

LEADERSHIP NOW: REFLECTIONS
ON THE LEGACY OF BOAS
SHAMIR

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MANAGEMENT VOLUME 9

LEADERSHIP NOW: REFLECTIONS ON THE LEGACY OF BOAS SHAMIR

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INTRODUCTION: FROM LEADER-CENTRIC TO COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Israel Katz, Galit Eilam-Shamir,
Ronit Kark, and Yair Berson

The initiative for this book came in the wake of the sudden passing of Professor Boas Shamir on November 8, 2014. Professor Shamir was a teacher, partner, colleague, and one of the key scholars of leadership in our time. We sought to bring together some of his impressive scholarly works alongside new studies that correspond with his contribution to the field. The initiative for this book originated in the “Leadership Today” conference hosted by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Professor Shamir’s academic home for more than 30 years, in November 2015, one year following his passing.



Photo courtesy of Tel Aviv University.

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Boas Shamir was, during our close acquaintance, a sensitive, modest man, a man of integrity, and exceptionally diligent as attested by the 122 articles and books that he authored and co-authored over the years beginning in 1980. These unique qualities echoed on a webpage created in his honor. Colleagues and students emphasized his originality and in-depth approach, his meticulous style, and openness to new ideas. Furthermore, they noted his talent for constructive criticism that brought out the best in others. Boas's opinion was highly regarded among his colleagues, and his articles remain points of reference, despite the passage of time. As an anchor in the lively discourse on leadership in recent decades, Boas represented a position of professional leadership, which is entirely the result of his intentionality and the admiration for him in the scientific community. His work integrated different research methods including advanced quantitative methodologies to qualitative analysis of leaders' speeches and secondary analyses of accumulated research findings. He had outstanding knowledge of a virtuoso in his research field and the ability to establish discourse with different theoretical traditions with both respect and constructive intellectual challenge.

Boas's interest in leadership began quite early, but on the advice of his teachers he wrote his dissertation in England on another subject. Their sense, and his at the time, was that there was an abundance of research in the field of leadership and that it was a commonplace and saturated field, and that despite all this, our knowledge on the subject was not really well founded or expanding with the accumulation of years. When, despite this, he returned in the 1990s to his original desire to study leadership with a systematic research effort in the field, it was with the intent of challenging the prevailing positions of the time, which saw leadership as a given attribute of individuals and made a sharp distinction between leaders and followers. Boas, instead, viewed charismatic leadership as a relationship that develops in certain contexts through a complex bond between leaders and followers. Precisely this complex position enabled him to create a dialogue with longstanding traditions (that focused on heroic leadership) and new concepts (such as relational–construal models), while formulating his own complex position. For Shamir, leadership, captures the *impact* of individuals on society, it is *asymmetrical* in nature, and anchored in a *shared connection* in which there is a *formative* role for both leaders and followers.

This book seeks to integrate eight of Boas Shamir's scholarly contributions with four articles that have been written especially for this volume by other prominent scholars in the field, who were all influenced by Boas Shamir's work and respected it. The works are organized into three parts inspired by Boas Shamir's editorial logic evident in one of his most recent works: a series of four volumes on leadership published by SAGE, in which each volume has a different focus (Shamir, 2015). The three parts reflect both the evolution of Shamir's work from a focus on a single entity, the leader, through the leader–follower relationship, to larger entities and contextual conditions. At the same time, Shamir insisted on the traditional focus on a single leader and hence the life story approach, a leader centric approach, which engaged him in his last decade (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). The choice of articles that we reprinted in this volume also reflects Shamir's

legacy. Among these are not only his most cited theoretical works (i.e., [Howell & Shamir, 2005](#); [Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993](#); [Shamir & Howell, 1999](#)) but also works that received somewhat less attention but shed light on his creative writing (i.e., [Shamir, Arthur, & House, 1994](#); [Shamir, 1991, 1995](#)). Overall, these articles reflect 20 years of his writing, and, in line with his legacy, we consider them to be among his most influential writings.

Part I of this book focuses on leader-centric approaches, including charismatic and authentic leadership, both of which highlight the ways in which leaders motivate followers through a common bond they form with them. The opening article of this collection is arguably Boas's most influential article ([Shamir et al., 1993](#)), as demonstrated by the impact it has had on the field of leadership and organizational behavior. This article lays the foundations for the motivational effects of charismatic leaders and as such serves as the theoretical backbone for the neo-charismatic approaches to leadership, long considered most influential among leadership scholars. It is, indeed, one of the most cited article in the field with over 3,500 citations. In this article, Shamir with Robert House and Michael Arthur, outlined the role of the leader in the harnessing followers' self-concept by infusing meaning into the task, the establishment of a sense of value, and expression of faith in the follower and the collective. All of these lead followers to identify with the collective and ultimately perform better.

The second article in this section, published in the following year (1994), is written by the same group of authors (Boas Shamir, Michael B. Arthur, and Robert J. House), and focuses on leadership discourse as rhetoric. It includes an analysis of a particularly impressive speech from the 1988 Democratic Party National Convention, comparing it to another speech at the same conference. In this article, the authors examined the links between rhetorical and charismatic leadership. On the basis of text analysis and by providing a theoretical perspective, the article presents the elements of speeches that create desired effects, including emphasis on the intrinsic value of effort, empowerment of followers, the intrinsic value of goal accomplishment, and instilling faith in a better future.

A more recent article that still takes a leader-centric perspective, yet with a significant contribution to the field, is co-authored with Galit Eilam-Shamir and emphasizes Boas Shamir's view of authentic leadership. This article focuses on the way in which the leader's self-concept is expressed in his or her behavior. This takes place through presenting a vision and perspective for the work of the group or organization, through originality and through an expression of beliefs and values in interactions with followers. Rather than being a prescriptive approach, Shamir and Eilam-Shamir argue that every leader has his or her own version of leadership, and part of the challenge of being authentic involves expressing the leader's own personal approach, on the basis of experiences that the leader has accumulated throughout his or her career.

An article written especially for this collection by Bruce J. Avolio, Benjamin M. Galvin, and David A. Waldman is integrated into this section. This article seeks to restore the status of singular leadership, leadership by individuals that has prominent results in relation to the actions of others. They demonstrate the importance of singular leadership both through links with positive outcomes,

such as effects on organizational outcomes, and through their destructive influence. In their contribution, Avolio et al. discuss how and why singular leaders are important, the nature of their influence on followers, peers, and organizational outcomes, and present a theoretical model aimed at clarifying the influence of different forms of singular leadership within organizations.

Another contribution was written especially for this collection by Dov Eden, a renowned scholar of leadership and organizational behavior. Dov Eden notes how the two concepts of charisma and the Pygmalion effect developed separately, and how clarifying the link between them is important to research on leadership. Whereas charisma deals with the way in which an aura is constructed around the leader, the notion of Pygmalion, self-fulfilling prophecies, is about the way that directing high expectations to followers generates displays of ability and action. The aura of charisma is charged with a combination of emotion and values, transmitted by signals conveyed by the leader that ultimately lead to the formation of a self-fulfilling prophecy among followers. Eden discusses the importance of the simultaneous operation of these two effects, in a way that empowers both the influence of the leader and the feeling of self-generativity among the followers at the same time. Obama's "Yes, we can" chant reflects this interesting combination.

The articles in *Part II* focus on the leader–follower relationship. Two articles on this topic were chosen for this collection, written by Boas Shamir alone and in collaboration. Shamir saw charisma as the way in which a leader influences others, and its behavioral expressions as dynamism and energy, displaying of self-confidence, high-level commitment and motivation, setting high-performance standards, action-directed toward innovation, setting goals through using ideological concepts, and displaying confidence in followers while setting high expectations of them.

In his 1991 article (Shamir, 1991), which opens this section, Shamir compares six common explanations of the effects of charismatic leaders on their followers, and demonstrates how it is possible to derive fertile but distinctive research hypotheses from them. Alongside this mapping, the article has a distinct focus on deciphering the charismatic relationship in which the leader and the followers function as partners.

In the second article chosen for this section, Jane M. Howell and Boas Shamir (2005) distinguish between two types of charismatic relationships in which both the leader and the followers play a role. The distinction is according to the level of relational identity and self-concept clarity among followers. When these are high, the connection with the charismatic leader is perceived as mutually empowering and based on a collective-socialized orientation. When these are low, the relationship is perceived as personalized, one that relies on a position of weakness and vulnerability on the part of the follower, leading followers to unquestioned obedience and other harmful consequences.

An original contribution to this section, also focusing on the leader–follower relationship, is a contribution by Deanne N. Den Hartog and Corine Boon. They argue that congruence between leaders and followers on organizational identification will yield more followers attributions of charisma to the leader. Specifically, leaders who identify with the organization are more likely to embody

and communicate its values, an act that will facilitate followers' attributions, only if followers too identify with the organization. Followers, low on identification, will identify with leaders who are also low on identification. They report a study in the healthcare sector, demonstrating these effects as well as carryover effects of charisma to organizational citizenship behavior.

In another contribution to this volume, Mary Uhl-Bien and Melissa Carsten follow on Shamir's "reversing the lens" approach to the study of followership in the context of charismatic leadership. Taking Shamir's approach, they study followership within leadership rather than independently. They focus in particular on the challenges associated with this approach, by demonstrating how followership theory adds new perspectives to the study leadership as a "dynamic, fluid, relational process." They show several alternative views, some focus only on leadership and followership and others offer interesting combinations of these phenomena. They demonstrate how these views are reflected in Shamir's legacy as a scholar.

In *Part III* of the book, we deal with the issues of distance in terms of social distance and networks. Two articles by Boas Shamir (one of which is co-authored with Jane M. Howell) are included here, and they deal with the relationship between distance between leader and followers and the attribution of charisma by followers.

In his 1995 article, Shamir attempts to distinguish between leaders whose followers have direct, immediate experience of them, and leaders who are distant, mostly represented by state-level leaders. This article demonstrates that a distant leader is perceived with more idealization, a rather stereotypical image that has been created for him or her as a result of followers' perceptions. In contrast, close leaders are perceived more "as they appear," perceptions are more linked to behaviors, and on the basis of followers' concrete experience of the leader.

The second article in this section, by Boas Shamir and Jane M. Howell, published in 1999, casts a spotlight on the organizational context in which leadership is enacted. It distinguishes between "weak" situations, characterized by ambiguity and instability, that serve as an excellent incubator for charismatic leadership and "strong" situations, in which relative order and stability prevail, and in which charismatic leadership is less common or is even inhibited.

This section also contains an article written especially for this volume by Micha Popper. Like Boas Shamir, Popper emphasizes the importance of social distance. Building on construal level theory of psychological distance (Trope & Liberman, 2010), he examined the role of follower emotional perception of the leader as a determinant of whether the leader is construed abstractly or concretely. He reports the results of a study including interviews and testing correlations on an online pool.

Finally, this section also includes an article by Smadar Porat, who was a doctoral student of Boas Shamir up until the time of his passing. The article deals with the transition from the perception of the leader as an orchestra conductor (with an emphasis on his differentiation and dominance) to an approach of the "jazz band," in which, alongside the constant need to improvise and demonstrate flexibility, leadership is perceived as an emergent phenomenon. Leadership

occurs as part of a social process with multiple interactions in which members of the relevant group are involved in ongoing negotiations regarding the role of the leader. This work is framed within social networks theory and is based on examples from research that examines when and from who people seek advice in any given context.

In addition, to reflecting on how the work of Boas Shamir has evolved throughout his career and summarizing how it echoed in the works included in this volume, we also include at the end of this volume is a brief version of Galit Eilam-Shamir's 2015 speech from the conference, we mention above, to the memory of Boas Shamir. This speech is based almost completely on quotes from Boas Shamir's writings throughout his career. This was Galit's way of honoring her husband's request not be eulogized, and at the same time to convey his spirit and teachings on the subject that so occupied him in his scholarly research.

We hope that the readers will find value in this collection and that it will contribute to the intensive discourse about leadership that accompanies our lives.

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