

## Dysfunctional Executives: ‘Jumpers’ Practicing Covertly Concealing Managerial Ignorance and Immoral Careerism

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### Abstract

Scholars who found trust to be the most important moderator of transformational leaders' effects did not allude to trust spiral creation. Others found that managers' vulnerable involvement in subordinates' problem-solving generated trust, shaped high-trust innovation-prone local cultures and led to successful organizational change as change leaders were grasped as high-moral trustworthy. These findings suggest that the common 'jumping' careers tend to nurture immoral executives. Albeit, immoral mismanagement was infrequent among mid-levelers, only a minority of some 25% opted for CCMI; the majority opted for contrary high-moral trust, creating ignorance-exposing vulnerable involvement in their jurisdictions but many of them remained detached and ignorant of ginning. This article deals with the managerial immorality and has become a major topic of organizational research but this is not true of careerism, hence few remedies were offered for Im-C.

**Keywords:** Jumpers; Covertly concealing managerial ignorance; Immoral careerism; Trustful ignorance exposure; Distrusted CCMI-Im-C user executives; Vulnerable involvement

### Introduction

Scholars who found trust to be the most important moderator of transformational leaders' effects [1], did not allude to trust spiral creation: A's action which B grasps as trusting encourages B's acts of trusting A; these encourage A's further trusting acts, B reacts accordingly and so on, a spiral of ascending trust [2]. Others found that managers' vulnerable involvement in subordinates' problem-solving generated trust [3], shaped high-trust innovation-prone local cultures and led to successful organizational change [4] as change leaders were grasped as high-moral trustworthy [5]. A manager's vulnerable involvement in employees' problem-solving exposes her/his ignorance of their exclusive knowledge acquired in communities of practitioners [6]. Ignorance exposure is a high-moral trust-creating practice which enhances change and innovation through learning the above knowledge but it jeopardizes managerial authority until one's learning succeeds. Thus, Intel CEO Grove [7] hesitated much before admitting his ignorance of computer programming to Intel's programmers when he wanted to learn their job secrets prior to leading a corporate transformation that required such know-how. 'Jumper' executives suffer larger gaps of local job-essential know-how than insiders like Grove [8]; these gaps encourage covertly concealing managerial ignorance (hereafter: CCMI), defending authority by either detachment [9] and/or autocratic seduction-coercion [10]. CCMI use causes distrust and ignorance cycles, which engender mismanagement that bars performance-based promotion and encourages immoral careerism (Im-C). Such careerism is a known managerial malady, but explaining its emergence proved challenging as managerial ignorance is often concealed as a dark secret on organizations' dark side by conspiracies of silence [11].

### Case Study

A longitudinal 5-year semi-native anthropological study of five 'jumper'- managed inter-kibbutz automatic processing gin plants and their parent inter-kibbutz co-operatives made by managerially experienced and educated anthropologist untangled a positive correlation between 'jumper' statuses, experience of 'jumps', and preference of practicing CCMI and Im-C. 'Jumper' executives' larger knowledge gaps than mid-level managers deterred ignorance exposure, encouraged CCMI, left executives job-incompetent and together with related factors encouraged practicing Im-C, using subterfuges which engender distrust and conservatism-prone local cultures that fail change efforts aimed at efficiency and effectiveness. Some 75% of 'jumper' executives studied combined CCMI and practicing Im-C by either detachment from practitioners' deliberations or by seductive-coercive autocracy, generating vicious distrust and ignorance cycles and remaining incompetent. Their Im-C subterfuges generated distrust, secrecy, and concealed/camouflaged mistakes which failed change and innovation efforts [12]. Albeit, immoral mismanagement was infrequent among mid-levelers, only a minority of some 25% opted for CCMI; the majority opted for contrary high-moral trust, creating ignorance-exposing vulnerable involvement in their jurisdictions but many of them remained detached and ignorant of ginning. Only a few high-moral vulnerably-involved ignorance-exposing and trust-creating 'jumper' executives learned practitioners' know-how and enhanced changes and innovations that led their plants to excel. Most CCMI-Im-C practicing executives survived in jobs and furthered managerial careers by 'riding' on successes of vulnerably-involved employees-trusted mid-levelers none of which was rewarded by promotion to executive jobs.

### Results and Discussion

These findings suggest that the common 'jumping' careers tend to nurture immoral executives. In view of the business scandals in the last decade, managerial immorality has become a major topic of

organizational research [13,14] but this is not true of careerism, hence few remedies were offered for Im-C.

One remedy suggested by the findings is a trust-based escalating majority solution for executives' succession, that is periodic tests of trust in a leader by all managerial ranks say every four years like the re-election of US presidents. However, to prevent unlimited continuity which often breed oligarchic rule, a leader will be allowed up to four terms if in each re-election is trusted by larger majorities, i.e., over 50% for a second term, over 67% for a third term, and over 88% for a fourth term. Thus, a fifth term threshold on the same gradient should have to be above 100%, i.e., impossible [15].

A second remedy can be a preference for insider successors by adding the following yardsticks for managers' selection:

- Did a candidate habituate vulnerable involvement in practitioner deliberations and create trust and learning cycles in previous jobs?
- Did a candidate acquire, by such learning, referred and interactional expertises that fit the firm's major problems [16]?
- Did a candidate achieve successes by trustful high-moral transformational leadership in previous jobs [17]?

## Conclusion and Further Studies

Other remedies may find further study of managers' 'jumping,' CCMI, and Im-C by more longitudinal ethnographies which will 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 [18] and the study of the kibbutz for myself [15,19,20].

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