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HAL Id: hal-01366745

https://hal.science/hal-01366745

Submitted on 15 Sep 2016

Short paper submitted to **EGOS subtheme 47: Reclaiming the shadow of leadership**

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Introduction

Psychoanalytic approaches to leadership centre on emotions and the role of the leader as the manager of emotion (Gabriel, 2011). These perspectives have often focused on the dysfunctions of leadership, the way in which leaders contribute to 'dark' and unhealthy organizational lives. In contrast to such approaches, in this paper we draw from Christophe Dejours' psychodynamic theory of work, in order to explore what role leaders could play to facilitate health in organizations.

We first begin by providing a short overview of some psychoanalytic perspectives on leadership. We show that such approaches illuminate the emotions and fantasies entailed in leadership or in the bonds between leaders and followers. We then discuss Dejours' psychodynamic theory, which provides a different view. This theory does not focus on the emotions and fantasies associated with leadership, but insteaddemonstrates the role of work in the affective and social life of the subject and the implications this has for leading/managing workers.

Psychoanalytic approaches to leadership

Psychoanalytically informed approacheshighlight the emotions and fantasies involved in leadership (Gabriel, 2011). A great deal of the psychoanalytic perspectives

drawsonFreudian and Kleinian concepts (Baum, 1987; Cluley, 2008; Kets de Vries and Miller, 1984; Stein, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2013; Zaleznik, 1977, 1991), but a minority of publications alsomake use of Lacanian theory (Costas and Taheri, 2012; Driver, 2013).

Much of the psychoanalytic literature focuses on the interior life of leaders and on leadership personalities (Lapierre, 1992, 1993, 1994, 2012;Lapierre and Kisfalvi, 1993;Obholzer, 1996; Stein, 2005), often concentrating on the 'dark' sides of leadership. Leadership dysfunctions have been a key focus of psychoanalytic perspectives, which includes, for example, studies that unveil the relationship between neurotic pathologies such as narcissistic leaders and organizational dysfunctions (Kets de Vries and Miller, 1984, 1991;Maccoby, 2000; Rosenthal and Pittinsky, 2006; Schwartz, 1990).

Others have focused on the issue of followership. Kohut (1971) popularized the idea that leaders are often viewed and related to by followers in ways that reflect earlier childhood relationships with parental figures. Gabriel (1997) studied various fantasies through the stories that followers tell about their leaders. Some have also studied the emotional bond between leaders and followers (Cluley, 2008; Kets de Vries, 1988; Kets et Vries and Miller, 1984, chapter 3). Kets de Vries (1988) shows how this bondoften involves defensive and transference processes and the management of anxieties, all of which can often lead to dysfunctional behavior.

A psychoanalytic approach that somewhat differs from the above mentioned is Zaleznik (1977; 1991), who, focuses on the difference between managers and leaders. He advocates the development of leaders, rather than managers in organizations. While managers are focused on rationality, order and control, leaders are more intuitive, emotional and creative, and they have passion and vision. Managers "dedicate themselves

to process, structures, roles, and indirect forms of communication and [they] ignore ideas, people, emotions, and direct talk" (Zaleznik, 1991, p. 97). Managers are practical and focus on order and control, but leaders are emotional and can cope better with disorder. Managers feel detached from the substance of business and task and they prioritizeprocess, interest politics and self-interest overthe content of work(Zaleznik, 1991: 112). This makes them very manipulative, devious and calculative. One of the key problems with modern business today, Zaleznik (1991: 116) argues, is the "managerial orientation, with its emphasis on form over substance, on structure over people, and on power relationships over work". Leaders develop a personal relationship with their teams, while managers adopt an impersonal, bureaucratic style. Management, Zaleznik (1991) implies, discourages individual responsibility and assertiveness, while leadership evokes passion, commitment and dedication.

As an alternative to the predominantly Klein/Bion/Freud perspectives, a small number of scholars have drawn on Lacan. Driver (2013) focuses on the imaginary construction of leadership identities that ultimately fail. Costas and Taheri (2012) discuss the now popular'authentic leadership' approach, and its focus on positive emotions such as love. Drawing from Lacanian concepts, they show how authentic leadership, while seemingly offering a more just leader-follower relations, can in fact conceal leader-follower inequalities and relations of dependency. It could be argued that the Lacanian perspectives provide a more critical view of leadership than the Kleinian/Bion/Freud approaches, given the focus on discourse and power. However, Driver (2013) and Costas and Taheri (2012) still centreon the leader, on the fantasies associated to his/her role or on complex, unconscious, emotional leader-follower relations. A radically different psychoanalytically informed theory is Dejours, which we will turn to in the following.

Dejours theory of work and its implications for leadership

Although Dejours' perspective is Freudian, hedoes not provide a psychoanalytic theory of leadership. His theory is primarily concerned with work and the relationship between the activity of working, subjectivity and health. This is not to say, however, that he is not concerned with the issue of leadership in work organizations. He nevertheless departs from the existing psychoanalytically informed literature on leadership in many ways. Dejours does not focus on the person of the leader, his or her inner life, pathologies and dysfunctions.Neither is he interested in the emotional bonds between leaders and managers. Rather, his main concern is to delineate the role of work in the affective and social life of the worker and the implications of this for leading workers. It is important to note thatDejours does not speak of 'leaders' but of 'managers', and he focuses mostly on 'middle management' or 'team managers'. This choice of terminology and focus is not insignificant. It does not suggest that he concurs withmanagement's concern for rationality, order and control. Rather, it could be said thatthe choice of the word 'manager', rather than 'leader', reflects the view that the primaryrole of the person in charge of a group of workers is not to inspireand evoke passion and commitment to the organization, but to focus on work itself, and to support workers in the 'doing' of work.

Indeed, Dejours theory does not shy away from making normative claims. He insist, for example, that work can be beneficial for health and subjective enhancement, and to a large extent, Dejours' work is concerned with identifying the conditions that turn the experience of work either into one of health and pleasure, subjective expansion and freedom or one of pathological suffering and unhealth. The manager/leader plays a crucial

role, not because he/she can help to develop personal relationships or to encourage creativity, but because they can support workers in dealing with the real while working, and thus contribute towards health. The real of work is the objective world that poses a challenge to the subject and puts a limit to action. The planned organization of work – or prescriptions, guidelines, or instructions – is never the same as the actual reality of the concrete work activity; something(s) interrupt(s) the direct application of rules and guidelines. For Dejours, to work is, first, to experience the 'real' (which is not the Lacanian real). 'The real is experienced by the one who works by its resistance to know-how, to procedures, to prescriptions; more generally it reveals itself under the form of a breakdown of technical know-how and even knowledge' (2009b: 27). The real may include fatigue, insufficient skills/experience, contradictory organizational rules or instructions, or the occurrence of unexpected events (for example, breakdowns of machines, tools, materials and systems, or disruptions that arise due to other colleagues, bosses or subordinates). The real implies 'the experience of the world's resistance' (Dejours, 2009b: 21). As a consequence, for Dejours:

> working consists [for the subject] in bridging the gap between the prescriptive and the real. But what has to be done to bridge this gap cannot be planned in advance. The way to go from the prescribed to the real must always been invented or discovered by the working subject. Hence, for the clinician, work is defined as what the subject must add to the prescriptions to reach the objectives that are assigned to him (2007: 14).

In order to conquer the resistance of the world, the subject needs to apply effort. Even the most thorough guidelines require some degree of resourcefulness on the part of the worker, who mobilizes intellect and affect and 'gives' himself or herself to the task.If the worker feels

unable to cope with the real, he/she will experience pathological suffering (Dejours, 1998, 2014, 2015a). It is here that the psychoanalytic perspective of Dejours becomes most clear. Dejours develops the concept of 'ordinary sublimation' (2011: 137). Freud (1930) states that working can be for human beings a very efficient way of sublimation because it enables them to inscribe themselves in the community and to contribute to its development. But Freud refers here to a very specific kind of work: the Great Work of artists or researchers, and he underlines that ordinary work is avoided and hated by most people and conducted merely to earn a living. According to Dejours, the process of sublimation occurs also in ordinary work in the form of 'ordinary sublimation', when the worker must use his body, his intelligence, his subjectivity to overcome the difficulties coming from the occurrence of the real. This concept of ordinary sublimation also indicates how work and sexuality are linked in Dejours' conception (2009a): it is always the sexual drive that is at the origin of the desire to move, to act. The drive is a concept that is at the frontier between the body and the psyche and is closely associated with affect (because the drive cannot be 'directly' visible: affect is a translation of the drive into a feeling). The drive has to renounce its sexual component to be transformed into the involvement of the worker in the process of answering to the real. And the affect of suffering (as pathos) refers to the stopping of the movement of the drive when it is suddenly interrupted. For Dejours, the working process enables the drive to be transformed and sublimated (Dejours, 2009a). The subject at work, while working with tools and technologies, and deploying the body and thought to 'work on' something, is also carrying out a kind of 'psychic work' on the drive.

From the perspective of Dejours, what enables a worker to work properly (i.e. answer to the real of work by mobilizing his/her subjectivity) are work rules, and the support of a work collective. However, Dejoursclearly adds in his recent books,*Travail vivant (second*

*volume, 2009b)*and*Le choix – Souffrir au travail n'est pas unefatalité (2015)* that the worker and the work collectives also need the support of a manager whose role is very specific. The leader's, or manager's, principal role is to beaware of the importance of the process of sublimation in work. This implies that they need to recognize the difficulties encountered by his/her team members when working and support workers in the 'doing' of work with his/her technical knowledge and know-how. It entails acknowledging the contradictions enclosed in the prescribed organization, the difficulties and failures that occur in the work process. In what follows, we elaborate further on the role of the manager from the perspective of Dejours.

Define priorities andmake choices and trade-offs

This is not to be confused with the classic managerialistidea that managers set goals and targets. From the Dejoursian perspective, the priorities and choices concern the elicitation of what has to come first in case there are contradictions between the various prescribed rules and targets - what Yves Clot (2010) calls "the conflict of criteria". For instance, very often the criteria of rapidity and productivity for hospital doctors are contradictory with the criteria of care quality. Manager's role is to prioritize among contradictory criteria, but in doing that, he/she takes into account the rules discussed and elaborated by the work collective. The manager needs to outline and defend these trade-offs. A consequence of this is that when a worker decides not to apply a prescription because of itsincompatibility with the real of work, s/he knows that s/he can refer to the rules and priorities supported by the work collective and by the manager. The doing of workers takes place within a safe professional frame.

Enable cooperation, rather than coordination

The classic conception of the manager is one whoorganizes coordination between team members, i.e. he organizes and allocates tasks among colleagues in order to complete the assigned work. However, Dejours (2015) asserts that the main mission of the manager is "to enable cooperation" (p.166).His theorydifferentiates between coordination and cooperation. While coordination implies a system of domination that artificially imposes how people should relate through their tasks, cooperation implies a 'deontic activity', or a collective activity of producing 'work rules' and agreements between workers that enable them to answer to the real of work and most of the time contrasts with the formal rules and prescriptions implied by coordination.The capacity of work organization to produce cooperation, instead of coordination, is a decisive factor here. Working effectively implies changing the prescriptions. Workers answer to prescribed coordination by engaging in effective cooperation.

As a consequence a role of the manager is to support spaces of deliberation between members of his/her team. These may include formal spaces, such as team meetings, staff meetings, debriefing meetings, in which the decisions on how work has to be done (to answer to the real of work) are elaborated, registered, and collectively defended. It may also include informal spaces (at the cafeteria, coffee break, reception, cloakroom, etc.),that can facilitate the development of trust and mutual knowledge between colleagues, and where these decisions can be commented, discussed, and internalized. Trust between colleagues is here very important if one wants people to accept engaging in such collective deliberation (trust because it implies to explain what does not work, the difficulties people encounter

when they work, the prescriptions people follow, which makes it difficult to follow other prescriptions etc.).

Dejours underlines that a fundamental role of the manager is to finally decide when the deliberative process does not allow workers to reach consensus concerning the definition and use of work rules. This possibility of referring to the arbitration or the final decision of the manager prevents the work organization from collapsing in case of dissensus. However, according to Dejours, a specific quality of the manager is here required for workers to respect the choice made: his or her authority has to be recognized by them. This authority is the "supplement" that will give the "manager's voice"(Dejours, 2009b, p. 141) a different status than the voice of the other workers. This authority is based on: first, the ability to engage oneself in listening (what Dejours calls "risky" or "engaged listening"); and second, the manager needs to have the appropriateabilities and the know-how in the professional field in which workers themselves are engaged, i.e. a recognized competency in dealing with the real of work. Authority is this special character of power that gives power its legitimacy. Dejours recognizes that authority always entails the risk of authoritative deviation, but the collective encounter with the real is supposed to limit this possibility of arbitrariness.

Dejours also underlines that every authority has to be incarnated in a living body (2009b, p. 147); according to him even the authority of an institution cannot last without the incarnation in a physical and human body. He strongly criticizes organizations in which it is difficult to identify who is supposed to incarnate and exercise authority.

Mediator between the hierarchy and the team

The manager is accountable for the choices made in the work collective and he has to take responsibility, over the long run, for the consequences of these choices in front of the workers as well as in front of his/her hierarchy. Another role of the leader/manager is to translate the directives and instructions from the hierarchy to the team (and not transmit them), explaining what it implies for the concrete work of the people in the team, what it changes. It means also that the manager has to interpret those instructions according to his/her knowledge of the real of work and as a consequence, s/he may take (and assume) a risk with regards to his/her hierarchical superiors. The manager/leader's responsibility is also to transmit to his/her superiors his/her knowledge of the real of work of his/her team, of their efforts, and of the collective interpretation of directives and prescriptions. The manager is the 'depository' of such knowledge, and has to transmit to his/her hierarchy the difficulties people encounter when they work. It may even imply strong negotiations with the executive management or committee when s/he considers that some instructions or orientations are incompatible with the work of the team.

It must be underlined that Dejours has since long defended such an ethical involvement of managers at work. In *Souffranceen France* (1998) he insisted on the fact that people are responsible for what happens at work and that they cannot always transferto the upper level the responsibility of what they do (he made the comparison with the banality of evil during WW2 thus using Hannah Arendt's concept). At that time (in 1998), Dejours asserted that people should not stay as passive transmitters of directives, but that they had to engage themselves ethically and politically if they did not agree with the decisions taken by the top-levels. In his 2015 book, he seems to insist more on the fact that everyone has to

take their share of the responsibility at the level of the doing of the real of work. This is less of a 'moral' position, and instead refers to deontic activity as ethical activity (because it raises questions about what a 'good job' is and 'how a good job should be done').

Conclusions

In this paper we have clarified the contribution of Christophe Dejours' psychodynamic theory of work and its implications for leadership. We have argued that Dejours does not provide a psychoanalytic theory of leadership; he is not concerned with the inner life of the leader or the emotional bonds between the leader and the follower. Rather, he draws from psychoanalytic theory to understand the impact of work on the life of the subject, and hence, provides a normative theory of the role of the leader/manager that takes into account the real of work and the importance of sublimation through work.

As such, Dejours approach also differs from the authentic or collaborative leadership perspectives (Avolio, and Gardner, 2005; Ladkin and Taylor, 2010), which seek to establish more equal and empowering relations between leaders and followers. Such approaches focus on the emotional relationships between leaders and followers and promote empathy and love. Rather than advocating a specific leadership characteristic that promotes the establishment of harmonious sympathetic relationships, Dejours approach centres on work. Therefore,Dejours (2009b),if he does focus on the manager, points out the necessary subjective involvement of the manager in the managerial process: he must apply his intelligence, his affectivity and his body – his subjectivity – in the process of managing. It is perhaps at this level that we should explain that managing is a working process in itself, and

as a consequence, the considerations of Dejours about the necessary subjective involvement at work also apply here.

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