

Ignorance-Concealing Use of Immoral Means by Outsider Managers, a Covert Corrupting Practice that Nurtures Immoral Executives

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Abstract

Executives' morality and ethics became major research topics after recent business scandals, but research missed a major explanation of executives' immorality: career advancement by "jumping" between firms that cause gaps of job-essential local know-how, tempting "jumpers" to covertly concealing managerial ignorance (hereafter: CCMI). CCMI causes mismanagement by vicious distrust and ignorance cycles, it bars performance-based career advancement and encourages immoral careerism (Im-C), advancing by immoral subterfuges. Im-C is a known organizational malady but its explanation missed "jumpers" CCMI, probably due to secrecy and conspiracies of silence as well as managers' ignorance of own ignorance. A 5-year semi-native anthropological study of five "jumper"-managed automatic processing plants and their parent inter-kibbutz co-operatives found CCMI-induced Im-C practiced by some 75% of executives, versus only by some 25% of mid-levelers. This gradation of morality suggests that "jumping" careers tend to nurture immoral executives. Ideas for remedies for this corporate malady are suggested, and further study of "jumpers" coping with ignorance is called for.

Keywords: *Covertly concealing managerial ignorance; immoral careerism; trust and learning cycles; distrust and ignorance cycles; vulnerable involvement.*

Introduction

Extremes can identify the phenomenon like no other means. According to Arendt (1963) the vice that promoted Eichmann to a high Nazi position from which he organized the industrialized extermination of millions of Jews and others, i.e. immoral careerism (Im-C), was a common vice of mass society. Given the business scandals in the last decade, managerial ethics has become a major topic of organizational research (e.g., Ailon, 2013; Gini, 2004; Rhode, 2006); this is not true of Im-C, although it encourages unethical behavior. For example, in the 58 Sage management and organization studies journals there are 966 article abstracts that contain the word "career" but only five contain either "careerism" or "careerist," though already Riesman (1950) decried American managers' transition from high-moral serving the social good to pursuing private ends at others' expense, and Dalton (1959) found prevalent Im-C among corporate managers. Luthans (1988) found that ineffective careerist managers advanced careers more than effective ones, while a majority of executives surveyed by *U.S. News & World Report* felt that "managers try too hard to be stars when what is needed is old-fashioned competence" (Buckley, 1989). Feldman and Weitz (1991) found that Im-C increased among a university's business administration alumni from 1970s graduates to 1980s graduates, and Weissberg (2002) found widespread Im-C among US academics who became university administrators. Self-serving careerists were found all too common (Bratton and Kacmar, 2004; Flyvbjerg, 2006), Starbuck (2007: 24) found that "careerism has been pervasive" in the business schools and Curtis (2009: 505) concluded that careerism is "seldom conducive to clear thinking or original thought." Military scholars have criticized Im-C¹ and Luttwak (1984: 200) warned that "If careerism becomes the general attitude, the very basis of [military] leadership is destroyed." However, ex-Marine Corps Colonel Wilson (2011: 46) pointed out:

"...many senior officers think that the military is all about getting promoted and accumulating as many signs of rank and status as possible, completed with a host of perks... [They] are so prevalent because bureaucracies are in effect designed by and for careerists... [Careerists] are promoted because of a zero defect record of playing it safe, making no controversial decisions and requiring others to do the same."

Behaviorists explain Im-C by careerists' traits, beliefs, and ideologies (e.g., Chiaburu et al., 2012), but Wilson explains it structurally: careerists' hegemony shapes bureaucracies conducive to Im-C. A major route for career advance is changing firms with a façade (Goffman, 1959) of successful functioning in previous jobs by low-moral means: concealing, camouflaging and scapegoating others for one's mistakes,

¹ Ficarrotta, 1988; Gabriel and Savage, 1981; Mosier, 1988; Vald, 1987.

wrongs, and failures,² while appropriating to oneself others' successes (Mehri, 2005: 142; Shapira, 1987: 95). "Star" images created by careerist "jumpers" (Groysberg et al., 2008) help rapid career advancement by concealing real competencies and pitfalls. Corporate Boards commonly nominated "star" "jumpers" as "saviors" to please Wall Street while ignoring nominees fit for the job, and many such "stars" failed.³ Succession studies failed for half a century to conclude whether insiders or "jumpers" were preferable (Karaevli, 2007) but recently students found superiority of insiders.⁴

"Jumpers" are common: 58% of US executives were "jumpers" (Campbell et al., 1995), as were 33% of CEOs in the 500 S&P firms (Bower, 2007), but the ample organizational knowledge and management learning research missed a crucial question in this regard: Which practices do "jumpers" use as they face inevitable ignorance of job-essential local tacit know-how and *phronesis* of their new job, which subordinates have due to specialized education, practicing jobs and learning within communities of practitioners?⁵

"Jumpers" suffer larger knowledge gaps than insiders (Bower, 2007), while successful job functioning requires learning local know-how and *phronesis* (Townley, 2002) by vulnerable involvement that exposes ignorance and gains locals' trust and will to share tacit knowledge, which only social contacts can teach.⁶ However, ignorance exposure diminishes authority, which may be regained only if learning succeeds (Blau, 1955). Due to knowledge gaps "jumpers" often see little prospect for successful learning, avoid admitting ignorance and use their powers for concealment of managerial ignorance (CoMI for short). They use bluffs, power abuses, and other subterfuges to camouflage ignorance and scapegoat others for their mistakes and failures, while concealing these low-moral deeds as dark secrets, i.e., their very existence is secret (Goffman, 1959), veiled on organizations' dark side by conspiracies of silence.⁷ Only a few studied managerial ignorance, but these few found it common.⁸ Studies of managerial effectiveness concur: Ineffective managers advanced careers more than effective ones (Luthans, 1988); among Gallup-studied 80,000 managers only a few were effective (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999), as found by others as well.⁹ Anthropologists repeatedly depicted managerial ignorance of employees' know-how and *phronesis* as also admitted corporate CEOs.¹⁰

Anthropologists did not study how managers handle their ignorance (Roberts, 2013) as they could not be participant observers as managers, but the uncovering of managers' common bluffs, abuses, scapegoating and other subterfuges, suggests that they used these low-moral means to conceal ignorance and incompetence to defend their authority, jobs and careers.¹¹ However, managers' morality was not grasped as a personal strategic choice (e.g., Mintzberg, 1987) that affected ignorance handling, and the finding that managers used low-moral means were rarely related to CCMI (e.g., Mehri, 2005). Such means are kept a dark secret, an explanation how the research missed CCMI as a common strategic personal choice. Even stupidity research did not allude to CCMI, and explained mismanagement by psychological dysfunction (Sternberg, 2002), although "jumping" causes ignorance: the "jumper" takes charge of an unfamiliar unit/function/firm, lacking its "[p]ractical wisdom ...[which is] emerging developmentally within an unceasing flow of activities, in which practitioners are inextricably immersed" (Shotter and Tsoukas, 2014: 377). However, "jumpers" power enables them to avoid immersion and, as cited, many managers use low-moral means, probably to veil their ignorance and incompetence, which causes CCMI through avoidance of immersion, ignoring and suppressing employees' voice that can expose it (Fast et al., 2014). CCMI leads

² Dalton, 1959; Hughes, 1958; Jackall, 1988; Maccoby, 1976; Webb and Cleary, 1994; Wexler, 2006.

³ Bower, 2007; Groysberg et al., 2008; Johnson, 2008; Khurana, 2002; Tichy and Bennis, 2007.

⁴ Bower, 2007; Collins, 2001; Heskett, 2011; Santora, 2004; Shapira, 2008, 2013.

⁵ Fine, 2012; Flyvbjerg, 2001; Orlikowski, 2002; Orr, 1996; Schön, 1983.

⁶ Bennis, 1989: 17; Collins and Weinel, 2011; Shotter and Tsoukas, 2014: 377; Zand, 1972.

⁷ Dalton, 1959; Griffin and O'Leary-Kelly, 2004; Hase et al., 2006; Hughes, 1958; Jackall, 1988; Linstead et al., 2014; Mehri, 2005; Shapira, 1987, 1995.

⁸ Gannon, 1983; Hogan and Hogan, 2001; Shapira, 2015b; Smithson, 1989; Zbaracki, 1998.

⁹ Baldoni, 2008; Curphy et al., 2008; Dalton, 1959; Hogan and Hogan, 2001; Hollander, 1998; Izraeli, 1977.

¹⁰ Collinson, 2005; Dalton, 1959; Gouldner, 1954; Orr, 1996; Mehri, 2005; Roy, 1952; Shapira, 1987. Admitting CEOs: Grove, 1996: 144; Robison, 2010.

¹¹ E.g., Boddy et al., 2010; Dalton, 1959; Jackall, 1988; Levenson, 1961; Mehri, 2005; Shapira, 2015a, 2015b.

“jumpers” to Im-C by shuttering performance-based advancement, rather advancing careers by bolstering authority and prestige through abuse of power, petty tyranny, downward mobbing, and other such means, which are “much more widespread than usually recognized or acknowledged” (Diefenbach, 2013: 150).

The above begs major questions: Does career advancement by “jumping” encourage CCMI and Im-C, resulting in lower morality the higher a manager’s position? If so, how can this situation change such that managers will prefer trust-creating ignorance-exposing vulnerable involvement and remain high-moral even in executive positions?

Literature Review and Theory

Managerial morality and ethics became a major research topic after Enron, Worldcom and other such scandals,¹² but research missed the possibility that executives’ amorality often stems from “jumper” careers advanced by practicing CCMI that leads to Im-C. Dalton’s (1959: 152-7) mid-levelers asserted that their bosses advanced careers by low-moral, non-performance means and many found that managerial Im-C was all too common as was cited. However, the etiological connection between “jumping,” opting for CCMI, incompetence, mismanagement and Im-C was missed, seemingly because managers are mostly unaware of their ignorance (Kruger and Dunning, 1999) and because they use status, authority and power to conceal their ignorance and/or its consequences as dark secrets, i.e., their very existence is kept secret (Goffman, 1959). Secrecy encourages low-moral practices such as abuse of power, scapegoating, bluffing and other subterfuges, engendering employees’ suspicions and distrust, which result in descending trust spirals with far reaching consequences.

“Jumpers” may conceal their ignorance by detachment from practitioners’ deliberations and by seductive-coercive autocratic involvement that suppresses employees’ openness and will to teach them (e.g., Gouldner, 1954; Gittell, 2000). Detachment conceals ignorance, as in the Jewish saying “a mute fool is reputed to be wise”; it resembles Edgerton’s (1967) mentally retarded youths, who when leaving their shelter avoided others who might have exposed their incompetence. Both CCMI strategies engender distrust that shutters knowledge sharing and diminishes learning and problem-solving.¹³ Trust and distrust are reciprocal and tend to create either ascending or descending spirals (Fox, 1974). CCMI engenders vicious cycles of descending trust, secrecy, ignorance preservation, mistaken decisions, ineffectiveness, and failures that further distrust by expert and innovative employees as managers use conservatism to spare expertise-needy innovation.¹⁴ Contrary to CCMI users, ignorance exposing vulnerably involved managers create virtuous trust and learning cycles by openness to employee knowledge contributions, enhancing their intrinsic motivation, self-determination, and wilful cooperation,¹⁵ resulting in high-performing innovation-prone cultures (Heskett, 2011; Shapira, 2013). Some authors emphasized staff’s talent and character (Collins, 2001: Ch. 3; Meyer, 2010: 63), and others emotional, social and cognitive intelligence (Boyatzis, 2009), but having the right knowledge, skills and *phronesis* is even more crucial as it enhances psychological safety (Nienaber et al., 2015) that encourages one’s choice of trust-creating ignorance-exposing vulnerable involvement that enables learning tacit know-how and *phronesis* from and with practitioners, engendering virtuous trust and learning cycles that result in organizational effectiveness and innovativeness.¹⁶ The knowledge gaps of “jumpers” hamper their psychological safety, deter them from vulnerable involvement, and their CCMI engenders vicious distrust and ignorance cycles that retain incompetence despite their intelligence, resulting in failed job performance that encourages Im-C (Shapira, 2013, 2015b, In print). The contrary processes can be summarized concisely, thus:

Virtuous Trust and Learning Cycle

Insiders choose ignorance-exposing

versus

Vicious Distrust and Ignorance Cycle

“Jumpers” choose CCMI either by detachment

¹² Ailon, 2013; Johnson, 2008; Pullen and Rhodes, 2015; Rhode, 2006; Villette and Vuillermot, 2009; for earlier works see: Ciulla, 1998; Jackall, 1988; Scharfstein, 1995.

¹³ Diefenbach, 2013; Fast et al., 2014; Fox, 1974; Gittell, 2000; Gouldner, 1954; Shapira, 1987, 1995, 2013.

¹⁴ Gouldner, 1954; Mehri, 2005; Shapira, 2013; Webb and Cleary, 1994.

¹⁵ Bennis, 1989; Guest, 1962; Obembe, 2012; Thomas et al., 2009; Weibel and Six, 2012; Zand, 1972.

¹⁶ Deutsch, 1962; Geneen, 1984; Guest, 1962; Shapira, 2012a; Zand, 1972.

vulnerable involvement due to much local knowledge, psychological safety and other reasons



Ignorance exposure creates trust, openness; and knowledge sharing that enhances managers' learning, correct decisions and successes



Successes further the above process; Managers gain expertises, become Competent and enhance innovation



The resulting innovation-prone high-trust enhances learning from innovation mistakes, furthering executives learning and encouraging more involvement

or coercive-seductive autocratic control due to local knowledge gaps, lack of psychological safety and other reasons



Both choices causes distrust and secrecy that inhibits "jumpers" learning, causing mistaken , indecision, failures, destructive conflicts, bluffs, abuses and subterfuges



The above furthers secrecy and learning inhibition; further failures and executives' job-incompetence that encourages conservatism



Conservatism spares some mistakes but secrecy culture causes others and minimal learning from them, to repeat them, and brain-drain which furthers the low-trust culture with all above maladies

The choice between these alternatives affects the trust level, which decisively impacts knowledge and information sharing, without which "jumpers" remain ignorant incompetents (Bennis, 1989: 17; Gouldner, 1954). Moreover, large, sophisticated firms use such a huge amount of know-how and *phronesis* that no single individual, even a highly educated genius, can hold them all or even a large part of them. Hence, knowledge sharing is vital for effective management (Simon, 1957), requiring open trustful dialogue between and within echelons.¹⁷ High-trust, innovation-prone cultures called "organic" by Burns and Stalker (1961),¹⁸ were common in early-day kibbutzim (Pl. of kibbutz; Shapira, 2008; Spiro, 1983), but often disappeared with growth, success and oligarchization (Kressel, 1974; Shapira, 2001, 2008) as in other large communes, cooperatives and socialist parties.¹⁹ Many kibbutz members called *pe'ilim* (meaning activists; singular: *pa'il*) managed kibbutzim democratically at first and then "jumped" to manage I-KOs (inter-kibbutz organizations), including I-KRCs (inter-kibbutz regional cooperatives), but this was often autocratic and oligarchic, conforming to Israeli bureaucratic cultures (Shapira, 1987, 2008). This implies that their "jumping" (called "parachuting" in Israel) to I-KRC management encouraged CCMI-Im-C.

Thus, the research questions are 1. Was Im-C prevalent in "Jumper"-managed I-KRC gin plants? 2. Can "jumping" explain the majority choice of CCMI rather than ignorance-exposing vulnerable involvement? 3. To what degree did "jumpers" CCMI-Im-C negatively impact plant functioning? 4. Did managerial echelons differ in their practicing CCMI-Im-C and did differing practices explain differing successes and careers? 5. How can the negative impact of "jumping" be mitigated?

The paper has three sections: 1. Longitudinal semi-native multi-site ethnography: method and cases. 2. Findings: CCMI-Im-C by "jumper" managers and executives. 3. Conclusions, discussion, and plausible solutions.

1. Longitudinal Semi-Native Multi-Site Ethnography: Method and Cases

Anthropologists have rarely studied executives (Welker et al., 2011) as they face a major barrier: they cannot be executives and thus heed the advice of sages of old: "Don't judge others until you have stood in their shoes"; field-work as an employee (Mehri, 2005) or an observer-interviewer (Dalton, 1959) cannot achieve this. I overcame this barrier by a unique semi-native longitudinal Anthropology: A native anthropologist studies his/her people and, being too close to them, may adopt their biased or particularistic views (Narayan, 1993), while outsider ethnographers suffer naivety, miss/misunderstand locals' sincere views and/or other crucial insider knowledge (Gioia et al., 2013: 19). I avoided both by studying five automatic cotton gin plants and their parent I-KRCs, each owned by dozens of kibbutzim and managed by *pe'ilim* who "jumped" there from managing kibbutzim or kibbutz production units called "branches." Like

¹⁷ Deutsch, 1962; Fox, 1974; Guest, 1962; Raelin, 2013; Shapira, 2012b, 2013; Thomas et al., 2009; Zand, 1972.

¹⁸ E.g., Dore, 1973; Heskett, 2011; Ouchi, 1981; Semler, 1993.

¹⁹ Brumann, 2000; Michels, 1959[1915]; Russell, 1995; Stryjan, 1989.

them I was a kibbutz member, had a college managerial education and had experienced for 18 years work and management at my kibbutz's automatic processing plant that partially resembled the five cotton gin plants studied, hence enjoying much referred expertise i.e., expertise in other action domains that facilitates local learning (Collins and Sanders, 2007); I knew some *pe'ilim* even before the study, as well as the kibbutz context that socialized them (Shapira, 2012b; e.g., Fondas and Wiersema, 1997); usually organizational ethnographers lacked such knowledge (Yanow, 2004).

Due to all these, I approached *pe'ilim* as their peer and interviews often turned into openly discussed common problems and I gained access to their documents. I entered the field as an anthropologist, without choosing a research design in advance, aiming at thick description (Geertz, 1973) based on variegated data collected while participating in local life and sensing subjects' feelings, building mutual trust with informants and achieving openness such that my analysis is based on complete, reliable, accurate and sincere views and information. Moreover, this openness and trust enabled valid interpretation of my data: as coping with the problems of plants' uncertainty domains, such as the changing characteristics of raw cotton, was learned exclusively on-the-job, I held mini-seminars with nationally renowned veteran ginning experts, learned these problems and acquired considerable "know-that" before learning the "know-how" (Brown, 2001) by participant observation as registrar. Eventually, I was so knowledgeable of ginning that technicians and supervisors asked me why I did not replace their intelligent and educated but ginning ignorant plant manager (hereafter PM) Shavit.

1.1 The Focal Plant and the Case Studies

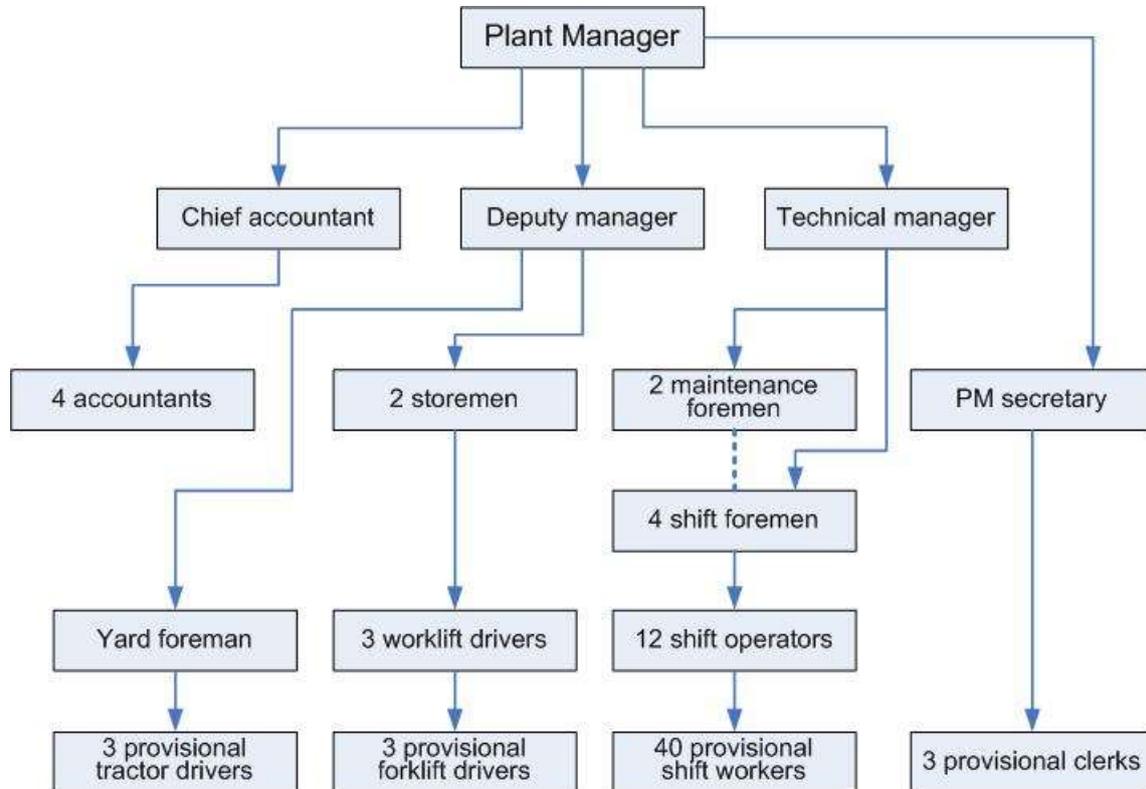
For five years I intermittently visited the focal Merkaz high-capacity automatic cotton gin plant (a pseudonym, as are all names hereafter) and its I-KRC's industrial park, holding both casual talks and lengthy open interviews of up to an hour and a half with 168 current and former staff members plus 24 executives of its parent I-KRC and other plants, both *pe'ilim* and hired employees, as well as cotton growers, some of them more than once (interviews recorded in writing; many were home interviews with a protocol of 565 folio pages). Intensive participant observation was made as a shift worker along the focal plant's 3.5 month high season when it operated non-stop 24/7 and included visits to the other two shifts. My registrar job enabled me some writing during the shift and further details were added to it, resulting in 791 pages observation journal. Then I toured four other gin plants, observed their premises and interviewed 63 present and past executives and managers (331 page protocol). The longitudinal ethnographing, with free access to documents, made it possible to check information and assertions, avoiding outsiders' naivety and managers' tendency to bend information to build their image. Thick descriptions of managers' practices let me judge them as if I stood in their shoes. Moreover, I analyzed and re-analyzed my data several times over the last 30 years, returning from aggregate dimensions to 1st order concepts (Gioia et al., 2013).

Merkaz had two processing units in some, 2000 and 2500 square meter halls full of large noisy machines connected by huge pipes and operated by some 200 and 240 electric motors of some 2300 and 3000 horse power. The two together were capable of processing 650-700 tons of raw cotton daily during the high season, September-December, but mismanagement limited average daily production to some 400 tons during my participant observation season. Raw cotton was brought to the yard and then to processing units in compressed stacks of eight ton on 6 X 2.5 meter metal stretches which stood on 6 one-meter long iron legs transported by specially built tractor-pulled hydraulic carriages. The main product, bales of quarter-ton cotton fibres, were stored in 3 stores, some, 2000 square meters each, until shipped to spinning mills, mostly abroad, while the other product (seeds) was lorry-transported to oil extraction plants.

Merkaz's gin plant permanent staff included 10 *pe'ilim* and 17 hired employees, supplemented by some 70 hired workers in the high season. 7 *pe'ilim* managed the plant: the PM, his deputy, the technical manager (hereafter TM), his deputy, the store manager, garage manager and office manager (figure 1). Some 40 kibbutzim with some 12,000 inhabitants owned Merkaz I-KRC that handled much of their agricultural input and output in six plants with some US\$350 million sales (almost one billion in current prices; e.g., Niv and Bar-On, 1992). It was administered by some, 200 *pe'ilim* and operated by some 650 hired employees. Kibbutzim received uniform salaries for *pe'ilim*'s work, whose formal term of office was five years, in accord with the supposedly egalitarian *rotatzia* (rotation) norm at kibbutzim, but senior powerful *pe'ilim* violated it: national I-KO heads continued for up to 52 years, some I-KRC CEOs served for up to 28 years,

I-KO officials continued for 10-20 years and lesser *pe'ilim* “jumped” among jobs every 5-10 years. Higher-ups were empowered by violating *rotatzia* versus rotating lower echelons, enhancing oligarchization rather than curbing it, contrary to the declared aim. The kibbutz field (e.g., Lewin, 1951) was stratified, much like a corporation (Shapira, 2005, 2008) hence its analysis can help explain corporate executives.

Figure 1: Organization Chart of the Merkaz Gin Plant in the High Season



2. Findings: CCMI-Im-C by “Jumper” Managers and Executives

Touring Merkaz plants and interviewing the CEO and 23 executives, untangled clear signs of Im-C, contrary to *pe'ilim*'s assertions that their prime aim was to advance plants' effectiveness and efficiency to best serve kibbutzim. On plants' shop-floors I discerned obliviousness to inefficiencies and ineffectiveness, rarely did I find signs of genuine interest in

pe'ilim's declared aims. For example, as against *pe'ilim*'s brand new company, cars fork-lifts were cheap old sluggish models that frequently breakdown. Another contrast: most plants were enlarged far beyond kibbutz agricultural requirements while exhibiting technological virtuosity, signaling the accumulation of power by the managerial elite interested in prestige, status, power, privileges and prolong tenures (Shapira, 1978/9; e.g., Galbraith, 1971). Likewise lavish amenities: Air-conditioned offices and ample company cars which were rare in kibbutzim at the time, and privileges such as learning trips abroad which were undeclared bonuses as their routes violated declared aims. Kibbutzim had abstemious egalitarian cultures, while *pe'ilim*'s standard of living especially that of senior ones was well beyond kibbutzim standard.

Merkaz's new fodder mix mill demonstrated *pe'ilim*'s self-aggrandizement: before adding the new computerized mill to the older one the annual mix production per employee was 1291 tons, while subsequently, instead of the promised enhanced productivity it fell to 1123 tons. This mill's construction was a mega-project-type OPM waste by excessively ambitious and incompetent executives (Flyvbjerg et al., 2003): Its planned cost was US\$8 million, while the actual cost was US\$20 million (fixed prices); planners and executives bent some numbers to gain Board's approval. Amid construction, the true cost became known while fodder mix consumption projections showed that half the planned capacity would be superfluous in the next decade. The kibbutzim demanded a reduction of the project's scale, but *pe'ilim*

stubbornly objected as they expected to fail with this complex, tricky task. Finally, they won, the mill was built, was underutilized, and kibbutzim paid extra fodder mix prices.

Similar excesses and self-aggrandizing incompetence characterized other Merkaz plant enlargements (Shapira, 1978/9). Worse still, CCMI user “jumpers” caused fiascos: for instance, the autocratic gin PM Yuval decided to replace the electricity system at the cost of some US\$300,000 (US\$900,000 in current prices) with an imported system, presented by the importer and a colluding consultancy engineer as state-of-the-art. Soon after starting operations it failed and was replaced, doubling the cost. The former plant’s chief, an electrician who had left due to his objections to this system, warned Yuval that it could be presented as a novel because there were no such systems in Israel since they had failed and were replaced. But Yuval did not review this warning with experts to conceal his complete ignorance of industrial electricity.

Yuval’s stupid CCMI echoed top ginning experts’ critique of gin plants’ ignorant PMs and TMs. Arbiv, the past successful TM of Northern Gin Plant (below) who became an R&D engineer at the US labs of the world’s largest ginning equipment manufacturer said:

“The manager of the Western Gin Plant who also headed the National Gin Plant Association reached the conclusion that a good technical manager is just a good mechanic and did a bad service to the entire industry. Take Gornitzki from the Western Gin Plant – he’s an excellent mechanic but during his first five years as technical manager, he had no idea about cotton. Fortunately for him, he had two senior shift foremen who did know something about it and saved him. And do you think he knows anything about it today? Did you see how he failed with the automatic sampler?”

This failure in Western Gin resembled those of the other five plants, pointed to the large gap between a good mechanic and a professional TM of an automatic gin plant. This gap was indicated by another top-level expert based on his twenty years of experience as the head of national cotton fibre grading laboratory, a graduate of a professional school in Mississippi whose lab’s grading decided Israeli cotton fibre bales’ market value:

“Only very few people knew the [ginning] trade... At each gin plant, there was the administrative [plant] manager who did not last long, a *pa’il* whose circulation decided continuity rather than the gin plant [needs], this was the worst defect, because until one learns the subject... a plant manager needs at least 5-6 years. The professionals who did the ginning, its changes and innovations were hired mechanics, often good mechanics who knew nothing about cotton – there was a huge gap between [knowing] the technical side and understanding cotton.”

My data corroborated these portrayals of most of the “jumper” gin PMs and TMs, but my explanation of the etiology of their ignorance and incompetence differs meaningfully: CCMI user “jumper” PMs and TMs were incompetent no matter how long they served, keeping jobs by low-moral power abuse and subterfuges while “riding” on the successes of vulnerably- involved expert subordinates, as Gornitzki was saved by such subordinates.

2.1. Detached CCMI of PM Moav: 10 Years of “Riding” on Subordinate Successes

Veteran *pa’il* Moav, who was a close relative of the I-KRC CEO, “jumped” to establish the Merkaz gin plant from a large commercial I-KO’s chief bookkeeper job. His high office assisted the I-KRC Board’s approval of his nomination despite the nepotism involved and his minimal job-relevant knowledge. *Pe’ilim* Yaakov and Aharon, enthusiastic ex-managers of kibbutz cotton branches, were his deputies, and Muli, a hired technician “jumper” from another gin plant, was TM. He taught Yaakov and Aharon ginning basics, and through ignorance-exposing involvement, they created a high-trust shop-floor culture, learned ginners’ language (Collins, 2011), gained interactional ginning expertise (Collins and Evens, 2007) and functioned successfully. In the plant’s fifth year Yaakov led a successful expansion by adding a new, higher capacity second ginning unit. The veteran stores manager nostalgically remembered: “Yaakov modelled committed leadership so convincingly that you could not but follow him.”

Dozens of interviewees described Moav’s detached CCMI; he was a conservative stingy PM who spared expenses by barring innovative problem-solving. Work committed expert employees were minimally remunerated, only slightly more than lazy loafers retained because they made do with low salaries, while detached Moav missed the difference (Collins and Weinel, 2011). However, Moav was lavish with his amenities: one of the first air-conditioned offices in the park, a nice small company car and more. Moav’s Board members were likewise ignorant; Yaakov:

“In the [gin plant] Board there were a variety of people who may have had skills in various domains but no professional know-how [of ginning]. Only two of us were capable of making professional decisions - me and Aharon. When Aharon left [on the 6th year] I felt I was only disruptive... I knew every machine and all about the [cotton] business, but who else understood these? One can sell anyone any old wives’ tale over there, and the people are too embarrassed to ask questions so as not to reveal their ignorance.”

Management sessions were quite similar, according to the minutes: Moav rarely spoke, except when finances were discussed in an attempt to save on expenses.

When Moav finished a five-year formal term and a year after reaching retirement age (65), although everyone agreed that Yaakov as the plant’s real leader should replace him, the new CEO Akerman satisfied with Moav’s staunch loyalty as a member of the I-KRC Board of

Directors rejected Yaakov and Aharon’s demand for his succession. Akerman admitted that “Yaakov was Moav’s natural successor, he enjoyed the full trust of all those involved with the plant, which is of prime importance in this job,” but he declined to explain why the “natural successor” did not succeed. Moav’s job was entirely in the CEO’s hands, ensuring his yes-saying while Yaakov was empowered by the plant’s success (Klein 1998); the detached CEO only missed the fact that the plant would dysfunction if frustrated Yaakov would leave, as eventually happened.

Moav reacted by “parachuting” the young talented *pa’il* Yuval (aged 30) to Yaakov’s job, though ignorant of ginning and with minimal managerial experience, hence requiring prolonged grooming for the job and even more to succeed Moav. Moav prolonged his tenure by avoiding grooming a true leader (e.g., Haslam et al., 2011). The detached CEO accepted Yuval’s import as it spared him ignorance exposure by involvement in deliberations concerning a successor, but in his detachment, he missed Yuval’s drawbacks as Deputy PM (below). The CEO’s Im-C, preferring his power in the Board over the plant’s need for a true leader, prevented Yaakov’s nomination, enabling dysfunctional Moav’s double tenure, while detached CCMI allowed Yuval’s CCMI autocracy both as Deputy PM and as PM. The plant’s deterioration due to Yuval’s mismanagement, as exemplified above and detailed below, did not motivate the CEO to call back “the natural successor” Yaakov or to find a qualified PM (Shapira, 2015b).

2.2 CEOs Detachment Encouraged Autocratic CCMI-Im-C of PM Yuval

Yuval was an ex-kibbutz cotton branch manager; he was replaced after two years as according to branch members his autocracy contradicted kibbutz culture. He behaved likewise at Merkaz:

“Yuval entered the plant with too much brutal force; this was a major reason for my departure. He was the opposite of Yaakov; if some piston dysfunctioned – he went and tried to fix it with no consideration of experts; he never waited for them, never consulted them and after I left the staff rebelled against his excessive involvement in their work” (Senior Technician Amram).

Beside his autocracy habitus, ginning ignorance and minimal managerial experience, Yuval was much younger than veteran local experts; he lacked the psychological safety (e.g., Nienaber et al., 2015) necessary to risk ignorance exposure by the vulnerable involvement required for a virtuous trust and learning cycle. He used CCMI by keeping a distance from employees and occasionally interfering amateurishly and foolishly, ignoring experts and causing animosity, distrust, and secrecy. He roamed around but was isolated due to employees’ distrust and remained ignorant (e.g., Gouldner, 1954). This was exposed, for instance, when he drove a forklift over a frail pit cup which broke, and he and the machine fell into the pit.

He sought empowerment by “parachuting” lieutenant *pe’ilim* like himself (Moore, 1962: 109): first Karmi (aged 34), ex-manager of a kibbutz cotton branch, as Deputy PM. This frustrated Muli’s expectations for the job; he informed Yuval that he would soon leave and Yuval “parachuted” certified practical engineer *pa’il* Avi as Deputy TM. Intending to replace Muli with Avi he kept this secret (e.g., Hase et al., 2006) to prevent resistance by expert staff, who saw senior technician and foreman Amram as Muli’s heir apparent, but when a year and a half later Avi replaced Muli and failed miserably, exposing his incompetence due to detached CCMI. Senior foreman and shop steward Levi:

“Avi was so unsure of himself that you simply couldn’t understand his orders. So you would start asking him questions, and he would start stammering. He didn’t understand anything [about ginning]. Thomas understood it in a quarter of the time. I don’t remember ever receiving from Avi any good idea about how to solve a problem in all those years; he’s incapable of being number one [in the technical domain] at Merkaz.”

CoMI user Yuval missed Avi's incompetence due to ignorance of his ignorance (Kruger and Dunning, 1999), while mutual distrust with staff helped slip up Avi. Ginnners hated Yuval's autocracy and the CCMI-Im-C of "jumper" *pe'ilim*; they retaliated by minimally informing *pe'ilim* and minimal information prompted Avi's failure (Shapira, 2015a).

Karmi called practical engineer *pa'il* Thomas to the rescue, manager of a kibbutz agricultural machinery garage, *de facto* replacing Avi though formally called second TM to camouflage Avi's demotion (Levenson, 1961: 374). Importing ginning-ignorant Thomas rather than promoting competent Amram or Levi, further proved Yuval's Im-C, empowerment efforts by adding *pe'ilim* to form a peers' clique. This was further proved by the sinecure (Dalton, 1959: 172) of retaining Avi's status though he was only Thomas's assistance.

All the above do not mention the new CEO Zelikovich who replaced Akerman a year after Yuval's promotion to PM. Zelikovich also opted for detachment *inter alia* because Amram, Levi, and others retained the plant's mediocre functioning, sparing the CEO any need to intervene. This encouraged Yuval's self-serving arbitrariness, as depicted by a senior foreman:

"In Yuval's time there was no Board [control] above him – he did what he wished or to be precise what his lover secretary wished."

Low moral lawlessness culminated in his 4th season: married Yuval and his young unmarried female secretary frequently disappeared for half a day to an unknown destination, with no way of contacting him, although urgent major decisions were sometimes necessary for the 24/7 working plant. Everyone talked about this vicious romance, but the detached CEO whom I never saw in the plant ousted Yuval on the pretext of *rotatzia* only months later.

Yuval's loyal support of the two CEOs on the I-KRC Board was insufficient to explain his retention for four years, despite his dysfunction and costly failures, about some of which even the detached CEOs knew; much like Moav's late era mediocre plant functioning enabled the CEOs to remain detached, allowing Yuval's incompetent arbitrariness until his Im-C culminated in total irresponsibility which the CEO could not ignore (Shapira, 2015a, 2015b).

2.3 CCMI-Im-C Practicing PM Shavit "Rode" on TM-Led Successes, Failing as the High-Moral TM Left

Yuval was replaced by Shavit, nominated due to his loyalty to CEO Zelikovich, created when the two collaborated in another organization. Shavit had no industrial management experience, nor cotton industry know-how. With no referred expertise (Collins and Sanders, 2007) he opted for detached CCMI-Im-C, following his boss (Liu et al., 2012). He also adopted status symbol amenities, such as a brand new automatic car, while by conservatism Shavit spared dependence on experts; almost all employees distrusted him. In his rare visits to the shop-floor, he asked only ignorance-concealing trivial questions, listening only to his loyalists, Avi and an ignorant foreman who was his "two way funnel" (Dalton, 1959: 232-4). He retained Avi's sinecure as it ensured his loyal support at management sessions, and for four years he "rode" on the successes of high-moral trusted transformational leader (Burns, 1978; Graham, 1991) TM Thomas, who transformed the low-trust shop-floor culture that he found when CCMIing to the rescue into a high-trust innovative one, by committed vulnerable involvement that engendered trust and learning cycles, solving problems in locals' community of practitioners (Orr, 1996) that created an "us" feeling (Haslam et al., 2011). This happened both on the shop floor when coping with failed machines and on the shady benches in front of the offices where mostly Deputy PM Danton, and less frequently Thomas, congregated with hired staff for a cup of coffee while discussing work problems; neither Shavit nor Avi were ever present.

Thomas successes made him a well-known expert among Israel's cotton ginnners and then abroad, as efficiency and effectiveness soared (Shapira, 1987, 2012a, 2013). Shavit did not interfere, enjoyed the plant's success, but was intimidated when Thomas proposed developing and building an original automatic cotton-feeder at one third of American firm prices, US\$80,000 instead of US\$250,000. Shavit felt that it was too good to be true and used red tape to tame Thomas. To cut a long story short, the three year struggle against Shavit and his patron, CEO Zelikovich, concluded in success, the machine was built, but Thomas resigned after the machine's successful test trials due to his hatred of Shavit. In the festive inauguration,

Thomas' name was not even mentioned in a low-moral Machiavellian appropriation of his exceptional success by his opponent.

Shavit's "punishment" was the end of the success and dismissal: Shavit missed how Avi's detached CCMI kept him a "half-baked manager" (Dore, 1973: 54), promoted him to TM and before my eyes Avi failed to cope with each major problem he attempted; he soon stopped trying, the remaining trust granted him vanished, and in mid-season he was de-facto replaced by two subordinates; he kept some authority by suppressing the staff's critique of his mistakes (Fast et al., 2014) while Shavit believed his bluffs. This caused a major debacle with the new S&GH machine that cost half a US\$ million (current prices); Shavit and Avi were ousted after a year's delay to save their and the CEO's prestige by apparent *rotatzia* (Shapira, 2015a).

All Merkaz "jumper" PMs practiced CCMI-Im-C, kept their jobs by low-moral means and by the auspices of similarly practicing CEOs, while more knowledgeable mid-levelers enabled their tenure by some 7 years of successes, 9 years of mediocre functioning and 3 failing years that caused successions. "Jumper" CEOs preferred PM loyalty over job competence, while "jumper" protégé PMs followed their low-moral modelling (e.g., Liu et al., 2012). However, the context of oligarchic I-KOs field, ruled by dysfunctional low-moral old guard leaders who preferred sponsored mobility (Martin and Strauss, 1959) largely explained "jumper" executive choices of CCMI-Im-C (Shapira, 2008, 2015b, 2016).

2.4 Corroboration: CCMI and Im-C vs. their Opposites at 4 Other Gin Plants

Findings from four other I-KRCs' gin plants corroborate the article's theory; their contexts, practices, problems and solutions mostly resembled Merkaz's. Thus, by conducting visits to plants, 63 interviews of present and past executives, managers, and foremen, and reading plant and Cotton Marketing Council annuals,²⁰ I discerned executives' and managers' practices and their know-how and *phronesis*, found to be prime factors in the study of Merkaz. The information in the 331 folio page journal is detailed enough to support the hypothesis that Merkaz's findings were quite representative of these plants.

2.4.1 Northern Gin Excelled Due to Three Vulnerably Involved High-Moral PMs, Ceased as Three CCMI-Im-C Practicing "Parachutists" Succeeded Them

Three plants resembled Merkaz, each with two high-capacity processing units that processed 500-700 tons daily, while the smallest Northern Gin had one unit that processed 250-300 tons daily. However, Northern was for many years, up to the mid-1970s, among the best gin plants with both high cotton fibre quality and minimal downtime, only 3-5% versus 10-12% at most other plants and Merkaz's 32% in my season as registrar. This achievement meant enabling timely harvesting before autumn rains could cause damages.²¹ Northern's PM-2 Gabi led these successes by 7.5 years of vulnerable involvement in a community of practitioner deliberations (Guest, 1962: Ch. 4; Kanter, 1977: 33) and high-moral democratic management. Enjoying psychological safety due to a practical engineering education and managerial experience, he created virtuous trust and learning cycles from inception (Whitener et al., 1998), following his predecessor "jumper" PM-1 and backed by somewhat involved Northern I-KRC's CEO-1 and subsequently by fully involved CEO-2 Dan; of the 22 PMs studied, only Gabi learned to gin thoroughly and led Northern to excel. The other nine Israel's gin plant managers acknowledged Gabi's excelling and chose him as their Association head and representative vis-a-vis the authorities.

Northern I-KRC CEO-1 replaced PM-1 with Gabi after Gabi lost the Deputy PM's job at his kibbutz by daring to oppose his boss's defective plans for a new plant, offered by fraudulent consultants. CEO-2 Dan was more involved and knowledgeable and encouraged Gabi's high-moral unconventional decisions in I-KRC terms, such as replacing the mediocre *pa'il* TM-1 with brilliant hired practical engineer TM-2 Arbiv. Arbiv successes eventually led him to leave for the US to be R&D engineer at the world largest ginning equipment producer, while his experienced, knowledgeable hired deputy became TM-3. Their superb

²⁰ Interviews mostly took place at interviewees' homes. The few most knowledgeable were interviewed twice or for 3-4 hours.

Plants' annuals summarized both regional cotton crops and ginning results.

²¹ Raw cotton transportation technology limited storage capacity, and this limited the picking rate.

ginning expertise untangled lengthy repeated interviews, expertise which also explains Northern's success.

Gabi also succeeded by socialized leadership versus the personalized leadership (Poulin et al., 2007) of most other low-moral gin PMs, who cared nothing for employees' social and personal needs. For example, Gabi caught a young promising hired technician flirting with a 17 year old girl at night in his small Gogomobil car in the pesticide store. The guy explained that they intended to get married but could not afford a wedding party; Gabi reacted thus:

"I organized an appeal among all employees and the couple soon married, and now have three children; I was the godfather of their first son."

Gabi also made sure to get rid of low-moral employees even if this meant, for instance, losing the best ginner and required spying in the plant on the Jewish Sabbath holiday:

"S. S. was a proficient ginner who knew all the jobs perfectly and even replaced shift foremen for meals. He was an attractive guy with a pretty wife, but he was also low-moral and selfish, widely detested and called "pimp," hinting that this was how he earned extra money at night. One Saturday, at 2 is, a foreman phoned and directed me to the furnaces room, where I found S. S. having sex with a young, maybe 13 year old girl, a known way to introduce girls to prostitution. I had no legal basis for firing him. Thus I informed a relative, the family interfered, stopped his pimping by close surveillance, and soon he left Israel."

In accord with leader-member exchange theory (LMX), Gabi was fully informed of every meaningful event due to positive relationships with employees (Norman et al., 2010); those who concealed their incompetence by avoidance (Moss et al., 2009) were discerned from competent ones by involved informed Gabi (Collins and Weinel, 2011) and were discharged.

Dan's and Gabi's succession by a CCMI-Im-C practicing CEO and a similar PM caused a radically negative change to a low-trust culture. PM-3 opted for autocracy, totally failed and was replaced within two years as fibre quality plummeted to the worst of all Israeli gin plants. PM-4 was Gabi's friend and followed his practices; he managed to elevate fibre quality to midway on the gin plants' fibre quality list, but it plummeted again and never recovered as detached CCMI user "parachutist" PM-5 replaced him. A top expert hired TM-3:

"PM-5 [name] does not allow me any discretion of the kind I have with PM-4 [name]; the truth is that I am always worried about him, I don't know what his intentions are, what he will dream up at night and then try to implement in the morning. His decisions are strange; for instance, one kibbutznik [cotton grower] was abroad and saw yellow covers for cotton stacks that are presumably better [than the current red covers] but would double the cost. With no trial or consultation, the manager ordered hundreds of such covers, which proved bad for the cotton and had to be replaced."

Conflictual Relationships with detached CCMI-Im-C practicing *pe'ilim* PMs 5 and 6 led to "Italian Strikes" ahead of the season. In addition to detachment, their ignorance was concealed by not taking hired TMs and Deputy TMs to professional meetings of the Gin Plant Association, including those that hosted American experts, preventing witnessing of their stupid questions. Gabi and PM-4 testified that other *pe'ilim* PMs were astonished to see their hired TM and his deputy accompanying them to such meetings and on business trips abroad. Learning from national and international experts by senior staff also explains Northern's excelling.

The Northern case study strongly supports the theory: rare vulnerably involved high-moral "jumper" executives excelled due to virtuous trust and learning cycles, while excellence vanished when "jumper" successors practiced CCMI-Im-C, clashed with the knowledgeable expert staff they inherited from high-moral formers culminating in repeated strikes, made mistaken and stupid decisions, and caused inefficiency and ineffectiveness that resembled most of Merkaz's years and the other plants below (Shapira, 2015a, 2015b).

2.4.2 Lowland Gin: Detached CEOs and CCMI-Im-C PMs, a Detached and an Autocratic

The *pa'il* Avraham, head of the Lowland Regional Council, established the plant with a hired PM who failed and was soon replaced by Avraham as an absentee PM, since he also remained full-time Regional Council head; hired "jumper" TM (called L-TM-1), a veteran of two earlier "jumps," largely managed the plant. At first, he was highly committed, remained even until midnight if needed to solve a major problem, managing work reasonably. But he soon commenced using low-moral subterfuges like other "jumpers," such as

usurping others' proposed innovations by first rejecting them and after a while proposing them as his own (e.g., Mehri, 2005: 142). He became autocratic, causing distrust and brain-drain which enhanced his power but required of him extra efforts to overcome problems and gradually efforts subsided. Employees suffered from the PM's absence, and L-TM-1 rarely solved personal and social problems. To replace the departing Jews, less educated Arabs were recruited; satisfied with lower salaries and more committed to work than Jews they somewhat improved ginning results, letting Avraham continue his absence while empowering L-TM-1.

In the 6th year, Avraham was replaced as Council head but continued as detached PM. L-TM-1 became oligarchic conservative dysfunctional (Hambrick, 2007; Michels, 1959[1915]) and used Avraham's presence at the plant to travel abroad "dozens of times for teaching and guidance." Avraham did not interfere when L-TM-1 defended his power by rotation: on each trip abroad another foreman replaced him. Gradually, he low-morally usurped the PM's authority; for an employee who joined in the plant's 8th year L-TM-1 was

"L-TM-1 was omnipotent in the plant; he could come to work at three pm with no excuse. [Deputy PM] Yatzek demanded that he come at 6.30 am, but he refused; [his successor] L-TM-2, for instance, always comes at 6.00. And even when CCMIing at 3 pm L-TM-1 could disappear with no one knowing where he had gone."

Plant's functioning deteriorated, and Avraham did nothing about it. After another 5 years, Deputy PM *pa'il* Yatzek became PM, as the plant ownership shifted to the region's I-KRC. Yatzek autocratically sauntered around, yelled at employees publicly even for minor mistakes or seemingly mistakes and ignorantly interfered in technical decisions, stupidly overruling L-TM-1's decisions by amateurish ones and then firing him. Interviewed after 8 years on the job, Yatzek proved ignorant of ginning complexities, explaining the "parachuting" of an ex-kibbutz cotton branch manager with no technical education to the role of L-TM-2 thus:

"I made him TM and did not allow any overlapping between the two [him and L-TM-1]. Board members told me that I was playing with their precious cotton. They thought a TM in a gin plant is God himself, did not understand that it was only some bolts, metal sheets, and bearings, and since I knew what a bearing is, I was born on a tractor and my harvester combine never stopped working because I could always find a bolt or an iron wire to repair it, hence I was not concerned with any technical problems [due to this step]."

Yatzek bluffed, L-TM-2 depicted a year of overlapping with L-TM-1, but much worse was his ignorant stupidity, grasping a complex processing plant as "some bolts, metal sheets and bearings"; the ex-head of the national cotton fibre grading laboratory asserted that PMs need at least 5-6 years to become knowledgeable of ginning (p. 9), but autocratic Yatzek remained ignorant even after a decade. Veteran Valley Gin's TM cited the American engineer who in 1956 supervised his gin plant erection and before leaving for home heard the staff complaining that he had not taught them enough ginning:

"You'll work and learn the hard way; I have been in the trade for 25 years, and I am still learning to gin."

Unfortunately, learning was minimal in Lowland's culture of secrecy, bluffs, power abuse and subterfuges, due to the seductive-coercive autocracy practiced by L-TM-1 for most of his years and always by Yatzek, rewarding and promoting ingratiatory yes-men bums rather than expert competent truth-telling hard workers, as depicted by the veteran garage foreman:

"The problem here is that good work is not paid for, only talking and image building is paid, ingratiating the boss instead of doing good work. Many incompetents came here and remained who only knew how to drill a hole but pretended to be professional [mechanics]. Yatzek sought and rewarded spies who told him what was going on the shop floor. I refused... and was punished [for my integrity] by Yatzek."

All interviews supported this critique. But the detached CEO promoted Yatzek to PM of a much larger I-KRC plant, asserting that he had proved himself in Lowland although Lowland was on the lower half of the gin plant list. "Jumper" Yatzek's autocratic CCMI, combined with the CEO's detached ignorance, promoted him and probably enhanced his CCMI-Im-C in that job, in accord with Luthans's (1988) findings on the ineffectiveness of successful career managers.

2.4.3 Valley Gin: 15 Years Ginning Ignorant PM Missed Incompetence of CCMI User TM

The plant was established in 1956 by The Jewish Agency.²² In 1959 a Pima (long fibre cotton) ginning unit was added, and in 1965 it was turned into regular ginning, as farmers stopped growing Pima. An experienced locksmith from the plant's erection team was hired as TM, though lacking both mechanical and ginning expertise. This veteran TM's (27 years on the job; hereafter: V-TM) failures caused years of losses that encouraged the Jewish Agency to convey the plant at no charge to the Valley I-KRC in 1964. The CEO replaced the failing PM-1 with PM-2 David, an ex-kibbutz member with a convincing managerial record. David "jumped" to Valley after an ethical conflict with his former CEO, but high morality did not save him from making the cardinal mistake of not learning the gin's technical problems, as he explained:

"I did not want to descend to the level of shift foreman and to take care of technical problems since it was not my domain."

His ginning ignorance retained incompetent V-TM on the job for another two decades despite lagging fibre quality and productivity that continued even after recent renovation with state-of-the-art equipment when Valley moved to a greenhorn site. David explained this lag during the pre-move years by postponing equipment renewal to the plant's move, but this failed to explain Valley's recent lag: last year Southern Gin processed 32,000 tons of raw cotton in 11 weeks, Merkaz processed 30,000 tons in 13 weeks, while Valley processed only 25,000 tons in 16 weeks. Southern's expert TM Yunus bluntly offered a negative professional assessment of V-TM's functioning:

"V-TM? What can one say [about him]? Just see how [bad] the brand new Valley Gin is looking after just two years; this is V-TM."

Indeed, touring the new plant, it looked old, shabby and neglected, more than other plants; it suffered S&GH problems similar to those already solved in Merkaz, and it seemed strange that V-TM did not consult with Merkaz's experts, suggesting that V-TM avoided them for CCMI. To check this, I returned to V-TM's description of his early 1960s failures and found similar avoidance of other TMs. Consulting other TMs was common in the industry, which marketed its products cooperatively; David mentioned other TMs while V-TM mentioned no one throughout the 7 page interview. Likewise, other TMs never mentioned V-TM, aside from the cited negative mention by TM Yunus. V-TM clearly avoided expert TMs, consulted only with his Californian consultant, friend, and supplier John Smith, mentioned by no other TM. David untangled this secret: When he was nominated PM, the CEO demanded minimal investments in turning the Pima unit into a regular gin and John Smith supplied Valley with cheap equipment, installation plan, and problem-solving assistance, becoming V-TM's consultant and supporting his CCMI from everyone else. V-TM himself confessed his mediocrity as a ginner, saying: "this is off-the-record" (hence it was written later from memory):

"I have no blue blood;²³ I left the kibbutz quite early, and I am an ordinary man, a hired employee who does not care much for the interests of the kibbutzim. I have a deputy *pa'il* who is a certified engineer; for him, all that I have learned through hard work, all those 27 years, is only the tip of his finger nail."

V-TM was jealous of his deputy's superior expertise though the latter commenced learning to gin only a year ago. Thus, David's avoidance of the technical domain enabled V-TM to retain his job despite his incompetence and lagging ginning results by effective CCMI, helped by the exclusive know-how and equipment source abroad who was constantly contacted:

"John Smith helped us very much, gave us advice, sold us some machines and promptly answered my letters of inquiry. He remains the number one ginning expert and supplier of machines. I travel to the US every year, and I always visit him, whether at Valley's expense or on my own; he is our winning card."

V-TM's detached CCMI was so effective also because he was aware of his incompetence, did not seek promotion while enjoying an excessively trusting boss, a socialized leader (Poulin et al., 2007) trusted by everyone due to an "indulgency pattern" (Gouldner, 1954). For instance, until the plant's recent move employees lunched at home in the adjacent town through the off-season, though this lengthened the lunch break by 20-30 minutes.

Practice choices by "jumpers" proved decisive: even amidst the openness of a high-trust culture, a

²² The Jewish Agency was and still is the operational organ of the World Zionist Organization.

²³ Many considered kibbutz members "blue blood" as they were mostly Ashkenzis like higher Israeli strata.

“jumper” PM missed the fact that his TM’s CCMI was supported by a foreign expert for 17 years, as he avoided technical deliberations in critical domains and lacked interactional expertise. Valley proves how effective mid-levelers’ CCMI can be from such a “jumper” PM, despite continued mediocre results, and how ineffective a high-trust plant culture can be with a lenient leader which minimal contextual pressures allow him continued plant’s ineffectiveness.

2.4.4 Southern Gin’s Success: Unstoppable High-Moral Immersed Politician TM

In Southern Gin, for 17 of the 21 years studied, vulnerably involved trusted expert TM-2 Yunus mostly achieved both high productivity and fibre quality despite 4 CCMI user PMs of 6. This was one explanation why his achievements were not as consistent as those of Northern in Gabi’s era. Due to his involvement, PM-1 discerned TM-1’s lack of expertise (Collins and Weinel, 2011), replacing him with his kibbutz member Yunus who “jumped” from the job of TM at another processing plant. He learned to gin and the job through vulnerable involvement in ginners’ deliberations and by reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983) like Thomas and Arbiv. The first season was “very bad,” for instance Yunus worked with technicians for three days and nights to repair a major machine. Then he changed a major practice: instead of hitherto overhauling only problematic machines between seasons, despite workers’ resistance all machines were overhauled and the next season passed smoothly with better ginning results.

Successes with changes and innovations contrary to the manufacturers’ recommendations furthered his radical problem-solving, supported by PM-1. This support continued detached PM-2, answered Yunus’s query: “Do as you please, I understand nothing about it in any case.” Four other short-term *rotational* PMs practiced CCMI-Im-C. TM Yunus defended his job against *rotatzia* by obtaining their support for major changes and innovations, and never fought to introduce innovations against the opinion of reluctant bosses. For instance, he proposed importing Movers and an automatic feeder not when his US tour convinced him of the effectiveness of this technology, but only years later when his boss returned enthusiastic from such a tour.²⁴ He also frequently consulted another plant’s veteran TM “which is a better ginner than me” and spread information about his successes in the industry, hence other TMs came to consult with him, and their visits enhanced his prestige and power vis-à-vis the PMs.

Unfortunately, Yunus’s leadership of Southern’s staff suffered from wasting a great deal of time and attention on the politics involved in promoting changes without confrontations with ignorant bosses. As a result of postponing promising innovations like the Mover, Southern often lagged behind technologically. Expert employees’ trust in him suffered, as decisions were dictated by politics rather than professionally and a brain-drain ensued. A climate of distrust encouraged his limited concern for their well-being, leaving it to PMs whom he exempted from caring for other problems, but like most other PMs detached Southern PMs did not care much for this. Their uncaring led to major industrial conflicts, and eventually, autocratic *pa’il* PM-5 fired all hired staff, replacing them with kibbutz mechanics and youngsters. Yunus overcame their ignorance of ginning by working from 5 am to midnight.

Most of Southern’s PMs practiced CCMI-Im-C and “rode” on TM Yunus’ successes as did most other “jumpers.” Yunus survived in his job by careful politics: he used discretion given by PM 1 and 2 for successes that raised Southern’s productivity to the top of the list and ensured his power vis-à-vis subsequent ignorant PMs. Southern I-KRC’s CEOs were detached and appear to have practiced CCMI-Im-C, as evident from their almost complete absence from the 12 page interview with Yunus and shorter interviews with PM 1 and 2. However, these CEOs were not studied, as the study was terminated after these interviews, clearly indicating that their detachment resembled that of previous cases.

3. Conclusions, Discussion, and Plausible Solutions

3.1 Conclusions

Hambrick’s (2007) review of high echelons theory concluded that it “leaves us at a loss as to the real

²⁴ Mover is a specially equipped lorry which self-loads an eight-ton compressed stack of raw cotton, and then transports and unloads it into an automatic feeder, which feeds the cotton gradually into the ginning process.

psychological and social processes that are driving executive behavior” (p. 335), but thick description (Geertz, 1973) of a multi-site longitudinal semi-native anthropology made by a managerially educated and experienced ex-manager clearly points to a major social process that explains executive behavior: “jumper” executives mostly used CCMI that led to Im-C, which was a dark secret used to defend their authority, jobs and careers. The kibbutz *rotatzia* norm encouraged career advancement by “jumping”; “jumpers” mostly faced ignorance of job-pertinent know-how and *phronesis*, which curbed the psychological safety required to expose ignorance and practiced either detachment or autocratic seduction-coercion. Some of them probably also habituated CCMI-Im-C in previous jobs and grasped better prospects of advancing their career this way; together these factors explain how at least 22 of 32 executives practiced CCMI-Im-C and were ineffective, as in the cited literature. Only 7 executives avoided CCMI-Im-C and 3 others were high-moral but detached and incompetent (e.g., Valley’s David). As against the majority of CCMI-Im-C practicing executives, only a minority of some 25% of TMs and Deputy PMs opted for CCMI-Im-C; the majority opted for contrary high-moral trust creating ignorance-exposing vulnerable involvement, while CCMI-Im-C practicing bosses “rode” on their successes, furthering their tenures and/or advancing their careers despite low-moral mismanagement. This large difference between mid-levelers and executives suggests that the higher one advances by “jumping,” the more one tends to practice CCMI-Im-C, in accord with Piff et al.’s (2012) findings that the higher one’s status, the lower her/his morality.

The findings show that the research has missed major insights concerning “jumping”:

1. The inevitable ignorance of job pertinent knowledge that accompanies “jumping” careers,
2. The requirement that it be exposed and one’s authority be jeopardized to create trust and learn job-essential local tacit know-how and *phronesis* from practitioners,
3. The temptation to use managerial power for covert CCMI instead,
4. The choice of CCMI leads to Im-C rather than advancement by performance.

Unfortunately, books encourage CCMI-Im-C, telling managers they cannot and need not acquire local expertises as they have expert employees for solving specialized problems. But the findings confirm Collins and Weinel’s (2011) finding that only socially learned local know-how and *phronesis* enable to discern experts from smart bluffers, impostors, and inexperts who talk experts’ language and use local knowledge advantages to fool managers self-servingly. Without such discernment, “good work is not paid for, only talking and image building is paid, ingratiating the boss instead of doing good work” (Lowland’s garage manager). A “jumper” cannot discern these without ignorance-exposing immersion in practitioner deliberations that teach local problem-solving (Fine, 2012) by virtuous trust and learning cycles which enable the acquiring of local language (Collins, 2011), interactional expertise (Collins and Evens, 2007), premises of local decision-making (Simon, 1957), sensitivity to the unique contours of circumstances (Shotter and Tsoukas, 2014), and the know-how and *phronesis* of “what to do and how to do it, at the right time and with the right people, ...the crucial knowledge for leading is knowing which facts and theories matter, when to use which skills, and who should perform the actions needed” (Schweigert, 2007: 339-40).

The context of the oligarchic kibbutz field encouraged CCMI-Im-C by offering better prospects of career advancement by patrons’ auspices rather than by performance. Hence PMs mostly followed the 80% of detached CEOs (Shapira, 2008, In print). TMs mostly opted otherwise, due to their habituses and/or opting to problem-solving and being closer to practitioners and/or having psychological safety because of referred expertise and/or grasping less prospects for sponsored mobility than for mobility by successes because executives preferred their loyalists or prospective ones, much as UK engineers were rarely promoted to executive ranks (Armstrong, 1987). Other “jumper” mid-levelers often learned only their jurisdictions by vulnerable involvement, functioned reasonably but since they remained ginning-ignorant if included in management committees they had a negative impact on decision-making, like their ignorant bosses. Only in plants’ early days some ex-cotton grower mid-levelers acquired ginning expertise by vulnerable involvement and impacted management positively. Their committed socialized leadership (Poulin et al., 2007) is explained by seeking performance to overcome the 1950s kibbutz crises by advancing the new export crop of cotton (Shapira, 2008: 39).

3.2 Discussion

A “jumper”’s power tempts her/him to defend one’s authority, job and career by covert CCMI, which encourages a low-trust local culture, with bosses and fellow “jumpers” practicing it. Swidler (2001) pointed out that culture shapes human action by repertoires, codes, and institutions it provides to actors. In accord with the maxim that low morality begins at the top (Liu et al., 2012; Israelis’ “the fish stinks from the head,” Russians’ “a fish rots from the head”; Gini, 2004: 9), the lengthy dysfunctional oligarchic low-moral rule of the kibbutz field by old guard leaders shaped I-KO cultures; they became irreplaceable, similar to spiritual leaders such as Jewish Rabbis, each one nurturing his loyalist I-KO CEOs and officials who were exempted from *rotatzia*.²⁵ As explained (p. 7), contrary to the formal aim *rotatzia* enhanced oligarchization as did the “parachuting” of *pe’ilim* to I-KO management, aimed at tuning I-KOs to the interests of kibbutzim, which caused the opposite result: leaders’ low-moral preference for CEOs’ and I-KO officials’ loyalty over competence and performance cascaded through the ranks (Liu et al., 2012) to *pe’ilim*, whose *rotatzia* became circulation as I-KO growth required ample managers and ex-*pe’ilim* soon “jumped” to other I-KO jobs (Shapira, 2005). Circulation encouraged “jumpers” to follow higher-ups’ CCMI-Im-C. Much as in oligarchic corporations (Kanter, 1977; Mehri, 2005) “jumpers” acquired a low-moral repertoire in I-KO jobs, through codes of conduct involving detachment/autocratic engagement, abuses, bluffs, scapegoating and other prestige-enhancing and job-defending subterfuges. Facing common use of such means by bosses and role-partners, new “jumpers” often followed suit; the use of information as a means of control furthered distrust, secrecy, “jumpers” ignorance and use of CCMI-Im-C.

Due to ignorance of their ignorance, “jumpers” missed how CCMI failed them, as employees resisted their stupidity using local knowledge advantages (e.g., Roy, 1952). Kibbutz managers accepted *rotatzia* although it weakened them, requiring repeated facing of ignorance due to kibbutz students’ vindication of it, missing its oligarchic enhancement (Shapira, 2005) while the socialist ideology legitimized leaders’ prolonged dysfunctional rule (Shapira, 2016). *Rotatzia* was also accepted due to the prospect of “jumping” to I-KO privileged jobs with perks unknown inside kibbutzim, while the informal norm of *pe’ilim* monopolizing executive jobs and some mid-level ones spared them job competition with competent hired employees. Beside “riding” on subordinate successes, the auspices of higher-ups helped CCMI-Im-C practicing “jumpers” survive in their jobs despite dysfunctioning in return for loyalty and support, while failed “jumpers” seemingly replaced as normal *rotatzia*, enabling them with further managerial careers. Vulnerably involved “jumpers” rescued failing, plants but when successes subsequently empowered them supremacy-defending CCMI-Im-C user superiors suppressed them, and they left.

The kibbutz field’s low-moral oligarchic rule was the prime reason for I-KRCs’ low-moral mismanagement (Shapira, 2015b). Such a rule in democratic societies is concealed and camouflaged by various subterfuges (Jay, 1969), while neither leadership life cycle theory students (Hambrick, 2007) nor students of democratic organizations (Russel, 1995; Stryjan, 1989) have studied provisions aimed at curbing leaders’ oligarchic tendencies. Since *rotatzia* enhances this tendency rather than curbing it, other solutions are required.

3.3 Plausible Solutions

3.3.1 A Trust-Based Escalating Majority Solution for Executives Succession

Generous severance benefits for CEOs’ early retirement, known as “Golden Parachutes” are also not a true solution. Vancil (1987: 79) asserted that this expensive instrument is a success, as only 13% of CEOs remain longer than the maximum anticipated tenure of 12 years, but low-moral CEOs who wish to do so remain for good, for instance, Enron’s 15 years fraudulent CEO and chairman Lay. Secondly, self-serving deeds are encouraged, such as adding outsiders who as directors have granted generous “parachutes” elsewhere to the Board (Davis, 1994: 220).

Successes of democratic firms suggest that a democracy which includes knowledgeable mid-levelers in succession decisions beside directors can curb oligarchic tendencies²⁶ and discourage Im-C by periodic tests of trust in a leader, say every four years like the reelection of US presidents. However, the many cases of

²⁵ On such leaders see: Hambrick, 2007; Kets De Vries 1993; Michels, 1959[1915]; the “Movements” owned many I-KOs and impacted nominations of I-KRC CEOs; Shapira, 2005, 2008, 2015b.

²⁶ E.g., Erdal, 2011; Semler, 1993; Shapira, 2008; Storey et al., 2014; Whyte and Whyte 1988.

successful leaders who managed to function effectively for more than eight years advocate allowing executives more than two terms but with a provision that would limit tenures and keep leaders replaceable. As leaders were rarely really replaced democratically after more than 16 years in jobs, this seems to be the correct limit.

However, even allowing a leader 12 years is of special importance, as it can make her/him democratically irreplaceable. For instance, Roosevelt's 3rd term helped his 4th election in 1944 significantly despite his deficient functioning for most of that year (Wikipedia); had he not died in 1945 he might have been subsequently re-elected. A plausible solution that would prevent unlimited continuity is allowing up to four terms but only for those trusted by larger majorities, i.e., over 67% for a third term and over 88% for a fourth term (Shapira, 2013: 24). Thus, a fifth term threshold on the same gradient should have to be above 100%, i.e., impossible. The idea of a higher majority threshold for political decisions of special importance is not new in democracies and is common in deciding constitutional changes. The crucial role of oligarchic rule justifies the use of an escalating threshold to solve this problem.

3.3.2 Insider Successors Preference

Succession studies failed for half a century to conclude whether insiders or outsiders were preferable while recent studies found superiority of insiders.²⁷ Bower (2007) explained it by their smaller knowledge gaps, but my findings indicate that the main positive effect of smaller knowledge gaps is granting insiders psychological safety to expose ignorance, generate virtuous trust and learning cycles and function effectively (Shapira, In print). Unlike I-KOs, the above cited Democratic firms mostly prefer insiders, a preference associated with democracy: a truly democratic vote takes place when the choice is between known alternatives. "Jumpers" are less known than insiders, their prestige is not contaminated by their real past as that of equally talented and competent insiders, enabling them enhanced self-presentation (Goffman, 1959; Wexler, 2006), while they are also assisted by "the neighbor's grass is greener" effect. To mitigate these advantages, the findings suggest enhancing insiders' preference by adding yardsticks for executive selection:

1. To what extent did a candidate habituate vulnerable involvement in practitioner deliberations and create trust and learning cycles in previous jobs?
2. Did a candidate acquire, by such learning, referred and interactional expertises (Collins and Evans, 2007) that fit the firm's major problems?
3. Did a candidate achieve successes by trustful servant transformational leadership (Graham, 1991; Sendjaya et al., 2008) in previous jobs?

Measuring candidates by these yardsticks bars "jumper" users of CCMI-Im-C, preferring trusted involved insiders as their record concerning these yardsticks is more reliably known than that of "jumpers." However, further study of these yardsticks' relative weight in foreseeing who among candidates will choose trust-creating vulnerable involvement is in order. Research is also required of the relative weight of the factors that impact this choice:

1. Involvement habitus,
2. Relevancy of expertises,
3. Previous leadership style,
4. Perceived career prospects of alternative advancement routes,
5. Organizational contexts that encourage/discourage each choice.

A radical change of attitude to the study of "jumpers" coping with ignorance of new jobs is required; beside these factors this coping is impacted by personal histories and their cultural contexts, thus requiring more longitudinal ethnographies, much lengthier and extensive than usual organizational ethnographies, and they must be phronetic, seeking concrete, practical and ethical answers to major troubling questions concerning power-holders in one's society, much as the Aalborg Project was for Flyvbjerg (2006) and the study of the kibbutz for myself (Shapira, 2012b).

²⁷ On succession studies: Karaevli 2007. On advantageous insiders: Bower 2007; Collins, 2001; Heskett 2011; Santora, 2004; Shapira, 1987, 2008, 2013.

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