignoring their abandoning trusting transformational leaderships quite early, becoming dysfunctional conservatives. With no cultural analysis of the kibbutz field's two contrary hemispheres, kibbutzim and I-KOs, researchers missed leaders' amoral self-perpetuation by conformist autocratic oligarchic I-KO cultures, and how privileged leaders' loyalist conservative *pe'ilim* became dominant in their kibbutzim, causing degeneration of high-trust innovation-prone kibbutz cultures (Shapira, 2005, 2008, 2016b).

Social scientists accepted the charismatic posture as they missed the leaders' power sources, while historians studied only one type of I-KOs, the Movements without alluding to their anti-kibbutz practices. But with the field's growth and ramification economic I-KOs' CEOs became powerful; their I-KOs' autocratic capitalist-like cultures accorded Movements' conservatism, and their loyalty to the leaders helped their prolonged tenures. "There is nothing more practical in science than a good theory" said Kurt Lewin (1951); without Lewin's field theory and I-KOs' study, researchers missed the impact of the capitalist context on the kibbutz field leaderships (Shapira, 2001, 2015, 2016b). Researchers also lacked clear leadership concepts; without the addition of "trusting" to "transformational leadership" its high morality was not clearly discerned from moral neutrality of charismatic leadership, missing that trusting leaders achieved exceptional successes by empowering followers, and that leaders' later decades were

low-moral conservative non-charismatic. Kibbutz scholars followed most literature in which morality is a marginal aspect of “charismatic-transformational leadership”: of the 439 publications citing [Van Knippenberg and Sitkin’s \(2013\)](#) critique of this concept, 246 (56%) made no mention of “moral(ity)” (Google Scholar, accessed February 20, 2018).

The findings support [DiTomaso’s \(1993\)](#) critique of authors who missed Weber and Etzioni’s insight that charisma is about wisdom, wisdom which the leaders enjoyed at first due to trustfully engaging brilliant innovators like KA’s Shenhabi, but deprived later as they suppressed innovators, distanced themselves from the rank-and-file’s know-how and *phronesis* of communal problems, and listened to yes-men deputies. Status elevation and its assurance by Stalinist cosmology encouraged the leaders’ conservatism and the evasion of problems troubling kibbutzim that required creative innovation ([Shapira, 2008](#); e.g., [Stryjan, 1989](#)); the suppression of critically thinking innovators and elevation of loyalists lacking such thinking helps explain the leaders’ surprise by Stalin’s 1950 anti-Semitic turn and their continued USSR reverence after 1956. Beside an aversion to admitting mistakes the leaders needed the fresh critical thinking of creative innovators in order to replace Stalinism with new visions and cultures but encouraging such thinking would have elevated potential successors, hence they persisted with the USSR’s bluffs that defended their superiority.

The findings emphasize the time dimension of leadership and leaders’ power to mislead students without close contact to the reality of leadership practices ([Carroll et al., 2008](#); [Kärreman & Alvesson, 2014](#)). Without the time dimension, students missed the gradual conversion of high-moral trusting transformational leadership into a conservative oligarchic dominance concealed by autocratic means, researchers’ co-optation, and deluding by Stalinism’s bluff and charismatic postures. Changes over time help explain the acceptance of charismatic postures: Such postures were questionable when Stalinism was controversial (the 1940s) and when crises exposed leaders’ ineptness (1950s); only with the 1960s-1970s successes did these postures become convincing. Indeed, the first scholar to designate the leaders as charismatic was [Rayman \(1981\)](#).

The current study supports LLCT, as initially effective innovative leaders became dysfunctional, but LLCT ignores [Michels \(1959\[1915\]\)](#) at its peril: Leaders may turn dysfunctional oligarchs quite gradually; LLCT research operationalized leaders’ dysfunction commencement as firms’ results start to decline but this may miss the beginning of defensive autocracy by several years. This time lag is a major problem of democratic organizations: leaders’ turn to autocratic defensiveness may commence early, with signs of dwindling effectiveness and threats to their position; despite criticism they often continue due to mediocre functioning and the prestige resulting from past successes. By the time most followers discern their dysfunction and actively seek succession, they are entrenched, their autocracy pruned critical thinkers and innovators ([Hirschman, 1970](#)), and the lack of promising successors bars succession ([Ansell & Fish, 1999](#)). This problem calls upon research to pay more attention to followership processes

(Hollander, 2009) and to seek solutions to the imminent threat of oligarchization (Shapira, 2008: Ch. 18).

One practical conclusion is that those who decide about leaders' succession would do better to probe leaders' practices, whether they succeeded by vulnerable involvement in employees/followers' deliberations, built mutual trust, and solved problems by learning from them and with them while allowing them discretion (Fox, 1974), or used distancing to conceal their ineptness while "riding" on mid-levelers' successes with a false image of successful leadership (Gardner et al., 2005). This can untangle careful listening in a trustful climate of openness to critical assessment by a candidate's ex-partners who may best know her/his dark secrets (e.g., Boddy et al., 2010; Shapira, 2008, 2017; Tourish, 2013).

Secondly, as a leader's change process to dysfunctional is impacted by variable internal and contextual factors, there is no uniform leadership life cycle; leaders' tenures impact leadership life cycles (Wulf et al., 2011). Hence, no any mandatory term length can achieve timely leaders' succession that minimizes dysfunction phases; a new anti-oligarchic succession leader norm is needed instead of mandatory terms, which failed wherever and whenever tried (Bowra, 1971; Gabriel & Savage, 1981; Shapira, 2001, 2005; Vald, 1987), and instead of "Golden Parachutes" which are unrelated to leaders' job-functioning (e.g., Johnson, 2008). Leaders' tenures must be subject to periodic tests of trust, say re-election every 3-4 years. However, this provision will be effective only if each additional re-election would require a progressively larger majority to neutralize the impact of accumulating tangible and intangible capitals in a job (Ginsburg et al., 2011: 1861; Shapira, 2015, 2017). Successes of democratic firms (Erdal, 2011; Semler, 1993; Shapira, 2008; Whyte & Whyte, 1988) suggest that such a democratic succession norm, which comprises knowledgeable insiders in continuity or succession decisions side by side with directors, can timely assure the leaders' succession when they commence dysfunctioning.

Studies of corporate leaders' changing practices can explain their changing combinations throughout their tenure; by longitudinal ethnographies of multiple units with different sub-cultures (e.g., Parker, 2000) research can reveal leaders' practice changes some of which are dark secrets, and using the critical power of the practice lens (Gherardi, 2009) explains leadership processes instigated by these and other variables. Then leadership processes are comprehensively explained and research becomes relevant and practical for both leaders' education and practicing leaders. Such studies have to be prolonged and extensive much more than common organizational ethnographies, and they better be phronetic, that is seeking practical and concrete answers that are ethical to major problems concerning the leadership of one's society (e.g., Flyvbjerg, 2006; Shapira, 2008).

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Conflicts of Interest

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