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Tavistock Lunchtime Talk, 20th Feb. 2019, 1-2:30pm
Overview

• Historical development of some leadership concepts
• New take on the essence of leadership
• Snippets from life in a convent community
• Shaping up the core argument: “there is no such thing as a leader“
• Practical implications of the new paradigm
• 2pm: discussion around application of ideas with guiding questions
L‘ship: Historical Development of Body of Knowledge

individual manifestation

born vs made
talent/skill

charismatic / visionary
characteristic

transformational
heroic

distributed
coordination element

intersubjective matter
L‘ship as Individual, Relational & Group-as-a-Whole Dynamic
Like Water in Space: The Gestalt of Leadership
What is L’ship?

L’ship = group...

- dynamic?
- product?
- Gestalt?
- function?
- movement?
- property?
Convent of the Poor Claires of Arundel

**VIADINE**
Sun 23rd Help CR with dinner
other Sundays free

**M**on
**V**eg - Help in Laundry
Clean Community Room

**T**ues
**V**eg - Working in St. Bruno's Dunn

**W**ed
**V**eg - St. Bruno's - 11.15 Kitchen help

**T**hurs
**V**eg - Garden

**F**ri
Cleaning Chapel

**S**at
**V**eg - Maria's Cleaning,
Garden - Wash up after dinner

Afternoons - Study Related Work
Convent of the Poor Claires of Arundel

- Acceptance in the here & now
- Strongly assertive, heterogeneous
- No friendships
- Abbess
  - indistinguishable
  - role rotation
  - spokeswoman
  - servant leadership
- Obedience, trust, humbleness
Some Shockers:

• "I don’t know whether God exists... I hope so... I am not sure."
  → Allah - Al “H”: the Hhhhh...

• “In here, I am truly free - in here, I can truly be myself.”

• “God is, where the group is. God shows himself when we come together as a group.”

• “We don’t have a democracy. Everyone campaigns for their point of view and then the Abbess goes to pray and decides.”
Paradigm Shift: Dependency- vs. Centre-based Take on L‘ship
Centre-based L‘ship as Bion‘s ”O“
Core Argument & Implications

- Leadership is not manifested in a Leader, nor in any Follower, nor any person at all - it materialises whenever a group materialises and resembles its gestalt as a "thing in itself".

- No group member contributes more or less to this thing in itself called leadership, irrespective of their level of activity, integration in the group or intentions.

- Trust, humbleness, obedience are the essence of centre-based leadership.

- Maintaining the balance between individuality & group membership is the work of each group member (containment).
Practical Implications of a Centre-based Leadership Approach

- better fit to modern-day organisational concepts such as New Work, distributed responsibility, flat hierarchies and agility
- what are the implications of centre-based leadership on...
  - role distribution and role differentiation?
  - training and development programmes?
  - recruitment strategies?
  - fair renumeration?
Practical Implications of a Centre-based L‘ship Approach

Imagine being part of a team with an organisational primary task in which:

- the leadership role rotates annually
- every team member gets equal pay, regardless of their role
- all team members are highly assertive, argue their own point of view with great passion, yet commit unanimously to a decision once it has been made
- the impossibility of perfect knowledge is embraced in the everyday-culture

... what kind of differences would you be able to observe?
Thank you for thinking with me!