

# Appendix 3

## Chapter 6

### 'Mapping the Territory of Workplace Dynamics between Women'

#### Analyses of individual interviews

Chapter 6 contains two full analyses of interviews. Those contained in this appendix are referred to in this chapter and included in my findings (chapter 6 and appendix 4). As I quoted extensively from my analysis of Contributor F in chapters 6 and 11, I have not included this analysis separately.

#### Contributor A (interview no. 1)

A was a management committee member of a feminist voluntary organisation; we had an established friendship with her based on mutual support for our research projects, and shared advocacy of feminist politics. In our discussion she draws mainly from her experience of conflict in this organisation.

My approach to the interview triggered dilemmas associated with my experience of the 'identity politics' of the '80's in the lesbian feminist movement. Would I be able to move from shared advocacy, to dialogue? Would A be open to engaging with my inquiry subject?

Our exchange was on two levels and is summarised in the table below:

- Contested conceptual frames, stance and analysis.
- Sense making, narrating, offering examples of interactions between women, sharing experiences.

<b>Contributor A</b>		
<b>STATEMENTS about lived experience, approach and aspirations</b>		<b>DESCRIPTIONS of lived experience</b>
<b>1</b>	Women's experience and expectations of interactions with women are shaped by their political views and priorities, and the environments in which they are acting. No general conclusion can be drawn about woman to woman dynamics; sense making must be situated in historical, political, organisational and social context.	There is a problematic shift of values within feminism: younger women not knowing what feminism is; replacement of collective working for change by individual career – doing your own thing; and lack of appreciation by women in power of role played by feminists in making their success possible - that women were promoted as a result of feminist campaigning for equal opportunities.
<b>2</b>	'Feminists and not women are the focus of my expectations of support and disappointment'.  Feminism does not come from believing women are nice to each other but from a sense of injustice and rebelling, and recognition that women have to work together in their common interests - women have to combat their conditioning as it was then and probably is now - competing with each other for men...	A gives examples of: Disagreements being experienced as unsupportive or 'unfeminine' as well as 'unfeminist'. Being seen as hostile - pariahs for disagreeing. Attacking behaviour- resorting to formal grievance procedures against each other Management Committee (MC) Chair 'taking disagreement personally'. Envy and resentment at individual success and public recognition, attacking even tho' this served feminist values.
<b>3</b>	'Dis/liking' should not be a basis for women to deciding whether or not to work together; shared goals should take priority.	There is a current tendency to think you have got to like women you are working with – if you believe this you'll never get anything done.
<b>4</b>	'Women should value each other – and don't – that's what I find depressing!'	Disagreement can get confused with not valuing each other – it ties up with identity – who else you have something in common with.
<b>5</b>	Expectations of women towards women are shaped by context and environment, as well as by political views / priorities.	Disagreements were easier where there were shared feminist values; e.g. a woman volunteer used to working in competitive environments 'taking disagreements personally' in this women's organisation.

A's sense-making frame referred primarily to women's political views, including her own, and the political environment in which they were acting. She stated that my questions implied a 'psychological model' of gender difference, thereby challenging my use of 'women' as a generic category, and often reframing my questions in terms of political context and beliefs. She suggested that I needed to distinguish political differences between women and consider how these inter-cut with their expectations of each other and the type of organisations they worked in.

At certain points A. did allow 'women' as a generic category rather than 'feminists' to be the subject of our discussion. Like B, she makes qualifying statements defending against negative comparisons with men: that there was no evidence that men would have done any better. In the following I have asked A what the characteristics would be of a well-functioning women's organisation:

*A: Yes, there must be some baseline of shared interest/vision but that's not a satisfactory word*

*M: Would passion be a better word, or engagement in objectives and ideals?*

*L: mmm..*

*M: and not pressure to like each other?*

*A: mmm..*

*A: Women don't value each other enough! I mean in my organisation there is no respect for each other and that's what I find depressing, no valuing of people..*

*M: Not just achievements but who each other is?*

*A: Yes who each other is...and maybe that's what we were trying to say in our book and has never been said there strongly enough - that women don't value each other enough.*

*M: Perhaps we're not used to valuing each other in our public lives somehow because there's not enough sense of self worth?*

*A: Disagreement is confused with not valuing each other -*

*M: That resonates, if you're not feeling valued in yourself then it doesn't take much disagreement to feel bad and like retaliating.*

*A: I think that's where it's tied up with identity, it's a common sense thing like who you are. It's not necessary to make a psychoanalytic analysis, it's who else you have something in common with, and having a sense of that.*

During the discussion I became more aware of A's distinction between the dynamics between women, and the ways women interpret and work with these dynamics; between feminist analysis and gender analysis. I resolved to explore this further in my subsequent discussions.

After the interview I made the following note:

*I came away from the afternoon feeling energised, affectionate and as if A and I had really engaged in dialogue with each other. This contrasted with the doubts with which I had set out, about our capacity to explore differences and my capacity to hold a separate position. I think this positive experience illustrates A's statement that the capacity for dialogue is closely associated with a sense of mutual valuing, and that this is linked with positive self-sense. In further research interviews I would like to explore this further.*

*A said she would be open to having a second interview to consider the material I have collected and she would also take part in group discussion.*

## Contributor D (interview no 4)

D is a freelance consultant working in the housing sector. I had no established relationship with her. We met at a women manager's network event where she expressed a strong interest in being interviewed for this inquiry.

The interview took place in my house and we made a good warm and positive connection during this conversation.

D is businesslike and friendly in her approach; I felt relaxed without worry that we would lose the thread or the momentum of the interview or that I had anything to prove. She spoke entirely as a consultant, and we did not make reference to other roles. The experience she drew from was consultant/client relationships in her consultancy role. Our discussion is summarised in the following table:

Contributor D		
STATEMENTS about lived experience, approach and aspirations		DESCRIPTIONS of lived experience
1	Difficulties I experienced with a male client <i>may</i> be due to gender.	Challenge to competency, competitive: gendered responses of her and male partner
2	Characteristics of working with female clients follow social gender roles although not all women or all men follow these	Women pay attention to the small things- the individual – not just the role;  Women are friendly and able to mix the personal and the professional.
3	Women have legitimate expectations for care and consideration by colleagues / clients - which are not always met by men or women.	Not to be treated as a machine but as having physical needs!  To be acknowledged as a person – especially by women: e.g. of woman who doesn't who D describes as 'odd'.
4	Enjoyment of sharing - hitting it off with women clients- not necessary or always the case but nice when it happens.	Shared passion for the work  Fun.
	Looking after the individual and looking after the process are different - challenge can sometimes be necessary for the greater good.	Its sometimes hard to keep them separate.
6		'It doesn't necessarily work out this way with women – sometimes men are more friendly!'

In the following analysis I attempt to convey the pattern of our exchange, in relation to the explicit verbal content:

*D shows her own expectations and wishes are associated with being valued; with receiving and giving care, nurturing as well as challenging, and balancing care for individuals with care for the process. She includes passion and fun in her paradigms of good relationships with female clients – combining friendliness with professional roles without necessarily having a separate friendship.*

I felt this was mirrored in our interaction in the interview; munching and drinking of tea, nurturing and 'paying attention to small things' in action! There was no conflict between her stated espoused way of relating to women in professional situations and what she describes.

She provided illustrations of how in her experience women did hold different expectations in relation to each other than in relation to men, of how they built and sustained work relationships and in how they were treated. She stated that although these expectations did not always work out the qualities they offered were enjoyed and special. This mirrored contributor C's account of how women build relationships.

She showed for example that she was able to offer a nurturing role and hold this in balance with offering challenge when this was appropriate, and to separate 'caring for the individual' from 'caring for the process'. She showed discomfort with competitive, challenge to her competence from a male client and contrasted her experience of this challenge to her male colleague who she felt enjoyed this more competitive, combative approach in the example to which she referred. She was careful to make it clear that her preferred ways of working held in relation to men as well as women. They were qualities rather than gender attributes embodied in men or women.

D's naming of the need to balance care for the individual and care for the process seemed key to my consultancy practice, and informed my analysis in my case studies.

## Contributor E (interview no 5)

E was a researcher active in advocating the need for funding women's organisations. She runs her own consultancy practice and spiritual growth workshops for women. She is training to be a Shaman.

E was interested in and convinced of the value of my inquiry as a researcher as well as a consultant and feminist. She is familiar with and has used and referenced my previous research. I have high expectations of the interview, as I know she will be able to engage directly both in bringing experiences to it and in mutual sense making.

When I asked her to be interviewed she accepted with a lot of enthusiasm. She was interested in exploring a painful experience with a woman ex-colleague. There had been quite a build up of anticipation to the interview between us, which I experienced and recorded:

*These mutual expectations may be difficult to live up to. I am aware of pre-interview anxieties that I also experienced in relation to A, B and C, a fear of somehow not living up to the expectations I imagine they hold of me as ‘their kind of woman’ – or feminist? Am I enacting an assumption that to hold credibility or to maintain the relationship I needed to enact the part of their espoused paradigm of how women should be?*

<b>Contributor E</b>		
<b>STATEMENTS about lived experience, approach and aspirations</b>		<b>DESCRIPTIONS of lived experience</b>
1	<b>As a sacred circles leader</b> Embraces feminine, ‘earth-based’ philosophies, which honour the leadership and power of woman.	Gender bias in childhood led her to emulate ‘masculine’ qualities; felt punished for her leadership qualities by women incl. women’s movement; found affirmation in earth based philosophies.
2	Advocates for responsive leadership in contrast to ‘power over’: responding to the needs of the group and the opportunities in the environment.	Enabling, empowering, inspiring, and transforming self-image and re-framing experience through political analysis.
3	‘Earth based philosophies value women’s strengths in contrast to the women’s movement which upheld masculine values in order to get women valued in society’.	‘I have changed as a result of finding a set of values which value / allow me to value my leadership qualities.’  ‘I am less judgmental, more open; people find it easy to unfold with me and reveal their problems.’
5	<b>As a consultant</b> Seeks to empower women’s organisations by helping them become more powerful.	Holding up a mirror, illuminating. Celebrates what people have achieved, countering devaluing and low self-esteem.  Brings the sacred and professional together, helping people celebrate and identify their achievements.
	‘Women expect negative judgement due to devaluing of their work’.	Breaks down isolation between people showing communality and shaping by historical political and organisational forces to put the individual into context.
	Works from consensus.	Retreats when clients withdraw – ‘when I have gone too far’.
	‘I have to believe in what I am doing –	Aims to make clients feel valued, celebrated

	passion gives me fire’.	and empowered by new awareness of what they have achieved. Works strategically to achieve change.
	<b>As a manager</b> ‘Women in organisations cannot afford to support each other regardless of role; but do sometimes hold these ‘primitive’ expectations.’ ‘Feminists have institutionalised these expectations.’	The woman manager in her organisation did not support her in relation to a male member of staff; she felt betrayed at the time but later understood that her manager could not afford to alienate her own [male] manager.
6	‘Women are often driven by desire to be liked.’	Panicking at thought that people would hate her: portrayed as dictator by male manager.
	Friendship with women can be held alongside line management relationships.	‘I was friend and manager’ c.f. woman colleague who could not maintain a friendship with her as her manager.
	Women need to be nurtured in organisations.	‘Where women are not nurtured- desire for friendship / isolation can flip into destructive dynamics’.
	The feminine has a strength that the masculine cannot touch – I made that connection [through earth-based philosophies] and am trying to see the connection between that and my enormous expectations of women.’	‘Falls in love with’ women colleagues with opposite qualities – attraction of opposites.

The following analysis of the session attempts to convey the pattern of our explicit verbal exchange, in relation to the implicit content:

*At the beginning rapport seemed immediate; E responded with immediacy, as if she knew what I am talking about and felt at home within my conceptual frame. Also as if she was enjoying the space as an opportunity to explore aspects of her experience that are or have been taboo among feminists. E engaged fully with each question and then used them to narrate, reflect and to make sense of her experience.*

In the session we moved through a series of detailed explorations of her experience in consultancy and management roles, of her changing sense of her self and of her thinking



about power and leadership. She described her developmental trajectory from values and ideologies that she believed privilege the masculine and in relation to which she felt devalued, to her current beliefs, which she described as the sacred. Her sense of herself was closely intertwined with her sense making paradigms, the way she lives out her subjectivity and passion:

Passionate belief in her values and challenging notions of power and powerlessness are both at the heart of this:

*Um.....I haven't thought about how I do consultancy...One of the things that's really important to me is that I believe in what I am doing ...if I'm passionate then I have the fire and then I get the work done. I always say that the hardest work for me is work that I don't believe in and that I don't feel passion about.. Something you said there is helping me to clarify.. you said when you work with other consultants you have a shared agenda of wanting to promote change...*

The interview was rich in the quality of exchange and sharing and the degree of E's engagement with the subject. E moved between personal and professional experience and drew from both to fully engage with the subject. She used the session to think through and conceptualise how she did consultancy. When I read the transcript I felt that that E had sought and got from the session the kind of experience she offered to the women with whom she worked: an opportunity to have a mirror held up to their achievements in order to see what they had achieved in a different light.

Was there any parallel between the dynamics E described between women and the dynamics between us in the interview? It seemed to each of us that I had opened up a process slow to take off and hard to close down. At the end she said:

*That was fascinating and I feel that I only just began to answer the questions towards the end...I felt like I needed to tell my story before I could answer the questions...*

I walked away exhausted and affirmed in our shared valuing of the research project. I wondered how this sense of exhaustion might relate to the 'enormous expectations of women' which E claimed she had and was trying to understand – and which we may have been enacting in the interview situation.