The following abstracts of peer reviewed journal papers pertain to Group Relations and Psychoanalysis and Groups, Organizations and Society. It also includes papers that reference workplace unconscious.

Papers cover the five years prior to August 2022. A list of the journals surveyed and their dates is at the end of this bibliography.


Abstract: This article positions itself at a particular moment in time to benchmark the shift to online working for group relations and organisational consultancy practices. Drawing on varied experiences of working online during the global pandemic of 2020, the authors describe the impact that remote working is having on traditional assumptions about systems-psychodynamic work. It contributes to an appraisal of what different approaches are needed in the online sphere. It discusses the opportunities for more global participation and the current challenges to existing cultural assumptions. The article is structured around the themes of: setting the scene—opening the window to online working; losing and finding ourselves in the online space; the renaissance of lateral approaches to leadership; the question of where the unconscious goes in 2D space; and finally looks at implications for structuring the online space, including design issues for workshops and conferences.


Abstract: This paper was first written in 2006 as a seminar paper for a Workshop that Jane Chapman ran for Group Relations Australia on 2 June 2006. I was impressed by the way it extended the ideas presented in her earlier paper published in this journal in 1999 on Hatred and Corruption of Task. It also provided practical guidelines for how to apply these original ideas to work with organisations, whether as organisational leaders or external consultants. Given the number of Royal Commissions examining various forms of unethical and corrupt behavior, although the paper was first written thirteen years ago, the ideas remain fresh and relevant and its message and the tools it offers are more urgently needed than ever. In what follows, I have made very minor edits to the original paper to adapt it to a journal format and included a couple of recent examples to illustrate some of her points. I have also added citations and a reference list. It is my hope that readers will find this as inspiring and useful as I did.

Abstract: More than 70 years ago during the Second World War, what became known as the Northfield Experiments began in a southern suburb of Birmingham, England. By 1946 these experiments had ceased and the major participants had journeyed in different directions but carried with them new ideas, particularly in relation to group psychotherapy and more generally applied psychoanalysis. John Rickman, Wilfred Bion, Tom Main, Sigmund Foulkes, Harold Bridger, Patrick de Maré and others at the end of the war dispersed to create abundantly. Such creativity fertilized the development of the principles and practices of therapeutic communities, psychoanalytic group therapy, the application of an analytic understanding to organizations and more. This article includes a consideration of how practice was influenced from these origins. This contribution has as a background the author working for over two years at the Cassel Hospital early in the 1990s and more recently attending a conference in January 2018 conducted at Northfield or Hollymoor Hospital, as it was originally, and remains, known. It includes some personal reflections.


Abstract: Psychoanalytic perspectives (such as the Kleinian/Bionian and Lacanian literature) have made significant contributions to the study of affect in organizations. While some have pointed out the affects involved in work tasks, most of this literature generally focuses on the affects linked to organizational life (such as learning, leadership, motivation, power, or change). The center of attention is not on affects associated with the work process itself. We draw from the French psychodynamic theory of Christophe Dejours—who is yet to be known in English language organization studies—to make the following contributions. First, we show the relationship between affect and working by discussing Dejours’ notions of affective suffering, the real of work, the significance of the body, and ‘ordinary sublimation’. Second, we advance critical research in organization studies by demonstrating the centrality of work in the affective life of the subject. Third, the article reinterprets Menzies’ well-known hospital case study to illustrate how Dejours’ theory extends existing psychoanalytical approaches, and especially to point to the significant role of the work collective in supporting workers to work well. We conclude by suggesting that if the centrality of work in the affective life of the subject is acknowledged, it follows that resistance strategies, and work collectives’ struggle for emancipation, should focus on reclaiming work.


Abstract: Contemporary expert organizations rely heavily on cross-border, often temporary teams typically working through virtual means of communication. While static aspects of teams are well researched, there have been considerably fewer studies on team dynamics and team processes. Existing process studies tend to take a cautious, entity-based approach, emphasizing team structure as much as (or even more than) processual aspects. This article represents a shift from studying teams as entities and structures changing over time to studying teams as an on-going process. Participants engage in teaming and thus in the continued making and sometimes unmaking of teams. We report on a study of three anatomically similar, self-managed teams performing the same set of complex tasks with radically different teaming processes. With more or less successful shared sensemaking, the team members collectively create (or fail to create) not only team task outputs but also the team itself.

Abstract: This article represents the first complete systematization of the basic assumptions as theorized by Wilfred R. Bion and post-Bionian authors. The authors reviewed, compared and systematized all the Bionian developments concerning the basic assumptions taking the prevailing anxieties, group topology, leader peculiarities, interactions with the work-group mentality into account. The analysis evinced five main ba(s) and five subsets (i.e. their features resemble one of the five main basic assumptions). Briefly, in the first paragraph the authors summarize Bionian thought and its underlying logical criteria while in the second they reviewed all the new proposals for basic assumptions emerging from the psychoanalytic literature (i.e. Lawrence, Bain and Gould, 1996; Romano, 1997; Sandler, 2002; Sarno, 1999; Turquet, 1974; Hopper, 2009). In conclusion the authors focus on the main strengths and critical points of the systematization. In the last section ‘Promising developments’ they address the methodology of the study of basic assumptions, its main features and potential developments. The article rounds off with a clinical appendix.


Abstract: Modern medical care for critically ill children meets the definition of a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) situation with an additional "R" factor of high risk (suffering and potential death of a child). The circumstances of care for a critically ill child create a unique psychological, social, and technical crucible for all involved, one primed for conflict. This article will trace the evolution of our study of inter-group conflict between physicians in the care of critically ill children from initial observations to broad, systematic surveys and qualitative analysis of practitioner focus groups. Our findings indicated that unconscious inter-group dynamics, shaped by setting variables, can significantly impair collective work towards the best interests of patients in these fraught circumstances, making "integrative decision-making" difficult to achieve. Patterns in inter-group relations clearly suggested the use of splitting as a social defence. The findings and related hypotheses provided clues for strategies to mitigate the impact of these dynamics. This article concludes with a description of the design and pilot testing of a structured method of case review designed to provide containing structures tuned to the specific context with the ultimate aim of facilitating integrative decision-making and optimising coordination of care for complex cases.


Abstract: Wilfred R. Bion’s clinical thinking was profoundly impacted by his early childhood experiences in India. In this article, the author elucidates Bion’s perspective on how “thought” is different from “thinking.” Bion’s notion of truth and thought takes us from chronological to the timeless. His longing to return to India is also evident in his theorization of “O.” The clinical relevance of Bion’s ideas is much debated and discussed, but rarely has any psychoanalytic writing touched upon the way in which psychoanalysis is linked with the sonic and sacred aspects of Om. Exploring the truth of and the truth in Bionian psychoanalytic thought will take us into the unexplored paths of how the experience of culture meets experience in the clinic. A sincere and critical reflection of the ideas proposed by Bion would certainly help us to locate its unexplored referents. He never came back to India, but his theories and ideas attempted to create contact with his early childhood experiences. Bion left India, but India never left him. Bion was a Hindu boy belonging to a Christian body. The ways in which Bion conceptualizes neurosis and psychosis are elucidated in this study. However, some of his ideas remain a challenge, fathoming which, requires remembering, repeating, and working through the clinical and mystical elements in his writing.

Abstract: This is a longitudinal inquiry into the theory and dynamics of four group relations conferences in China from 2014 to 2019. The study triangulates field notes, document artefacts, and verbatim transcribed interviews to investigate the application of Wilfred Bion's basic assumption (BA) group theory in the context of temporary learning institutions devoted to the examination of authority, leadership, and conscious/unconscious processes in groups. Given that group relations theory and practice in the Tavistock tradition is grounded in psychoanalysis and open systems theory, the study integrates psychoanalytic and psychodynamic systems theory in the analysis and interpretation of conference dynamics. The study concludes that group relations has important implications for psychoanalysis in China in light of: 1) the "psycho boom" in contemporary China; 2) the possibilities of cross-cultural learning and knowledge transfer; 3) cross-cultural trust building; 4) professional development of human services, mental health, and organisational development professionals; and 5) the application of psychoanalytical theory and practices to the understanding of organisational development in China.


Abstract: This article describes a research project that was undertaken alongside the 2012 Leicester conference group relations event. The aim was to explore a number of questions about learning derived from the conference, and in particular, how different aspects of the conference contributed to learning. It also explored the challenges inherent in undertaking research into a group relations activity. In relation to the first of these tasks, the results indicated that the learning was highly valued by participants, particularly in terms of increasing their understanding of group dynamics, and in feeling more at ease and able to cope in complex, ambiguous, and emotionally charged situations, with different aspects of the conference contributing differently to this learning. In terms of the second task, the research demonstrated that, when undertaken with care, a great deal of useful qualitative and quantitative data can be derived, without overly influencing the event itself.

https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2896815.

Abstract: This paper argues that our inherited categories for examining group relations, "boundary" "authority", "role" and "task" are inadequate to the task of understanding what I call "developmental projects". The latter are work settings in which participants are creating something novel, as they would in developing a drug, designing a product or producing a new play. The paper suggests that such projects entail existential rather than routine risks, use boundary objects rather than the work process to focus attention, create a social system in which management and authority are loosely connected, and rely on edges rather than boundaries to mobilise resources. The paper explores these issues by referencing some published cases of developmental work, for example, the failed project Taurus, an undertaking to computerise trading on the London Stock exchange. It also presents a case in which the author participated as a researcher and consultant, of a multidisciplinary team in a university setting building a computer simulation of "forced migration". The paper proposes how the new dimensions of developmental projects might distort working, for example, the boundary object can become a fetish object and edges can distort commitments confuse authorisation.

Abstract: Though the Tavistock group relations paradigm is now more than seventy years old, its unique conceptualisation of unconscious group processes remains nonetheless essential for understanding and affecting this volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous time. An adapted Tavistock group relations event called the Exploring Difference Workshop (EDW) takes place in the context of: 1) increasing attention to endemic racism within Canadian society; and 2) increasingly obvious limitations of dominant modes of anti-racism training framed within discourses of equity and multiculturalism. This article discusses new contributions group relations methodology can provide through the EDW to engage with the intractable and painful aspects of talking about racism in "the here and now". The article offers an analysis of key themes emerging from the workshops and the consultations supporting participants' learning about "difference" and self–other relationships. It proposes that the EDW enables deeper understanding of, and dialogue about, the (un)conscious processes affecting racism and anti-racism education, and offers a means for enhancing collaboration across difference in these times.


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Abstract: This article explores key events in the Beijing Group Relations Conferences 2014, 2016, and 2018 through key events regarding multiple leadership roles and lenses. This study analyses these key events utilising trust theory, and concludes that the development of group relations in China is based on the development of trust on multiple levels within a temporary experiential learning organisation in which the primary task is the study of authority, leadership, membership and covert/overt processes in groups and organisations. These events are described, analysed, and interpreted to illustrate how trust evolved in three group relations conferences and its implications for the development of group relations in China and other cultures unfamiliar with these in the Tavistock tradition.


Abstract: This article traces some of the ways in which the idea of the unconscious has transformed and been adapted from its origins in the eighteenth century to the understanding of organisations in the twenty-first century. Throughout the twentieth century psychoanalysis captured the term through its work with the repressed or dynamic unconscious. While psychoanalysis has often been attacked and has waned in scientific circles, the idea of the unconscious does not seem to go away; it returns in different forms and has continued to evolve since its beginnings. For example, neuroscience talks of "unconscious bias" and has popularised this idea; organisational research looks to the ways in which groups develop cultures with unconscious assumptions; and social psychologists examine social factors that leave societies with blind spots. This article argues that to minimise destructivity and increase creativity, organisations need to be aware of unconscious social processes as they are evidenced nowadays. It ends with stressing some areas where organisations can do this.


Abstract: While the question in the title can be considered from the perspectives of both members and staff, if a staff team is able to explore their own motivation and thinking in respect of their practice, the conference may develop as a fruitful learning experience for all involved. The article first considers responses by practitioners to a survey, and then explores the question itself through the work of several psychoanalytic writers concerning desire, seduction and abjection. The vicissitudes of sexuality impact on the dynamics of the conference which will be experienced in both maternal and paternal guises, and the article proposes that, in addition to listening to the transference–countertransference linking conference members and staff, the latter need to consider their own desire and attend to the transference that they themselves exercise towards their own Conference-in-the-Mind as a fantasmatic third.


Abstract: This article explores the concept of nostalgia from both phenomenal and interpretative perspectives as experienced within and generated by group relations conferences and other group activities like sport, drama, or music. It posits that nostalgia inevitably emerges in group relations
conferences to sustain primitive fantasies and the work of mourning necessary for psychic growth. The article then reflects on the dual purpose of conference titles as setting objectives to the exploration as well as protection from wild thoughts, enactments, and thus the unmitigated brutality of the experience of the unconscious in groups. It calls attention to how the intention to apply conference learning arises from (and contributes to) an overdetermined ambivalent relationship of group relations with psychoanalysis.


Abstract: Part I of this article will focus on the relationship between sentience and group relations conference work. Literature concerning group relations work and sentience will be explored. Sentience will be explored structurally and externally through the lens of task and group, with a focus on systems, organisational transformation, as well as the history, philosophy, and design of group relations conferences. Group relations work and sentience will also be focused on in relation to inquiry of why one does the work, embodying an internal perspective regarding the complexities of the consultant role and relationship to the group. The construct of group relations love will be introduced in connection with aspects of sentience in group work.


Abstract: Part II of this article will provide a focus on sentience and group relations work through the narratives of individuals who responded to a questionnaire about their lived experiences of group relations conference work. Formulated meanings, themes, and theme clusters of the respondents' narratives will be presented and explored using application of phenomenological analyses. Group relations love and the possibility of love of, and for, group work will be more deeply explored. A discussion and implications for group relations work will also be presented.


Abstract: Gangs are usually seen to exist on the edge of society, in the Mafia, on the street corner, or among those engaged in people- or drug-trafficking. In this article I take a different approach and argue that, especially in response to trauma, gang functioning may be present at the very centre of our society, and is sometimes to be found in governmental, business, public and voluntary sector organisations, as well as the groups and teams within them. Using Nobel-prize winner William Golding's novel Lord of the Flies to give shape to my ideas, I develop a psychoanalytic theory of gang functioning. I draw in particular on Kleinian psychoanalytic ideas as well as concepts from the psychoanalytic study of groups and organisations. I argue that the establishment of the gang involves primitive splitting and projective identification and the perversion of adult authority. I suggest further that gang functioning involves the destruction of the sensory and communicative apparatuses that alert the gang to reality, coupled with the creation of a substitute, false "reality". These features enable the avoidance of painful truths and experiences and facilitate the enactment of hatred that is so characteristic of ganging behaviour.

Abstract: This article reports findings from evaluation research conducted from three conferences in the Authority, Power, and Justice: Leadership for Change series, convened annually from 2014 to 2016 at Boston College. The conferences have had similar structures and themes, with some slight variations. The highly diversified staff and membership has highlighted the themes of social identity, power, and justice in the conferences. Findings were consistent with prior research that participants do indeed learn at conferences. For both experienced and inexperienced conference members, the process of learning and meaning making is complex, relational, and evolves over time beyond the conference boundaries, and is idiosyncratic and variable. Learning can also occur at a steep cost. Recommendations are offered for enhancing learning and mitigating some of the factors that may interfere with learning. Suggestions involve re-thinking our notions of conference boundaries and the consulting stance, better integration of conference themes into conference structure, and integration of evaluation processes into conferences.


Abstract:
There exists a variety of programs designed to prepare future leaders. In the arena of graduate programs in leadership, the International Leadership Association (2020) provides over 350 programs in their database. Guthrie and Jenkins (2018) have outlined dozens of strategies for leadership education that are utilized in degree programs. As such, there exists a need for informed choices when experiential learning pedagogies are incorporated in leadership education curriculum. One methodology, known as case-in-point, was designed at the Harvard Kennedy School to teach adaptive leadership (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). There lacks empirical research in demonstrating the effectiveness and impact of case-in-point pedagogy. This qualitative study explored the perceived impact of 12 alumni who took a case-in-point course embedded in a leadership master’s program across a decade. Alumni’s retrospective experiences were collected to understand the impact the course had on them during the time they were in their leadership program and the impact of the learning for their professional lives. Key themes that emerged from the participants included increased levels of awareness in race and power dynamics, an increased use of self-as-instrument, awareness of relationships to authority, and shifts in views of leadership. All participants viewed the case-in-point pedagogy as powerful or positive after having graduated from the program despite many recollections of mixed or negative experiences during their time in the course/s. Implications of the findings suggest important considerations relating to scaffolding and proper processing to enhance or improve outcomes for case-in-point pedagogy designed to enhance leadership ability.
Five years as of July 2022 was pulled. The inclusionary criteria for articles to be included on this list included articles mentioning Group Relations, Group Relations Conference, BART (Boundary, Authority, Role, Task), Wilfred Bion and Melanie Klein (only if it also relates to groups). Additional articles referencing workplace unconscious and topics relating to group relations were included. A final article from the Journal of Leadership Education in reference to the style of learning in graduate education was also included. The citations and their abstracts are included below.

The following journals were surveyed for the dates indicated for the bibliography:

*Administration & Society* July 2017 - July 2022 (Volume 49 Issue 6 - Volume 54 Issue 6)

*Culture and Organization* 2017 - 2022 (Volume 23 Issue 1 - Volume 28 Issue 2)

*Human Nature* September 2017 - June 200 (Volume 28 Issue 3 - Volume 33 Issue 2)

*Freie Assoziation* (German)

*Human Relations* July 2017 - August 2022 (Volume 70 Issue 7 - Volume 75 Issue 8)

*JABS (Journal of Applied Behavioral Science)* July 2017 - July 2022 (Volume 24 Issue 4 - Volume 29 Issue 4)

*Journal of Psycho-Social Studies—an e-journal* 2017 - 2022 (Volume 10 Issue 1 - Volume 15 Issue 1)

*Organization* July 2017 - August 2022 (Volume 70 Issue 7 - Volume 75 Issue 8)

*Organizational and Social Dynamics* 2017 - 2022 (Volume 17 Issue 2 - Volume 22 Issue 1)

*Psychoanalytic Psychology* July 2017 - July 2022 (Volume 70 Issue 7 - Volume 39 Issue 8)

*Socioanalysis* July 2017 - July 2022 (Volume 98 Issue 3 - Volume 103 Issue 3)