SHOOTING OURSELVES IN THE HEAD?

A qualitative exploration of conflicts with leaders in groups experiencing marginalisation

1 Abstract

This qualitative study uses interviews and questionnaires to explore the nature of conflict between leaders and participants in marginalised groups and groups working with marginalised people. It explores the concepts of leadership and followership and the dynamic of the relationship between leaders and non-leaders. It looks at the differences between these roles as positions and as roles in the dynamic of groups, exploring the contribution of expectations and fears attacked to the relationship between leaders and non-leaders.

2 Acknowledgements

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Caroline Spark was invaluable in steering me through the process of analysing hours of interviews and making sense of what was actually there rather than what I imagined or wanted to be there.

I also want to thank the teachers of the Process Work Institute and my teachers in Process Oriented Psychology Ireland who have accompanied me on my journey over the past twelve years. It has been a wonderful journey and I look forward to where it leads next.

I want to thank the five people who gave me of their time and experiences during the interviews and I want to thank all those who took the time to complete my questionnaires. Without these people who were prepared to contribute their thoughts and experiences this would not have been possible.

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Contents

3   Introduction

3.1   Statement of the issue

As a social activist I have been conscious of how the leader of a group is often involved in conflict with members of the group itself. This conflict can range from gossiping and passive resistance to all out attack on the leader. I have personally been in the position of attacking the leader and in the position of the leader who is attacked. It seems to me that very often this internal attack on the leader or the head of the organisation was extremely counterproductive and could even be seen to be doing the job of the group's opponent or oppressor. This was akin to the group shooting itself in the head.

My initial reading of literature on groups and leaders indicated that this was seen as an inevitable part of being a leader in a group. A lot of leadership literature and training is focussed on how to bring people along, to give them a sense of ownership and participatory leadership. Where they do address the issue of the leader being attacked they focussed on how the leader could prepare for the attack, could minimise it or head it off, or how they could best survive the attack.

A tenet of process work theory is that resistance or attack is a signal that something in the group is being ignored or is outside the groups awareness and that unless the cause of the signal is sought out and given voice the level of resistance or attack will escalate. Further, the message behind this disturbance is believed to be useful and that it is necessary for the group to listen to this message and to integrate it (Mindell 1995).

Again, my perusal of the leadership literature indicated that it is usually the leader who is asked about the attack rather than those who do the attacking. I therefore set out to listen to what people who have been in conflict with the leader of a group have to say. I wanted to get a sense of what the message might be and how it could be useful to groups and how they work.

3.2 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to gain insight into how non-leaders view the conflict with the leader of the group. I am seeking to listen to what they have to say about leaders and what it is in leaders that upsets them. In doing so I want to look at the dynamic between leaders and non-leaders and to make suggestions for how this dynamic can be improved.

3.3 Overview

The leader of the group is often, if not always, seen as the most important member of a group. The leader is seen as central to the functioning of the group and is given much power, responsibility and authority. In fact, the leader can sometimes be given or takes all of the power, responsibility and authority. This can leave the rest of the group feeling disempowered and perhaps angry and resentful.

Part of the dynamic that occurs is that the leader gets attacked, either through direct confrontation or through passive resistance.

The central role given to the leader means that the resolution of this is most often placed on the leaders head and the leader most often takes on the responsibility for it. Consequently, much

theory and training is focussed on what the leader can do to change the situation; to make sure that it doesn't happen; or to lessen the impact when it does.

If we are going to have hierarchical organisations that invest a lot of power and authority in the leader it seems counterproductive to me to attack the head of the group. It is like shooting yourself in the head rather than the foot.

This thesis looks at this conflict from the point of view of the group member who is in conflict with the leader. It seeks to shed light on the thinking and motivation behind the actions of the group member.

3.4   Overview of following chapters

The Methodology chapter sets out the rational for choosing my method and describes how the research was carried out. A mixed method approach of questionnaires and interviews was employed.

The Literature Review covers leaders and leadership, focusing on the areas germane to the area of conflict with leaders. It then looks at those who are not the leader and gives considerable coverage to the new field of followership. This is followed by a section looking at the dynamic of the relationship between leaders and non-leaders. The chapter concludes by exploring aspects of duality as it affects this relationship.

The findings are divided into four separate chapters and draw upon the data gathered from the questionnaires and from the interviews.

The first findings chapter looks at opinions on and expectations of leaders and leadership. It looks at definitions of leaders and leadership, views on good and bad leadership and on leaders who people would or would not follow.

The second chapter looks at how the interviewees responded to the behaviour of the leader exploring and classifying these reactions. The third findings chapter looks at the self-reflection of non-leaders and how they saw themselves in relationship to the leader and the group. The final findings chapter looks at the impact of conflict with the leader on the aims and effectiveness of the groups.

The discussion chapter looks at the findings in relation to the literature review. It starts by looking at the impact of conflict on the organisation. It goes on to explore what might be behind the responses of non-leaders to leaders. It then looks that the dreams and expectations that exist around leaders and concludes by looking at the role of non-leaders.

The conclusion chapter questions our expectations of leaders and the role and responsibility that non-leaders should take in groups and in caring for themselves and the leader. It also looks at the role of process workers in bringing awareness to the dynamic and role of followers.

4   Methodology

4.1   General description of methodology

As I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the views of people who have had conflicts with leaders I decided to use a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches by interviewing people and using an open questionnaire. I conducted five face-to-face interviews with people who were part of or worked for organisations that worked with marginalised people. The interviews had a general structure but followed the interviewee rather than prescribed questions. They each focussed on a specific situation where the interviewee had a conflict with the leader or leadership of the organisation and sought to get their opinion or perspective on what was happening.

The questionnaires were distributed by email to people I knew and who I judged to have similar social and political outlooks to the people I interviewed. There were set questions but the respondents were free to answer them as they chose. The purpose of the questionnaires was to get a general overview of how leaders and leadership are viewed. They focussed on what people saw as good and bad leadership and on the qualities of both.

4.2   Rationale for choosing method

I chose a qualitative approach to this research as I wanted to get a greater understanding of the experience of those who found themselves in conflict with the leader of the organisation. I believe that this was the best way to get close to understanding of their experience in order to shed light on what I believe to be a more general phenomenon.

Parker (1994) says that qualitative research is "(a) an attempt to capture the sense that lies within, and that structures what we say about what we do; (b) an exploration, elaboration and systematization of the significance of an identified phenomenon; (c) the illuminative representation of the meaning of a delimited issue or problem".

Within the general field of qualitative research there is a range of approaches that could be used including observation, interviewing or some form of action research. In approaching this research I considered these approaches as I felt they were the most promising in getting the type of in-depth understanding of the phenomenon I was seeking.

I had in mind that I wanted to study situations where there was a considerable degree of conflict between the leader and a member of the group. I was not looking for situations where there was a simple disagreement that was easily resolved. I was looking for situations where tempers were raised, where people felt hurt, where they felt anger and even hatred towards the leader. Getting access to a group that was in that situation would not be easy.

In considering the possible methods, I felt that simple observation would not work as it would have involved finding a situation or situations where an attack on a leader was perhaps likely to occur and then positioning myself or some form of recording apparatus such as a video camera to capture the data. I saw several problems with this. I felt that the act of observation would intrude on the situation so as to overly influence it in a way that would so alter the behaviour of the participants as to render it unreliable. I would have had to gain prior permission of the people involved I would have had to explain why and what I was hoping to observe and I feel that this

would have caused the participants to alter their behaviour in a way that they would be performing for the observer or the camera.

The second option was to use the ethnographic approach of participant observer where I would need to be part of a group over a period of time so that I could observe behaviour as an active participant. I would be in a position to talk to the people concerned and get a deeper understanding of the issues involved and the perspectives of the participants. For this to work I would need to have become part of the group to a certain extent while maintaining the objective position of a stranger within the group.

This again raised the issue of gaining access to a group that was in a situation where the leader was under attack and gaining the groups permission to both participate in the group and to observe and investigate as I went along.

A further possibility was to conduct a piece of action research with a group that was experiencing conflict with the leader and was interested in finding out more about the phenomenon for the benefit of the group. The scenario I envisaged for this is that I would act as a consultant facilitator with the group. Although it would be clear that I was doing research I felt that the fact that there would be a buy-in by the group that my participation would be more acceptable and that I would get access to better quality data and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The group itself would also have gained insight into what was happening for them. However, being the facilitator would also mean that I was influencing the process and given my interest in the issue I could have had an impact that would have overly affected the situation

from a research point of view. This could have been lessened through close supervision and overall this would have been my preferred method of research. Unfortunately, I was not able to find a group that was experiencing conflict with the leader and that wanted to work on it in the timeframe of this research.

The final approach that I considered was to conduct interviews with people who were or had been in conflict with a leader. My first preference would have been to find people who were in the process at the time and to perhaps interview one or two people over a period of time. Again, I could not find anyone who was in that situation during my research period. I therefore chose to interview several people who had been in conflict with a leader in the past using a semi-structured interview approach.

The advantages of using this approach is that it allowed me to get access to the participants subjective meanings of what happened during their conflict with the leader. This allowed me to explore issues with the participants that would not have been possible using a more quantitative approach such as a questionnaire.

The use of the questionnaire to get people's views of leaders they would or would not follow arose during the literature review stage of the research. I had begun to notice that there were distinct differences between those who were seen as good or exemplary leaders and those who were seen as bad leaders. The examples of good and bad leaders in the literature seemed to come from the opinions of the authors rather than from specific research so I decided to check it out for

myself within a cohort of people with views I considered to be similar to the people I had scheduled for interview.

4.3   Specific description of implementation

4.3.1   The interviews

The first stage in carrying out this research was developing a participant information sheet and an interview schedule. The participant information sheet was a short description of the purpose of the research and a general overview of the areas I wanted to investigate. I produced a first draft of the and piloted it with two fellow students. In the introductory paragraph I included the working title for the research, "Shooting Ourselves in the Head – an exploration of why groups that have been marginalised and oppressed attack their own leaders" and went on to describe how I was interested in exploring situations where they, as members of a group, had attacked the group leader. The feedback that I got was that how I had worded this produced a defensive reaction as my colleagues felt that they were being accused of wrongdoing. I also discussed the issue of a possible defensive reaction from the interviewees with Caroline Spark, the research advisor with the Process Work Institute. Based on this feedback and discussion I revised the participant information sheet (Appendix 2) to say that I was "interested in people's troublesome experiences of leaders and of leadership, where there has been tension or conflict" in the group. I included a list of possible areas that I would like to explore which tended to place the emphasis on the interviewees experience of the leader and the leader's behaviour:

- Your experiences of leaders and leadership

- What difficulties have you had with leaders or people who take leadership?

- Have you experienced conflict with leaders?

- Are there particular styles or approaches of leadership that you have found difficult?

- Have you had experiences where you felt put down by a leader?

- What have been your reactions to these experiences?

The interview schedule (Appendix 4) provided a general framework of questions that I would ask within the interview. This was intended as a guide to ensure that the themes I wanted to investigate were covered. Based on the feedback I had got on the information sheet I constructed a schedule that placed the conflict in a more neutral context without ascribing particular blame.

I piloted the information sheet and questionnaire with my two colleagues. In one interview the case presented didn't really fall within the context I was looking for as it was a one off training situation rather than a situation where the interviewee was a long term member of the group. The second pilot interview did focus on the type of experience that I wanted to explore and the framework of questions worked.

4.3.2   The interview participants

In conducting this research I was looking for participants who were members of groups that represented marginalised groups or that were involved in social action outside of or in opposition to mainstream and dominant society. I also hoped to recruit participants that had experienced marginalisation or discrimination themselves in their lives. As a long time social activist, I have many friends and acquaintances that fit that profile and so asked people who I know who fitted the general profile. Two of the participants volunteered at a meeting where I was talking about the research I was conducting and had said that I was looking for participants, although I had intended asking one of these to participate after the meeting.

All participants were presented with a consent form (Appendix 3), which they signed, and that guaranteed them anonymity. I also guaranteed that I would protect the identities of any individual or organisation that they named in the interview by changing names, details and locations.

I personally knew all of the participants for periods between 18 months and 20 years. I was aware that they each had had significant conflicts with leaders either because of my personal history with them or because they had volunteered this information when they heard the research I was doing.

"Sara" is female between 20-29 years old. She comes from an urban working class background in Ireland and was employed in an organisation that works with members of the Travelling community, an indigenous, nomadic, ethnic group from Ireland that experiences racist discrimination. The interview took place in a private office on 23 October 2008.

"Brian" is male between 40-49 years old. He comes from a middle class background in an Irish city. He was a member and volunteer with a charity that worked with homeless people. The interview took place in my home on 27 October 2008.

"Sue" is female between 40-49 years old. She comes from a rural community in Ireland. She was a member of the executive committee of a solidarity organisation that supported a revolutionary government in South America. The interview took place in my home on 28 October 2008.

"Joan" is female between 40-49 years old. She is from Australia but I do not know her social class. She was a member of a "Green Dollar" or LETS (Local Economy Trading System) system in New Zealand. The interview took place in her home in Ireland on 13 November 2008.

"Ellen" is female between 40-49 years old. She is African American from an urban working class background. She was employed in an educational facility for incarcerated youth in the USA. The interview took place in her home in Ireland on 19 November 2008.

4.3.3   Conducting the interviews

The interviews were conducted one to one following the general structure of the interview schedule (Appendix 4). Sometimes the interviewer volunteered the information before a question was asked in which case the sequencing of the questions changed. The precise wording of the questions was not followed but the general intent was maintained.

The interviews were recorded using a small digital recorder. The interviewees gave their permission for its use. The small size of the device – smaller than a mobile phone – made it relatively unobtrusive.

The interviews were transcribed within 2-3 days of the interviews taking place. They were transcribed verbatim, taking care to record accurately the precise words and other verbal cues used. Words that were repeated, pauses, sentences that went unfinished are all transcribed verbatim. Where there was laughter or other sounds these are included within square brackets []. Where both the interviewee and the interviewer talk at the same time the text in {} indicates the

overlapping segment. Where a word or words are unclear or indistinct "word" or "words" appear in square brackets. Pauses are indicated by a series of full stops .... illustrative of the length of the pause. When quoting from the transcripts in the Findings, sections that are omitted as irrelevant are indicated by four dashes - - - -.

This gives a sense of the ebb and flow of the conversation. It leaves any pauses, hesitations, laughter or other sounds present for interpretation, which, hopefully gives a full and rich representation of the dialogue. The full transcripts are contained in Appendix 1

4.3.4   Interview Data Analysis

In analysing the data from the interviews I was informed and guided by John Seidel's (1998) *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Seidel describes qualitative data analysis as a simple process of noticing, collecting and thinking about interesting things. It is a cyclical, iterative process where each part informs and changes the other parts. At the same time, it is a holistic process as each part also contains the other parts, e.g. when *noticing* you are already *collecting* and *thinking* about those things. At the same time there is at least an initial progressive approach following the three stages of noticing, collecting and thinking.
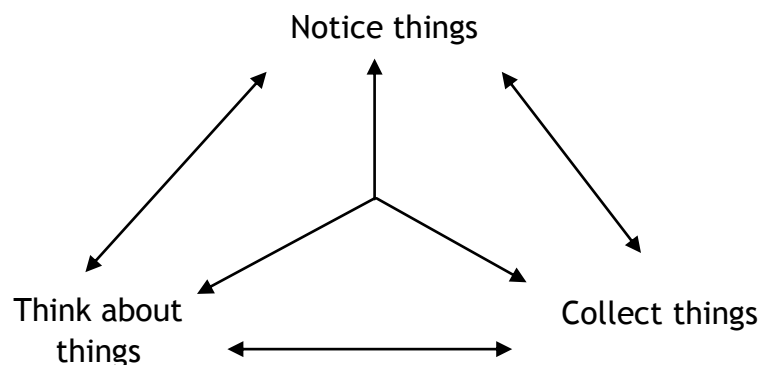
Figure 1 The Data Analysis Process, adapted from Seidel, 1998

The first stage of noticing involved recording the interviews on a digital recorder and then transcribing these verbatim as described above. I printed out the transcripts and as I read through them I wrote notes of my impressions of what was being said in the right hand margin. I also highlighted sections of the text that my note referred to. This is known as coding and I was looking for what the participant was saying or what they were talking about. I read through each transcript a second time following the same process and adding further notes when anything new caught my attention or perhaps modifying what I had written earlier.

The third time I went through the transcripts I read my earlier codes and as I did so I looked for patterns in the types of comments I had made. I grouped these different types of comments into themes to which I gave a title and wrote this in the left hand margin.

For the next phase I switched from using hard copies of the transcripts to using Microsoft Word where I set up a new document with a table with two columns. Then, reading from the hardcopy transcripts with my notation, I cut and pasted each section of transcript, or data chunk, from the original electronic copy to the right hand column and typed in the theme code I had given it in the left hand column. As I did this I highlighted the relevant section of script to which my original notation referred. I included the name of the participant with each data chunk or complete section of speech.

This gave me a new document with the theme code in the left column and the data chunk to which it referred in the right hand column. The highlighting in the right hand column was related to the theme code in the left column.

I then used the 'Sort' function to sort the table first by the theme column and secondly by the data column. As I had included the name of the participant as the first word with each data chunk the data was also sorted by participant.

Some chunks of data appeared more than once where it was relevant to more than one theme.

I next looked at all the themes I had and grouped these further into what I called categories. These categories represented the more general patterns that I noticed in the transcripts of the interviews and led to the themes by which I analysed the data.

I was able to go back to the original transcripts at any time to see the context within which a particular piece of data occurred by using the 'Find' function in Word.

4.3.5   Questionnaires

In order to get a more general view of how leaders and leadership were viewed I decided to use an open-ended questionnaire that respondents could complete themselves (Hall & Hall, 1996). The questionnaire (Appendix 5) was designed to find out how people defined leaders and leadership as I believed there may be a difference between how people viewed the role and the process. I also wanted to get a more personal picture of what motivated people to follow or not to follow a leader, what qualities attracted or repelled them. Finally, I wanted to get some examples of who people saw as leaders they would or would not follow.

On 11 November I sent a questionnaire (Appendix 5) to 52 people from my email address book. In the following 8 weeks I received 24 replies. The people chosen were from my email address book and were people who I felt would have similar views and life experiences to the people that I interviewed.

The responses to the questionnaires were analysed using a simple matrix (Hall & Hall, 1996) with the response from each person to each question given a separate cell (Appendix 6). This enabled the responses to each question to be compared giving a general picture of the responses. The questionnaires were not analysed on an individual case basis as this type of data was coming from the interviews.

4.4 Limitations

There are a number of limitations with this piece of research. The small number of participants who were interviewed, how the interviewees were selected and my relationships with them, the number of respondents to the questionnaires and how they were selected.

Interviewing allows for deeper exploration of an issue than would be possible using quantitative methods such as questionnaires. However, the time and resources involved in conducting, transcribing and analysing the resulting data tends to limit the breadth of the data collected. It is therefore difficult to draw any conclusions that can be generalised. Having only five interviewees meant that there were instances discussed that where only represented by one interviewee's experience. It is entirely likely that there are experiences in the area of investigation that were not shared by any of the interviewees and therefore are not represented.

The interviewees were all personal friends and acquaintances of mine. In some instances, I was familiar with the situations they described and knew some of the people they were talking about. This could affect the process in a number of ways. The existing relationship may have made the interviewees more comfortable discussing the issues covered with me. On the other hand, the knowledge that I was already familiar with some of the cases and that I knew some of the people involved may have also made them reluctant to be as open as they might have been with a stranger.

My personal relationship with the interviewees and with some of the people they were talking about may also have coloured my own judgement of the issues. This may have affected the directions I took in the interviews and in what I saw as significant.

The questionnaires were all sent to people in my personal email address book. I selected them as I thought they were of a similar political and social outlook as the people I was interviewing. There were clearly a large number of the respondents who come from the process work community as is indicated by the number of people who identified Arnold and Amy Mindell as leaders they would follow. This is unlikely to represent the views of the general population, even amongst those with a similar worldview. This also probably influenced their descriptions of leaders and leadership, seeing the leader as a temporary process role rather than as a positional role.

The timing of the issue of the questionnaire may also have been a limiting factor in the examples of good leaders. Barack Obama had just been elected President of the USA and this may have

influenced the number of people who identified him as a leader, given that he was relatively untested at that stage.

I had wanted to explore the how internalised oppression might play a role in the leader of a group being attacked. This has been put forward as a possible cause or contributing factor (Section 5.3.1). To really explore this would have required observation of the behaviour of a whole group to see if and to what extent the group had taken on the role of the oppressor. I did not realise this methodological shortcoming until I was conducting the interviews. One interviewee did discuss internalised oppression as it applied to the group leader rather than to the group members as a whole (Section 9.1).

5 Literature Review

Considerable amounts of study, theory and research have been written about organisations, group dynamics, leadership and more recently about followers. For the purposes of this research, I am going to focus on the aspects of groups and leadership that deal with conflict and differences between leaders and other members of the group. As the focus of this research is on what non-leaders feel about leaders, I am also going to give some extra attention to what is being called the field of followership, as this is relatively new and little has been written about it to date.

I will begin by looking briefly at what has been written about conflict in groups and how it is viewed. I will then look at leaders and leadership, and at non-leaders and the new field of followership. I will follow this by looking at the dynamic of the relationship between leaders and non-leaders and will conclude by look at the dualities that play out in this relationship.

There is general agreement that conflict occurs in groups and specifically that the leader of the group is perhaps more vulnerable to being involved in this conflict. There are, however, differences in how it is perceived. Particularly whether it is viewed as a normal, necessary and even healthy part of the life of a group or whether it is viewed as a dysfunction in the group or of group members.

The view that conflict in a group is a sign of dysfunction is perhaps most commonly associated with people from a psychodynamic background. Freud saw the relationship between the group and the leader as one of introjection where the group members identified first with the leader and then with each other (De Board, 1978). From a Freudian perspective, group members have "a tendency to idealize their leaders (and echo from early childhood, when the child wanted to be taken care of by an apparently omnipotent and perfect parent) in an attempt to endow the leader with quite unrealistic powers and attributes" (Kets de Vries, 2003, p. 6).

Melanie Klein's object relations theory proposes that group members have a tendency to identify only with the "good" aspects of leaders and to deny that the leader may have "bad" qualities. The theory proposes that this tendency results from not having integrated both the "good" and "bad" aspects of the mother in childhood (De Board, 1978).

The unconscious life of the group was further developed by Wilfred Bion (1961) when he distinguished between groups that were dysfunctional as the group operated on a 'basic assumption' that the group had got together to fulfil an unconscious task, and the 'work group' where the group focussed on the "real" task it was there for.

Manfred Kets de Vries (2003) suggests that "followers easily project their fantasies onto their leader, interpret everything leaders do in the light of their self-created image of them, and fatally seduce leaders into believing that they are in fact the illusory creatures the followers made them" (p 10). The process he describes is akin to the process of "dreaming up" in Process Work

(Diamond & Jones, 2004 Goodbread, 1997; Mindell, 1987) where the dreaming processes of both parties unconsciously interact with and feed each other.

These approaches suggest that conflict between leaders and followers occurs as the followers or the leaders have matters unresolved in their unconscious and that when it comes to followers having conflicts with leaders it is because of the follower not having resolved their issues. The dreaming up theory of process work sees it as a more democratic process where neither party is to blame and both are in an inevitable relationship.

Arising from psychoanalytic work with training and therapy groups Bruce Tuckman (1965) proposed that groups go through phases in their development, including conflict, and that this is an inevitable part of a group. He proposed that groups go through phases of Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and latterly Adjourning. In this approach it is believed that avoiding the Storming or conflict phase will result in the group not reaching its full potential of Performing.

Arnold Mindell (1992, 1995, 2002) sees conflict in a group as an inevitable and necessary part of a group's process. He also sees challenges and attacks on leaders as something that should be welcomed by the leader as a sign of life in the group (Mindell, 1992). In attacking the leader other members of the group are demonstrating their potential for leadership and are beginning, at least temporarily, to occupy that role.

Several others see conflict where the leader of the group gets attacked as inevitable if not necessarily welcome (Ruth, 2006; Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Offering several

theories for why there is conflict with the leader, the focus of these authors is on how to minimise or prevent an attack, and when one occurs, how to survive it.

5.1   Leaders & Leadership

Leader (n) **1a** somebody or something that ranks first, precedes others, or holds a principal position. **b** somebody who has commanding authority or influence. **c** the principal officer of a political party, trade union, etc. **d** *Brit* either of two government ministers in charge of initiating business in Parliament. **e** somebody who guides or inspires others.

Leadership (adj) the qualities of a leader

The Penguin English Dictionary (2002)

The dictionary definition above is weighted towards the authoritarian vision of a leader as a person who has rank and authority and only latterly mentions the need to influence or to guide. Leadership is seen as simply exemplifying the qualities of a leader rather than being a process in itself.

Much has been written on the subject of leadership, indeed in recent years it has become quite an industry (Kellerman, 2008). In this section I will explore the meanings attached to leaders and leadership.

The commonly held view in society it that a leader is someone to be admired (Heifetz, 1994; Chopra, 2004; Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Dotlich & Cairo, 2002, Goleman et al, 2002; Mindell, 1992). The leader is to be looked up to as a source of inspiration. Leaders gain a mythic status and are accredited with shaping destiny. Dotlich & Cairo (2002) list some of the qualities identified with "super" leaders:

- A leader should be a hero

- A leader solves problems

- A leader does it alone

- A leader inspires

- A leader is in control of his own destiny

Seán Ruth (2006) describes core functions of leaders as:

- Taking initiative

- Making proposals for going forward

- Acting decisively

- Organising

- Modelling the message

- Inspiring

5.1.1   Values of Leadership

The distinction between functions or qualities of leaders and the values by which leaders operate needs examination. This is core to answering the question of what is a "good" leader and poses several questions. By what criteria do we decide that a leader is "good" as distinct from effective or successful? Is there such a thing as a "bad" leader and if so by what criteria do we make this

judgement? Does it come down to whether we agree with the outcome that the leader is seeking to achieve or is it to do with the manner in which the leader leads?

Those most often cited as examples of leaders are people who have brought about great political or social change. Some of those most often cited are Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr., Joan of Arc, the Dali Lama, Nelson Mandela, De Klerk, Gorbachev, Napoleon, and Churchill (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Mindell, 1992, 1995, 2002; Ruth, 2006; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). All have had the ability to inspire people to follow them, doing things that they might never have expected they could do by themselves. Many of these leaders are seen as heroic and gain mythical status, even in their own lifetime. They are looked up to, quoted, aspired to, believed in; people have a great investment in their image of their heroes.

It is notable that most of these heroic leaders are men (Lash, 1995). The origins of the word hero is the name of the Greek demigod and ever since heroes have been overwhelmingly male. Exceptions have been the mythical Amazons; Athene, the Greek warrior goddess; Joan of Arc, again a warrior; or Boadecia the Celtic warrior queen. Although all women, they have been occupying traditionally male roles and displaying traditionally masculine behaviour. This indicates that we expect our heroic leaders to behave in a masculine way and to display masculine characteristics.

We talk about such leaders with admiration. But what about leaders such as Hitler and Genghis Kahn? Are they leaders? Have they inspired people to go beyond themselves? Ronald Heifetz (1994) makes the point that leadership should be seen as value free. He points out that we talk

about leaders of criminal gangs, fanatical religious movements or political organisations regardless of the values they espouse of the objectives they seek. The criteria for calling them leaders are that they are given authority, formal or informal, by others; they have the ability to convince people to follow them.

Heifetz (ibid) uses the example of Hitler to illustrate how leaders can be defined by their ability to fulfil core functions. By the criteria that a leader mobilises people to follow their vision; Hitler qualifies as a leader. He goes further to point out that by the criterion that both the leader's and the follower's needs have to be met, that Hitler was a leader.

Kellerman (2004) has described the tendency to only identify with the good qualities of leadership as 'Hitler's ghost' whereby we call leaders we disapprove of terms like tyrant or power-wielder to distance ourselves from these qualities that we dislike. She makes the point that to Machiavelli the only kind of bad leader is a weak leader.

We have very high expectations of our leaders. They are the one who will show us the way; who will inspire us when we are down; who will know what to do when faced with a crisis; who will always be there for us. People invest a lot of their hopes and dreams in their leaders.

Deepak Chopra (1994) has proposed that people need leaders to "embody the values that followers hunger for". However, he does not suggest that leaders do this on their own. He suggest that that leaders and followers co-create each other and that the "followers exist to fuel

the leader's vision from inside themselves". Arnold Mindell (1992) also points out that the group invests its primary identity in the leader.

There are other visions of leadership that occupy a less heroic, egotistical or individualistic role.

Lao Tzu gives advice in the Tao Teh King on how best to be a leader. He sees the leader and the follower working together and coming to a mutually acceptable conclusion, that both are satisfied with things as they both want them to be.

> *"A leader is best*
>
> *When people barely know that he exists*
>
> *Not so good when people obey and acclaim him*
>
> *Worst when they despise him.*
>
> *Fail to honour people,*
>
> *They fail to honour you.*
>
> *But of a good leader, who talks little*
>
> *When his work is done, his aim fulfilled*
>
> *They will say we did it ourselves"*
>
> (Lao Tzu, 1988)

For Lao Tzu the leader is without ego. The leader is self-effacing; does not patronise; is trusting and, thus, trusted. The leader does not use his or her position or authority to coerce or threaten followers. Whilst Lao Tzu does not seek to coerce his followers he still sees them as somehow

separate from or less intelligent than the leader. He still sees the role of the leader to set goals and to show the way.

Sun Tzu (2003) also has advice for leaders in managing their troops:

> *"One whose troops repeatedly congregate in small groups here and there, whispering together, has lost the masses. One who frequently grants rewards is in deep distress. One who frequently imposes punishments is in great difficulty. One who is at first excessively brutal and then fears the masses is the pinnacle of stupidity"*

Robert Greenleaf (2004) proposes that a leader needs to be a servant first. That is, he suggest that the role of a leader is to serve the community and that the first decision is whether one wants to serve first. The second decision is whether one wants to take a lead in doing so. He says that this begins with a natural feeling to serve and follows with a conscious decision to lead. He contrasts this with the person who is motivated to lead in order to satisfy an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. He describes a leadership spectrum between the "Servant-first" and the "Leader-first" with human nature falling between these two extremes.

Greenleaf (2004, p. 6) says the test of a servant leader is "Do those being served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wider, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?" He is painting a picture of leadership that is perhaps less focussed on an heroic outcome or a concrete goal and more as a process that emancipates and empowers.

This type of leader and style of leadership is also supported by Seán Ruth (2006) who says that true leadership should be about liberation in the context of social change. Leadership for him is about supporting people in their day-to-day struggles in the face of oppression. In fact he says that leadership itself has become to be "viewed suspiciously by many people as an oppressive and authoritarian process and the focus has been on how to minimize the influence or intrusion of leaders" (p. vii).

5.1.2   Leadership and Authority

There is a need to distinguish between leadership and authority. Seán Ruth (2006) makes the point that authority is something that is given to a person. They are elected or mandated in some way to carry out functions or tasks. Heifetz (1994, p. 57) describes it as "conferred power to perform a service". Leadership, on the other hand is something that it taken rather than being awarded. Ruth (2006) sees leadership essentially as a "decision we make to see that the things around us work well or that the situations in which we find ourselves are handled effectively" (p. 34). We can take leadership without any authority although the two often go together. However, those in positions of authority do not always display qualities of leadership (Ruth, 2006; Heifetz, 1994).

5.2   *Non-leaders, followers & opponents*

Most of the literature on leaders & leadership focuses on just these two concepts and although there are different views about what they mean there is general agreement with the use of these two words. There is even general agreement about what they mean, more so about the word leader. But, what about the people who are not leaders or who are not in a leadership role?

To date there are only four main texts that have looked specifically at the field of followers and followership. The first was Robert Kelley (1992) *The Power of Followership*. This was followed by Ira Chaleff (1995) who wrote *The Courageous Follower* and in 2008 Barbara Kellerman wrote *Followership* while Ronald Riggio, Ira Chaleff and Jean Lipman-Blumen edited *The Art of Followership* also in 2008.

The first to specifically explore non-leaders in organisations was Abraham Zaleznik in an article in the Harvard Business Review in 1965 entitled *'The Dynamics of Subordinacy'* in which he first proposed a model of followership (Kellerman, 2008).

Nothing more was written until Robert Kelley (1988) in an article in Harvard Business Review entitled "In Praise of Followers" brought attention to the importance to leaders of followers, pointing out that "Without his armies, after all, Napoleon was just a man with grandiose ambitions." These books and articles have been written to bring attention to the importance of followers to leaders and to look at how to develop "Star", "Exemplary" and "Courageous" followers, particularly in the business world. They have set out to emphasise the importance and contribution of followers, to describe ways of classifying followers in order of significance in supporting the leader and the goals of the organisation and to suggest ways of improving followership skills and competencies.

5.2.1 Who are non-leaders?

Kellerman (2008) points out that it is still unclear who or what precisely constitutes a follower. A search of two online dictionaries gives the following definitions for follower:

"1. **supporter:** a supporter or admirer of a person, cause, or activity

• a follower of Martin Luther King

• a follower of the Yankees

2. **somebody coming after:** somebody who comes or travels after somebody or something else

3. **member of entourage:** a servant, attendant, or subordinate, usually one of a number of people accompanying an important person

4. **imitator:** somebody or something that copies or imitates something else"

(Encarta)

"☐ One who subscribes to the teachings or methods of another; an adherent: *a follower of Gandhi.*

☐ A servant; a subordinate.

☐ A fan; an enthusiast.

☐ One that imitates or copies another: *A successful marketing campaign will have many followers.*"

(Answers.com)

Kellerman (2008) states that:

• "Followers can be defined by their *rank*: they are subordinates who have less power, authority, and influence than do their superiors

• Followers can also be defined by their *behaviour*: they go along with what someone else wants and intends" (p. xix)

She defines followers as "subordinates who have less power, authority, and influence than do their superiors and who therefore usually, but not invariably, fall into line" (Kellerman, 2008, p. xix). Having placed followers in subordinate position she then goes on to say that followers can fall into three categories. Those who are formally placed in a subordinate position such as in a hierarchy where there is clearly somebody superior to them. She also sees a group of followers who informally agree to go along with a particular leader, citing the example of the citizens of the USA who "generally go along with the president of the United States, even when they disagree or disapprove" (p. xx). Finally, she says that there are followers who have "become something else altogether – they have become agents of change" (p. xx). She points out that people who have ceased to go along with the leader – have ceased to follow – and for instance become whistle-blowers have in fact "morphed into leaders". She then goes on to say that she defines followers broadly, as ""unleaders", ... They are without particular power, without positions of authority, and without special influence." (p. xx)

Mindell (1992, p. 73) also sees people who attack the leader no longer as followers or simple participants but as "potential leaders who (are) not doing their job very well."

Ira Chaleff (2003, p. 15) also addresses the issue of who or what is a follower and differentiates between subordinates and followers:

> ""Follower" is not synonymous with "subordinate." A subordinate reports to an individual of higher rank and may in practice be a supporter, an antagonist, an indifferent. A follower shares a common purpose with the leader, believes in what the organization is trying to

accomplish, wants both the leader and organization to succeed, and works energetically to this end."

Kellerman's (2008) definition does not necessarily exclude Chaleff's (2003) definition but Chaleff is clearly seeing a more collaborative, supportive relationship than Kellerman, one that does not rely upon the rank of the leader to command the support of the follower.

5.2.2   Models, styles and types of followership?

Harvard professor Abraham Zaleznik described an early model of followership, based on the two dimensions of submission vs. control and activity vs. passivity (Figure 2). These were based on Zaleznik's Freudian perspective as is apparent from the dysfunctional labels he uses (Kellerman 2008). Controlling followers want to control their superiors, whilst submissive followers want to be told what to do. Active followers initiate and intrude, whilst passive ones sit back and let things happen.

- Impulsive followers are often rebellious, trying to lead whilst being led. They are sometimes spontaneous and courageous.

- Compulsive followers want to dominate their leaders, but hold themselves back. They typically feel guilty about their compulsive tendencies.

- Masochistic followers want to submit to the control of the authority figure, even though they feel discomfort in doing so. In this way, they gain pleasure from being dominated.

- Withdrawn followers care very little or not at all about what happens at work and consequently take little part in work activities other than doing the minimum necessary to keep their jobs.

Dominance
(Controlling)

Impulsive	Compulsive
Masochistic	Withdrawn

Active
mode of
behaviour

Passive
mode of
behaviour

Submissive
(Being controlled)
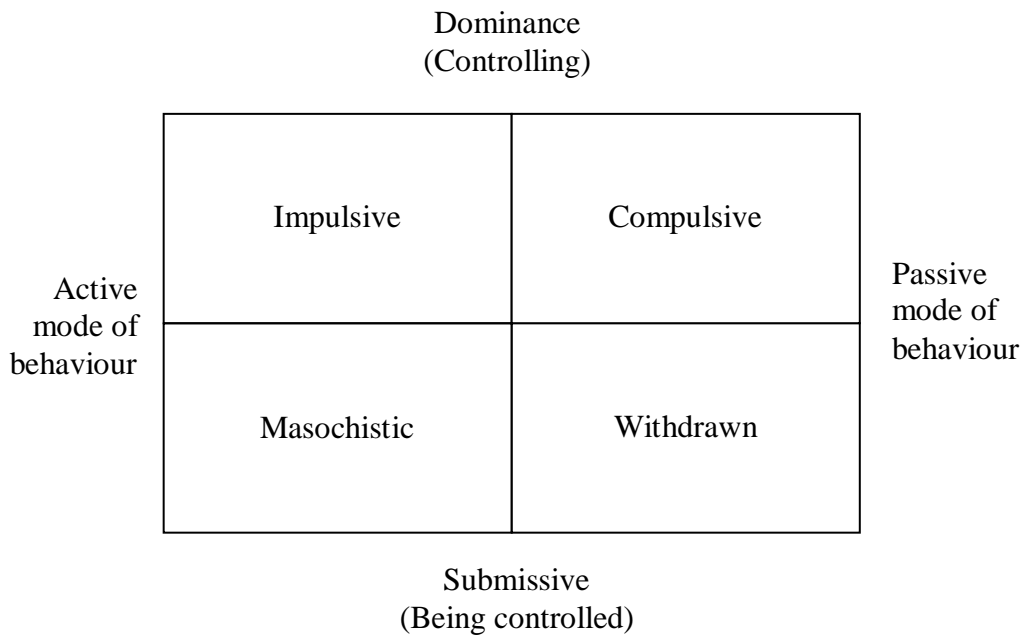
Figure 2 Zaleznik's Typology of Subordinacy

Kelley (1988, p. 4) tried to differentiate between styles or types of followership. He described the

qualities of effective followers as:

"1. They manage themselves well.

2. They are committed to the organization and to a purpose, principle or person outside

themselves.

3. They build their competence and focus their efforts for maximum impact

4. They are courageous, honest and credible."

Kelley (1992) starts by looking at the motivation for following. He argues that there is a common

perception that people follow leaders because of their charisma, however, there are also reasons

of self interest that motivate people to follow. He suggest that there are 'Seven Paths to

Followership' that represent the reasons of self interest that motivate followers. These are influenced by two dynamics.

The first is one of personal expression or personal transformation. At the personal expression end people are motivated to contribute their skills towards an organisational goal. The other end of this dimension is where people are seeking personal growth and development. The second dimension is between those who are seeking fulfilment through relationship and belonging, and those who are seeking to achieve a personal dream or goal. He points out that these are not permanent reasons or exclusive of each other.

Kelley's seven paths to followership (1992) (Figure 3) explore the personal reasons that people will chose to follow a leader or a cause. This followership is voluntary and chosen by the person themselves rather than being imposed upon them.

- The Apprentice chooses to follow because they are aspiring to lead themselves and they want to learn how to do it.

- The Disciple recognises a superior level of intellectual mastery in an individual and is so inspired that they will follow to absorb the teachings of the master.

- The Mentee forms an intense one-on-one relationship with the mentor where the mentor hones the particular skills of the mentee.

- The Comrade follows in order to get a level of intimacy and social support that is provided by the relationship and the personal satisfaction of achieving a goal that cannot be achieved alone.

- The Loyalist owes a particular obligation to the leader. This may be cultural, such as in the code of Bushido, or an obligation due to the protection or support that the leader has given.

- The Dreamer is committed to the achievement of a particular goal or dream and does not really care who is the leader and who is the follower. They might just as well occupy the leader position themselves but are happy for someone else to occupy it provided the dream is achieved.

- The Lifeway follower has chosen followership and service as a way of life. This way arises from an inner belief of sense of spiritual value. The Lifeway follower is having their personal needs met through the act of following and serving
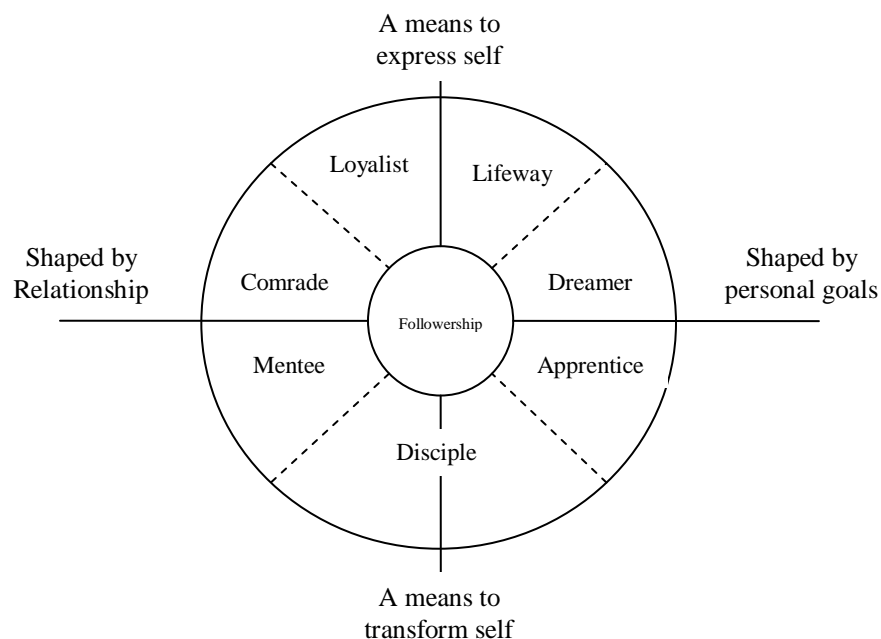
Figure 3 Seven Paths to Followership, adapted from *The Power of Followership*, Robert Kelley, 1992

Kelley (2008) then goes on to plot leadership styles on a graph with two intersecting axes. The first axis measures the relative dependence/independence and critical/uncritical thinking capacity

of the follower. The second axis measures the level of energetic engagement with the organisation from a positive active engagement to a negative passive engagement. This results in five styles of followership, the labels for which have varied through his writings. The diagram in Figure 4 taken from *The Power of Followership* and the descriptions of the different types are listed below with the labels used in 'In Praise of Followers' (1988) and "Rethinking Followership" (2008) in brackets.

- <u>Alienated Followers</u> score highly for independent, critical thinking but low on active engagement. Although members of the group they do not participate, are critical and cynical. They are free thinkers.

- <u>Conformist Followers (Yes People)</u> score highly on active engagement but are not independent thinkers. They like to be told what to do and will defer to the leader.

- <u>Passive Followers (Sheep)</u> are dependent upon the leader to do the thinking, are uncritical of the leader or the group's actions and are passive participants, going along with the group.

- <u>Pragmatist Followers (Survivors)</u> score in the middle zone for independence of thinking and the level of their active engagement. They are measured and limited in their criticism of the leader.

- <u>Exemplary Followers (Effective Followers, 1988 & Star Followers, 2008)</u> are independent critical thinkers who engage actively in the group. They can be relied upon to give constructive, critical input and to act on their own initiative.

Independent, Critical Thinkers

Dependent, Uncritical Thinkers
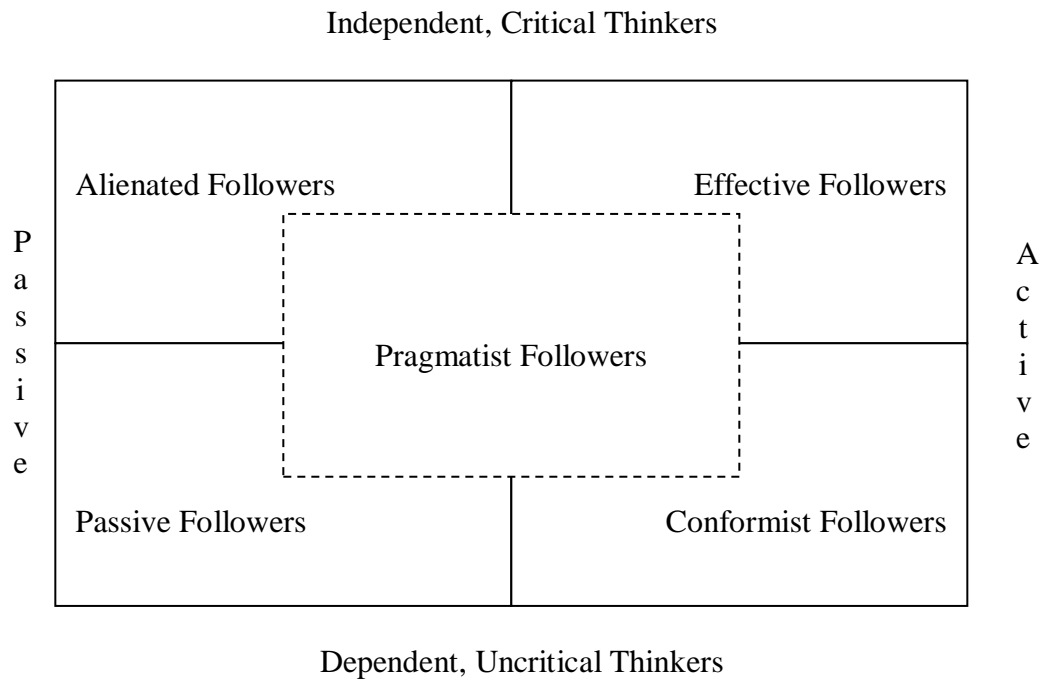
Figure 4 Robert Kelley's followership styles, adapted from *The Power of Followership* by Robert Kelley, 1992

Kelley's (1988, 1992) objective is to minimise the number of passive followers or sheep in an organisation and to transform all types of followers, including the Alienated, Conformist, Pragmatic, into Exemplary, Effective or Star followers with a "courageous conscience" that he defines as "the ability to judge right from wrong and the fortitude to take affirmative steps toward what one believes is right" (Kelley, 1992, p. 168).

Ira Chaleff took up this theme in 1995 when he wrote *The Courageous Follower*. Chaleff sees the role of the follower as a proactive one that "balances and supports dynamic leadership". He sees a dynamic relationship between the ideal follower and the leader based not on equality but on a parity of esteem and respect. Like Kelley, he believes that to be a powerful leader you need to have powerful followers. As the prevailing social norm is to confer power and rank on the leader, any follower who is going to play a serious, constructive and at times limiting or

restricting role in relationship to the leader is going to need to have a high moral calibre and have the courage to act.

Chaleff (2003) sees the relationship between leaders and followers as revolving around a common purpose. It is not the leader's personal vision or goals or drive that is important but the purpose of the organisation that is important. Figure 5 is used in *The Courageous Follower* to illustrate this point.
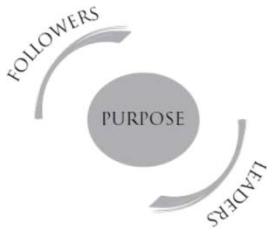
Figure 5 Follower-Leader Dynamic from *The Courageous Follower* by Ira Chaleff (2003) downloaded from http://www.exe-coach.com/followerPartnershipImg1.jpg

Chaleff (2003) also uses a two dimensional model to represent the range of followership styles that he sees present in organisations (Figure 6). The first dimension is the level of support that a follower is prepared to give to the leader. The second dimension is the degree to which the follower is prepared to challenge the leader's decisions or behaviour. He emphasises that both of these are in relation to the core purpose or values of the organisation.

High Support

Quadrant II IMPLEMENTER	Quadrant I PARTNER
Quadrant IV RESOURCE	Quadrant III INDIVIDUALIST

Low
Challenge

High
Challenge

Low Support
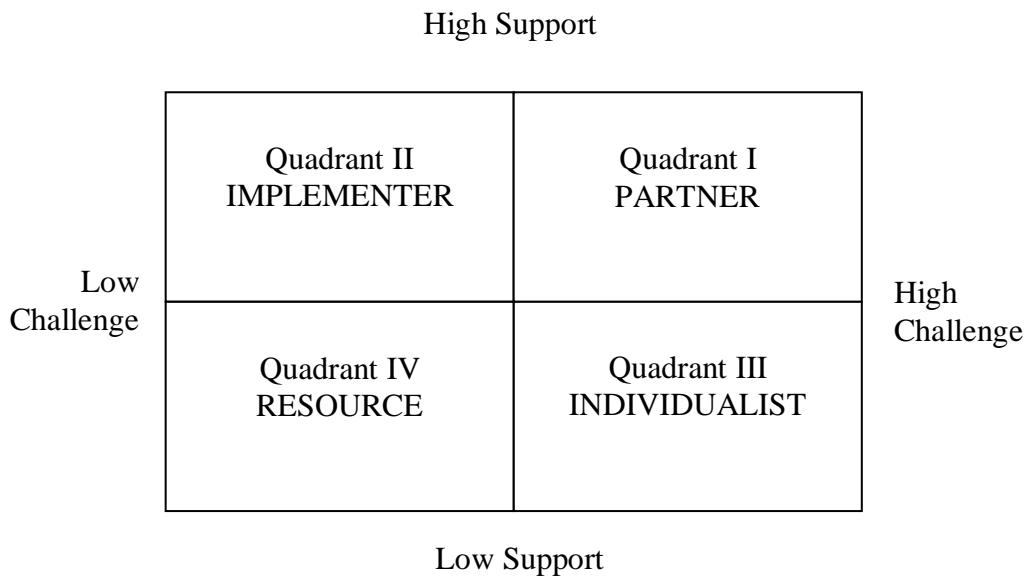
Figure 6 Ira Chaleff's Followership Styles from *The Courageous Follower by Ira Chaleff, 2003*

The four quadrants in Chaleff's diagram describes four followership styles:

- The Partner is highly supportive of the leader yet will also challenge and question the leader's behaviour and policies. Chaleff identifies this follower as displaying the characteristics of a courageous follower.

- The Implementer can be relied upon to get the job done without much supervision. However, they cannot be relied upon to give critical feedback if the leader is heading in a direction that conflicts with the purpose or values of the organisation. Chaleff points out that most leaders actually prefer this type of follower.

- The Individualist can be relied upon to voice an opinion and be critical of the leader. However, they tend not to balance their negative criticism with active support when the leader is doing well.

- The Resource is reliable and dependable – a safe pair of hands. They can be relied upon to do their job but no more. They are unlikely to voice an opinion one way or another.

Like Kelley (1988, 1992), Chaleff (2003) presents strategies for shifting followers from the Resource, Individualist and Implementer quadrants to the Partner quadrant. He sees this as happening by developing courageous followers who have the moral and personal fortitude to think independently, to support enthusiastically, to criticise constructively and challenge from personal conviction.

As with defining what we mean by the word follower, Kellerman (2008) also addresses the issue of defining followership. She continues the hierarchical structure of the relationship between leader and follower:

> "*Followership* is the response of those in subordinate positions (followers) to those in superior ones (leaders). *Followership implies a relationship (rank), between subordinates and superiors, and a response (behavior), of the former to the latter.*" (p. xx)

She is critical of the prevalent tendency to avoid using the term follower, with its connotations of low social rank, and replacing it with "euphemisms" such as "constituent, associate, member or subordinate". She is also critical of concepts such as leading-up whereby subordinates in a company take leadership actions. She is equally strident in her criticism of concepts such as "*empowerment, participation, teams,* and *distributed leadership.*" She argues that this tendency to minimise the passive submissive connotations of followership is bogus and merely delusional:

> "Still, the fear of following has precluded us from exploring followership in full – and deluded us into thinking that power between leaders and followers is easily shared, which it is not. In corporate America especially, we are loath to admit the obvious: those high on the

organizational ladder generally dominate those lower down. To obscure the unpleasant truth that power relationships persist, we use language that lulls us into thinking things are different from what they really are........... While many if not most organizational hierarchies have been flattened in recent years, leaders and managers generally remain in control. Whatever the jargon, the fact is that most organizations still have systems and structures in which superiors control their subordinates." (Kellerman, 2008, p. 7).

Following on from Kelley (1988, 1992) and Chaleff (1995) Kellerman (2008) also seeks to differentiate between different types of follower. However, she says that followers can be differentiated on a single "all-important" (Kellerman, 2008, p. 85) axis that distinguishes between types based on their level of engagement. This can range from total disengagement where the person feels and does absolutely nothing, to the person who is deeply involved and committed at the other end of the spectrum (Figure 7). Kellerman's five types are:

- Isolates are completely detached from their leaders, not caring about, knowing about or responding to them in any way. She makes the point that there are consequences arising from this isolation as by totally disengaging the leader's hand is strengthened further.

- Bystanders sit on the fence observing but not getting involved. They have taken a decision to deliberately disengage from their leaders and from the group dynamic. This disengagement, in effect, lends tacit support to the leader and the status quo.

- Participants are engaged in some way. They care enough to either agree or disagree with the leader and the group and are prepared to invest in some way in affecting the outcome.

- <u>Activists</u> care strongly about their leaders and act accordingly. They are energetic, engaged and active. They will invest heavily in whatever they believe in and will act on behalf of their leaders or will act to undermine or unseat them.

- <u>Diehards</u> do what it says on the tin. They are totally committed, and even prepared to die for what they believe in, whether that is an individual, a cause or both. If they support a leader, they will be totally committed in their support. Conversely, they are also prepared to go to any lengths to remove the leader if they feel they are abusing power or authority, or are damaging a cause in which the diehard believes.

Isolate	Bystander	Participant	Activist	Diehard
Totally disengaged				Completely engaged

Figure 7 Kellerman's Five Types of Follower

Kellerman's (2008) way of looking at followers is more dispassionate than either Kelley (1988, 1992) or Chaleff (2003). In contrast, she considers "followers" who are totally disengaged from the leader, and she considers that a "follower" may also become an opponent of the leader if they feel that the leader is behaving in an unethical way. Rather than providing a typology that allows followers to be placed relative to the ideal follower – the Exemplary Follower (Kelley, 1992) or Partner (Chaleff, 1995) – she instead provides a lens through which to view things from the bottom up rather than the top down.

It would be nice to be able to draw comparisons between these three typologies of followership but other than the obvious comparison between Kelley's Exemplary Follower and Chaleff's Partner it is difficult to really draw strong correspondences between the other types. So, although all three set out to shed light on followership, they are different lights that present a different hue depending on your perspective.

48

Most books on leaders and leadership either use terms that describe the status of the relationship between the leader and the people in their organisation that they are supposed to be leading, such as *employees, workers, staff, reports, team members, citizens* or *members.* Sometimes they are simply referred to as *people, participants, stakeholders, the group* or even *others*. Very often the presence of people other than the leader is assumed and only the effect or impact on the leader is mentioned, e.g. the leader was supported, or, the leader was isolated.

The only other labels that I have come across that describes non-leaders in a way that describes their activity and places them in relationship to the leader is to describe them as "attackers" (Ruth, 2006) or as "terrorists" (Mindell, 1995). Some (Mindell, 1992; Kellerman, 2008) suggest that a person who attacks the leader is in effect becoming a leader themselves.

5.3   *Relationship dynamic between leaders and non-leaders or followers*

There is a dynamic and complementary relationship between leaders and followers, even one of co-creation (Chopra, 2004). They occupy different social roles based upon their position within an organisation and both can occupy different roles at different times in relation to the group dynamic. There are also differences in power and privilege that affect the dynamic of the relationship. In this section I will look at roles and how role theory affects the dynamic of the relationship. I will also look at how the power and privilege differences, or rank as Mindell (1995) calls it, influence the relationship.

It is perhaps only common sense that leaders cannot exist without followers and several authors make this point (Chaleff, 1995; Chopra 2004; Kellerman, 2008; Kelley, 1988, 1992). And indeed

the corollary is also true in that if there is no leader who do the followers follow? Kelley (1988) puts it quite succinctly when he says, "Without his armies, after all, Napoleon was just a man with grandiose ambitions."

Kellerman and Chopra see the relationship as a reciprocal one. For Kellerman (2008, p. 60) "followers provide leaders with something they need and want (followers), and leaders provide followers with something they need and want (leaders)." Chopra (2004) is a little more specific in outlining what it is that each provides for the other, "Leaders and followers co-create each other. They form an invisible spiritual bond. Leaders exist to embody the values that followers hunger for, while followers exist to fuel the leader's vision from inside themselves."

Kelley (1992) and Chaleff (2003) focus more on the achievement of a goal or purpose and see the roles of leader and follower as separate but complementary roles. They both have their own particular function in achieving the purpose of the group. Chaleff (2003) challenges the idea of the heroic leader or "great man" that followers are inspired by and instead says that it is the purpose of the group that inspires both the leader and the follower. He says that "Followers and leaders both orbit around the purpose; followers do not orbit around the leader" (Chaleff, 2003, p. 13).

It is not possible to look at the dynamic of the relationship between leaders and non-leaders without looking at the issue of power in the relationship. In fact, power is intrinsic to this dynamic as it is to any relationship. Despite the efforts to minimise or mask this power differential by using terms like member or participant, or referring to teams and flat

organisations, there is an inherent hierarchical nature to the relationship between leader and non-leader. This power arises from the overall social context whereby leaders are accorded a higher level of power based upon society's general beliefs around the power of leaders (Chaleff, 2003; Kelley, 1992; Kellerman, 2008). This power may be further emphasised by the situation in which it occurs, such as in the military, school or in an employment situation. The patriarchal nature of our society, with values of assertiveness, dominance and individualism, teaches people from an early age, reinforcing it throughout their lives, that the leader, usually a man, is to be respected and occupies a position of power and advantage (Daly, 1984; Johnson, 1997).

Kellerman (2008) highlights one of the paradoxes in the relationship between leaders and non-leaders based on Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (1994). There is a struggle for followers to assert their independence while at the same time seeking the protection of the leader. There is a risk that if too much independence is sought or too much challenge presented that the leader may react with hostility to the follower and withdraw their protection. Non-leaders or followers do a cost-benefit analysis in relation to how much independence they will seek or how much challenge they will present. Thus a follower may decide to continue to follow or to give authority to the leader even when they disagree with the leader or when they do not or have ceased to admire the leader.

Chaleff (2003) also addresses this aspect of the power dynamic and makes the point that, when faced with an abusive leader, those at a distance from the leader feel powerless to act, while those close to the leader fear to do so in case the abuse is turned on them.

Yet another aspect to the dynamic is the social pressure to trust and obey authority figures (Kelley, 1992). Our institutions such as the family, religions and schools teach us to trust that those in positions of authority have our best interests at heart, that they are competent and knowledgeable and so should be obeyed. As a consequence of this trust we hand over responsibility for decisions on what is right or wrong and are more likely to follow an order or decision rather than challenge it.

A further consequence of this is that we can also abdicate moral responsibility and lay the blame for immoral actions on the leader. Kellerman (2008) makes the point that it was rank and file Nazis who did the actual killing during the Holocaust, yet the excuse of following orders was used when they were brought to trial. There is a tendency to believe that if there hadn't been a Hitler then there would not have been a Holocaust.

5.3.1   Roles & role theory

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts" (Shakespeare, 1993, Act II, Scene vii)

Social role theory generally proposes that people are fulfilling roles in society in much the same way as an actor plays a part in a play. There is a script, which is to be followed, that is decided by society's norms of behaviour. A person's behaviour is determined by their social setting rather than by their intrinsic nature or personality. Thus, in say a school, the teacher behaves in a certain way in accordance with certain expectations, bringing new learning, preparing course material, correcting assignments, etc. Similarly, the student is expected to behave in a certain

way, paying attention, asking questions, carrying out assignments, etc. There is latitude for personal expression but only within the limits of the role.

A functionalist perspective to role theory (Merton, 1957) sees the roles of leader or follower as being necessary to the functioning of the organisation. There are expectations that people occupying those roles will behave in ways appropriate to their position.

Another way of looking at roles is that they are a function of the interaction between people. This way of looking at roles has been used in psychodrama (Moreno, 1953), in transactional analysis (Berne, 1964) and in process work (Mindell, 1995).

Roles in Process Work are part of the field, the term originally used by Kurt Lewin (1972) and borrowed from physics. Mindell (1992, p. 24) defines fields as "natural phenomena that include everything, are omnipresent, and exert forces upon things in their midst." Fields are non-local and roles exist within the field, are part of the field and are occupied on a temporary or momentary basis by individuals within a group or organisation (Mindell, 2000). Mindell (1995) also refers to roles a "timespirits" to emphasise the impermanence and fluidity of a role. Timespirits exist as a function of the locality and the moment and as a word it perhaps makes a greater distinction from roles as functional positions in an organisation.

In Process Work theory, as in psychodrama and transactional analysis, it is as though the roles in the group move between the people, who then occupy them either consciously or more often unconsciously. People may stay in a role for a considerable period of time but more often will

switch from one role to another at which point someone else may occupy the role that they were formerly occupying, or it may remain unoccupied.

In general we think of roles in organisations as being rather permanent or at least we expect people to occupy them for a considerable period. People are usually appointed to particular roles. They may be elected to a role such as chairperson or they may apply for a job and be appointed to a particular post. Thus the chairperson, once elected, might reasonably expect to remain in that role until replaced at the next election. Attached to the role of chairperson is, at least implicitly, the role of group leader. In Process Work the role of leader, whilst perhaps remaining nominally with the chairperson, is a role that exists in the field of the organisation and can be occupied by anyone if it is vacant or it can be contested if it is felt that it is not being fully occupied. Roles are seen as fluid and just as a group member can occupy the role of leader, the leader can also occupy the role of follower. Mindell (2002) sees the potential for the role of facilitator and participant in groups to cease to be separate and to merge into a new role of participant facilitator.

This concept of role switching is not unique to Process Work. Kelley (1992) points out that within an organisation a follower with technical expertise will make decisions and take leadership where they have greater competency than the identified leader. He cites the example from the roman empire when Cincinnatus, a farmer, dropped his plough and became a general when needed for war and then, following victory, returned immediately to farming. Kellerman (2008) and Mindell (1992) make the point that followers that attack the leader have ceased to be followers and are in fact being leaders at that time.

Mindell also suggests that there are roles in the field of a group that nobody is willing or able to occupy. He calls these ghost roles and says that a ghost role is "something we feel but cannot see" (Mindell, 1995, p. 89). Ghost roles may be people or organisations that the group talk about but who are not present in the group. A ghost role may also be experienced by the thing that is not being talked about. Very often, they are roles that the group disapproves of, is angry at or feels threatening. The ghost role may be spoken of in dismissive or hostile terms, or it may be spoken of in stereotypical terms.

Yet due to the non-locality of field theory in groups all parts of the field are present in each part of the field. Therefore, although an individual or a group may feel that they couldn't possibly act like this ghost, the ghost is also part of them. In process work terms the ghost is part of their secondary process.

In *Sitting in the Fire* (1995) Mindell identifies "The Terrorist" as a particular ghost role that is present in groups, particularly those that have experienced oppression. Mindell says that the terrorist "fights for freedom and justice against another role, the role of social power and collective domination" (Mindell, 1995, p. 89). In such groups, a leader who is not conscious of his or her rank is liable to be experienced as abusive by the group and thus seen as occupying the role of dominator. The leader is inviting an attack from the terrorist role which "since those in power rarely notice when and how they put others down, they experience "terrorist" attacks as unfair, coming from those they least expected, occurring in surprising places and times, and using secret, unnecessarily hurtful or violent tactics" (Mindell, 1995, p. 94).

The role of oppressor can also become internalised within a group. The group takes on the patterns of oppression and directs them upon themselves (Mindell, 1995, Ruth, 2006). Several theorists have suggested a strong link between the level of internalised oppression and attacks on leaders (Ruth, 2006). The group itself takes on the role of oppressor and polices itself. Those in the group carrying out the attack will not identify with occupying this ghost role.

5.3.2   Rank

Arnold Mindell's (1995) theory of rank is very helpful in understanding the dynamics of power in the relationship between leaders and non-leaders. The concept of rank is used to bring awareness to the process where people feel more or less powerful in any given situation at any particular moment. Rank differences and the misuse or abuse of rank is behind all social situations and contributes to all conflicts. Having awareness of one's own rank helps a person understand why they may feel less powerful than or abused by someone with higher rank. Having awareness of one's higher rank can lessen the likelihood of using it in a way that is experienced as hurtful or abusive by someone of lower rank. High rank can be used in a positive way if a person is conscious of their high rank and can occupy it congruently.

Rank is the sum total of a person's power and privileges at any given moment. Some rank is earned over a person's life, by facing life's challenges and overcoming them. Some rank is unearned, that is, acquired by birth or social position. Rank is not constant and can change from moment to moment in a particular situation (Mindell, 1995).

Rank is noticed and experienced more acutely by a person who has lower rank. People with higher rank can be unaware or unconscious of their rank. If a person is unaware of their rank it is more likely to be experienced as abusive. Rank is neither good nor bad – it just is. Becoming more aware of one's rank reduces the likelihood of abusing it.

Rank is demonstrated through physical signals such as posture, tone of voice, volume of speech, clothing, language and gestures. It is also demonstrated through titles, possessions and property. A person cannot hide their rank, it will come out in double-signals; a person may be saying one thing but their body language will be telling a different story.

Rank can be divided into different types:

Social Rank is generally unearned and the relative powers and privileges are supported by social norms. It covers areas such as gender, class, ethnicity, skin colour, wealth, nationality, education.

Local or Situated Rank arises in a particular situation and is particular to an individual's position in that situation. Someone's high social rank may not apply in a particular social situation.

Psychological/Spiritual Rank is the power that you gain from life experiences, particularly overcoming and surviving difficult and challenging situations. Mindell points out that people who have been marginalised often turn to spirituality to centre themselves and this provides them

with the power to survive pain (Mindell, 1995). Spiritual rank can also arise from a feeling of connection to a higher power or to nature/the environment etc.

Within an organisation local rank issues are going to be to the fore. Organisations have hierarchies and people with more authority will have higher rank. Differences in pay, authority, responsibility will all come into play. Who has the biggest office, where someone's desk is situated, what resources they have access to will also affect a person's feeling of power, security and wellbeing. Cultural norms within the organisation will also come into play. Particular forms of behaviour or ways of thinking will be valued differently; some more highly; some will be disapproved of.

Social and local rank generally give the leader more power and authority than the non-leader. This arises from the social convention that leaders should be respected and that they have the power and authority to make decisions, issue orders and exact punishment on those who are of lower rank. Within a given situation such as an employment situation the fact that a person is an employee and is quite likely dependent upon the leader for their income and livelihood gives the leader higher rank. This rank difference will result in the person of lower rank feeling lesser than, beholden to or even subject to the leader in the higher rank position. Even in a situation where there is not an economic dependency of the non-leader on the leader, such as in a community group, the leader is still going to have higher rank due to their position and title within in the organisation.

The non-leader is not entirely powerless or without rank though. The non-leader may have greater social support from colleagues with whom they may have a more open and trusting relationship. This can give them access to greater information than the leader who is socially isolated from the other people in the organisation. The non-leader may also gain local or situational rank in particular circumstances. The CEO of a major corporation may be riding in a lift with the janitor. If the lift breaks down between the 33rd and 34th floor it is the janitor who knows what to do and who is competent to deal with the situation. The non-leader may also have higher psychological rank than the leader if they have overcome greater challenges in life, this may give them a sense of moral power greater than the leader.

Rank, as stated earlier, is the sum total of a person's power and privilege at any given moment in time. It is not constant but rather a fluid state. Psychological and spiritual ranks play a significant part in determining the rank of a person and how total rank affects a relationship. Psychological and spiritual rank are not necessarily apparent. They are not related to a person's gender, colour, position or title. They are more internal and give a person inner strength. Therefore, a person of lower social rank may have a total rank greater than a person of higher social rank. They may not have the outer trappings of power and privilege but they may have the inner resources to deal with a crisis due to their life experience than would a person of higher rank. For instance, a child who has survived a war or a conflict may not feel fear of a teacher in school. The teacher may not understand that the authority of their position and age does not count for much with the child. As social and psychological rank have been earned they are more durable then social or situational rank.

5.4   Duality in relationships and conflict

"It is because we single out something and treat it as distinct from other things that we get the idea of its opposite. Beauty, for example, once distinguished, suggests its opposite, ugliness.

And goodness, when we think of it, is naturally opposed to badness.

In fact, all distinctions naturally appear as opposites. And opposites get their meaning from each other and find their completion only through each other. The meanings of "is" and "is not" arise from out distinguishing between them.

Likewise, "difficult and easy," "long and short," "high and low," "loud and soft," "before and after" – all derive their meanings from each other."

(Lao Tzu, 1996, verse 2)

Taoism expresses the duality of nature as yin and yang. These are not opposing forces, more the complementary parts of the whole. It does not place greater value on one over the other as is the case in Judaic and Christian thinking, rather, it accepts that the two parts are necessary to make the whole (Watts, 1975).

In reading about leaders and leadership the influence of Judaic and Christian thinking is more prevalent. There is a tendency to look at leaders as only good leaders and to try to put a distance between "good" and "bad" leaders. Kellerman (2004) makes the point that this is confusing as

most people see leaders as those who have power, authority and influence; it is misleading as it attaches a value base to leadership rather than being objective; and does a disservice to leadership as a field as it fails to look at it in its entirety.

Psychoanalyst Melanie Klein put forward the theory that as infants develop they view their mother not as a whole but as part objects including a "good" breast and a "bad" breast. The infant projects unpleasant experiences onto the external part-object, i.e. the mother's breast. As the child develops it realises that both the "good" and "bad" breasts actually belong to the same whole-object, i.e. the mother. She described this splitting and failure to introject both experiences, as part of the ego, as the paranoid-schizoid position and saw this as a way of relating to the world that adults would return to (Oates, 1994). In adulthood, failure to integrate or introject earlier paranoid schizoid experiences can lead to internal splitting and the projection of bad feelings onto another person such as a leader (de Board, 1978).

Another theory that has a duality is social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Truner, 1979) and proposes that individuals base their personal identity on that of the identity of a group. The person's identity becomes invested in the group identity and thus in order to defend and maintain the personal identity, the identity of the group must also be maintained. This group becomes the in-group.

This social identity is also dependent on the existence of groups that are not part of that group. It defines itself by distinguishing itself from the "other", the "not-us" or out-group. By extension the individual in the group also defines themselves as distinct from the out-group. To have or

take on characteristics of the out-group is to be disloyal to the in-group. This causes conflict with the individual's identity.

Hogg (2008) sheds particular light on how social identity operates in the relationship between the leader and the other group members. The group will develop a prototypical identity for the group that embodies the beliefs and characteristics of that group. Members will define the parameters of the group and the group prototype through discussion of what it means to be a member of the group and what the group stands for. The members of the group will permit the leader to take a significant role in defining the group identity but will also play an active and significant part in its creation and maintenance. Members of the group are expected to behave in accordance with the characteristics of the group prototype and deviation from this norm will cause anxiety for the group members and cause them to take action to bring the errant member into line.

Group members receive the information about what it means to be a prototypical group member from observing each other, and particularly the leader as the most outstanding and obvious member of the group. The leader of the group is expected to be particularly prototypical of the group, as the group members have invested their identity in the leader. The group members may develop an idealised version of the leader as they wish to enhance their identity by making the leader seem more prototypical than is the actual case. This can lead to the experience of a fundamental attribution error (Ross, 1977) where the leader is seen as possessing charismatic qualities that are the group's projection rather than the actual traits of the leader.

Process Work is strongly influenced by Taoism and as such recognises the duality of life. This duality is manifested in several concepts including the "high" and "low" dream (Mindell, 1995). There are similarities with Klein's "good" and "bad" breast and with the "in-group" and "out-group" of social identity theory.

The high dream in process work expresses an individual's or group's ideals, deepest beliefs and highest hopes and expectations. It is an idealised state that is perhaps impossible to reach. However, the high dream also expresses the potential that an individual or group could reach. Being unaware of the high dream leaves a person or group vulnerable as it becomes impossible to see that it is just a dream and that reality may be somewhat harsher. The shattering of a high dream leads to the low dream. Being aware of the high dream and working with it rather than being subject to it can increase the possibility of achieving it. The low dream exists although perhaps outside of conscious awareness. The fear of the low dream can keep belief in the high dream strong. Awareness of the high dream also reduces its potential for disappointment and the fulfilment of the low dream.

The high dream of a leader can be like the prototypical leader in social identity theory. It can also be associated with the fundamental attribution error of believing in the leader to keep the low dream away. The high dream can also be that of one's unconscious potential for leadership that it then projected onto the identified leader.

5.4.1   A leader in the making

As I worked on this project the presidential election campaign was underway in the USA. George W Bush was coming to the end of his second term of office having divided the USA and the world in terms of his leadership. At one point he had been the most popular presidents of the USA (Wilentz, 2006) but left office having been the most unpopular president ever (Steinhauser, 2008).

Figure 8 Obama walks on water, downloaded from http://tkcollier.wordpress.com/2008/07/ on 31 January 2009

During the primaries a new candidate Barack Obama, appeared almost from nowhere, went on to win the nomination of the Democratic Party, and was subsequently elected President of the USA. Obama campaigned with a message of change and hope which inspired many people to the point of being considered a messiah by some (obamamessiah.blogspot). Figure 8 is one example of the montage images circulating on the internet. I think it demonstrates the high dream of leadership rather well.

6　Findings – Opinions on and expectations of leaders and leadership

This chapter looks at what the interviewees and the respondents to the questionnaire expect of leaders and of leadership. It looks at what they feel a good leader should be and what they feel a bad leader is. There is good correlation between the responses to the questionnaires and the views expressed by the interviewees, particularly in relation to what is considered bad behaviour by leaders.

6.1　Definitions of a leader

6.1.1　Vision, charisma and example

The most prevalent themes in the responses to the questionnaires were that a leader should have charisma and be able to influence people to follow him/her. This was closely connected to having a vision for the group. Mostly it appears that people expect the leader to have this vision themselves and to be able to communicate it in a way that others will be inspired enough to follow. The following are a selection of quotes from the questionnaires that illustrate this:

"A person who can influence others through vision, words, actions, values or presence";

"Someone who has an identified position at the head of at least one other; someone without an identified position but whose vision/style/other commands others' attention, and who they may choose to follow."

"[Someone] people want to follow.... that inspires them"

"someone with enough belief in their vision to imbue others with that belief"

"a good motivator, has vision, can bring people with them"

"People follow him due to his /her qualities of inspiring, motivating, guiding, visioning"

One of the ways that a leader inspires people to follow them is to lead by example. The leader is expected to "model behaviour". The leader "usually models his or her beliefs more than just talking about them."

6.1.2 The role of leader as a position or as a timespirit

There were two views of the role of a leader in the responses to the questionnaire that were sometimes presented as one and the same or linked, and at other times seen separately. One was the role of a leader as a position within the structure of an organisation. This position is occupied by the leader having been nominated by the group or by the leader selecting themselves. The other role is that of a timespirit, that is a role that emerges from the field of the group (see section 5.3.1) and may have been nominated by themselves or by the group but also having come forward in response to the field itself.

> "Someone who has an identified position at the head of at least one other; someone without an identified position but whose vision/style/other commands others' attention, and who they may choose to follow. Part of a time spirit."

> "Someone..... who is chosen to be a leader by the spirit"

> "Someone who is nominated by a community or group or team to coordinate and manage programmes, initiatives etc., on their behalf"

6.1.3 A leader with a purpose

Another view of the role of a leader is to fulfil a function, to do work for the group. The leader is expected to

> "coordinate and manage programmes, initiatives, etc",

"implement the strategy",

"work towards a sustainable future for its organisation/group".

6.1.4   Authority and power

By and large the responses to the questionnaire indicated that people expected leaders to lead through charisma and inspiration rather than power or authority.

"A leader ideally is someone with personal power who can congruently step into her positional power as needed",

"one who leads, either by force or charisma"

"in most situations leaders are those in positions of power or authority irrespective of skill or capacity".

6.2   Defining leadership

There were similarities between how people defined leaders and leadership as might be expected. There were however nuances of difference that are set out below.

6.2.1   Charisma, inspiration and vision

Similar to definition of a leader, leadership is supposed to provide or articulate a vision and to inspire people to follow it through personal charisma. Leadership is described variously as a "charismatic power"; "a quality that people have" that "inspires"; "influences"; "scares"; "motivates"; "gets people to buy into" the "vision"; "direction/collective dreaming" of the group.

6.2.2   Relationship and community

There was an emphasis on the process aspects of leadership. People emphasised the need to be aware and to facilitate building and maintaining relationship and community. Leadership is seen as being "accessible to everyone" and to be "inclusive" by "bring[ing] people together". The leader should have "awareness of the field .... communicate with others ...... and create community". The community needs to be "shared" and "inclusive".

6.3   *The qualities of a good leader*

When asked for the qualities that people would respect and follow there was consistency with definitions of leader and leadership in people looking for someone who is charismatic and who can articulate a vision. One respondent said that "[i]t needs to be somebody that can connect with a deeper vision or cause and have the courage to not just pursue it herself but also inspire others to want to do it and enable them to do it".

6.3.1   Character traits

People expect leaders they will follow to have a high personal moral code. They expect them to act with "integrity", to be "authentic", "trustworthy", and to "walk the talk". They are also looking for someone who is courageous and "tenacious"; who has "determination".

The ideal leader should have qualities of "love", "compassion" and humanity while having "a sense of humor about [their] own role as leader – not taking that role so seriously".

A lot of followers are looking for a leader who has wisdom and intelligence. Leaders need to be innovative, creative and to be able to "think inside and outside of the box". They need to be open with others have a generous spirit, be a good listener and to seek feedback.

6.3.2 Self-awareness, centeredness and an ability to support all sides

Followers are looking for a leader with a high level of self-awareness with "the ability to see their own strengths and limits". The leader needs to be "practically grounded in reality, but not letting go of ideals". They need to be "at ease even at the crisis time" and to have "trust and self belief in their capacity to occupy the role". The leader should also "be passionate about what they are trying to achieve while remaining aware and connected to those impacted by their leadership activity".

The leader needs to have "A sense of membership in the group, that is, fluidity of role, being able to place self in the shoes of a group member". Their self-awareness and centeredness is demonstrated by having the "ability to take their own side in a conflict but also capable of stepping into the other side in the conflict", they should have a "readiness to view opposition as a side of self".

6.3.3 Caring for the group

The leader needs to be aware of the group and of the need to build and maintain community. They should be "Someone who has the well being of the community at the heart of their interventions, suggestions and plans" One person is looking for a leader who "understand[s] 'follow' as meaning that the leader is 'following' the group and thus, by following the leader, we're following our own larger dreams". The leader should have the "Ability to clearly state

[their] own vision and direction [whilst having a] readiness to modify and adapt that vision to the needs of the group".

6.3.4 Supporting the development of individuals

Several respondents focussed on their own needs for development and to be seen as an active member of the group who is valued and whose contribution to the group is valued.

One person commented that the leader they would follow would be someone who "gave me latitude in implementing projects, who listened to my ideas and didn't have to add "superfluous value" and who really cared about me". Another said that the leader should "know my value as well as their own".

The leader's role in supporting the development of the follower was expressed in the following comments. The leader should be "focused on supporting me to be more myself not more like them". Another said that the leader should have a "strong believe [sic] in people and their ability to grow". Another said, "They would inspire me and empower me to be my own leader in integrity with my own beliefs". Finally, one said that the leader should "show me who I can be".

6.3.5 The importance of values and ideology

Respondents were looking for a leader with values that they could respect. The values that they are looking for include:

"Justice";

"Socially responsible";

"diversity awareness";

"egalitarianism";

"deep democracy";

"Caring for the needs of all who are represented, including those seen as 'other'".

Three people qualified their willingness to follow by saying that the leader would "Need to have a compatible ideology to me, to inspire me, for me to follow them". The leaders "ideological and political views would have to be congruent with my views" and the leader should have "ethics, values similar to mine".

6.4 Reasons not to follow the leader

The question *"What are the qualities of a leader that you would not respect and would not follow?"* produced a large range of responses that were not as easy to cluster as with other answers. There was also a tendency to simply list a number of qualities, traits and behaviours that would prevent or discourage followership.

The participants in the interviews went into more detail and provided more colour to the behaviour of leaders. In the following sub-sections I will first give the responses to the questionnaires and then give examples of the responses of the interviewees.

6.4.1 The abuse of power & control

By far the strongest reason that the respondents to the questionnaire gave for not being willing to follow a leader was the abuse of power. Being

"authoritarian",

"autocratic",

"controlling",

"dictator-like",

"too discipline oriented",

"enforcing";

[a] "bulldozer",

"manipulative";

[having a] "superior attitude"

[having a] "boss mentality",

[someone who] "isn't willing to share",

[someone who] "overrides others beliefs"

[someone who is a] "protector of patriarchal society"

summarises the behaviours and reasons given for feeling that a leader was abusive of their power and why people would not be willing to follow.

These comments correlate strongly with the behaviours that the interview participants found objectionable in the leaders in their organisations.

In Sue's case, where she was a member of the executive committee of an international solidarity organisation, she felt that the chairperson was excessively controlling of the organisation. She felt that the chairperson was making decisions for the group and telling Sue what to do. Sue felt that she therefore had *"no power to discuss anything, because she had already sent the decision"*.

This control extended beyond the meetings of the committee to the volunteers who worked with the group. Sue was in charge of preparing volunteers for work brigades and *"instructions would come from one or two people on the central executive committee, which I was part of, about how people were to be vetted, how they were to be trained, and prepared"*. She described how *"there was an assumption from some people on the organising committee, or the executive committee, that we could train the volunteers to go out and say certain things"*.

In Sara's case she describes her work situation as being a dictatorship with the Co-ordinator making all decisions.

> *"In a way it was very much a dictatorship; do you know what I mean? It's very strong, she controls everything, do you know, and it's a way of slotting people back into that follower role, d'ya know? It's not about 'we work together' – ok there were some projects where we did work together but the majority of the decisions went through her, even though there was a voluntary management committee it still ended with her decisions; she decided what really happened."*

and

> *"Most of it went through her actually. If a decision was made by the management committee that Colette didn't like she'd find her way around them. And that wouldn't happen anyway because Colette sat on the management committee and was very vocal in directing where things went"*

In the homeless charity, Brian describes how the executive committee exerted their power and control when they were unhappy with how an area of work was being carried out. In this situation the executive *"imposed a new management within the em… without reference to the management group. They imposed a new structure for managing, line managing, the person without reference to the management group"*. They did this by replacing the person who up to then had responsibility for overseeing the project. *"[H]is responsibilities for managing her was removed; because the executive viewed his support of her…………. It's not what they wanted so they imposed another person in to oversee the work project"*. Brian felt that the executive *"took control themselves. Yes, they imposed their own control on it"*.

Ellen felt that her employer in an educational facility for incarcerated youth was also very much in control of his situation, *"to say he liked to have a hierarchical system where he was in control is to almost diminish [laugh] it"*. She felt that he exercised his authority excessively in an *"abrasive"* manner. She describes how *"[h]e ordered people around. He expected people to be at his beck and call. Almost a kind of servitude, em, he expected a kind of servitude."*

Joan described a more subtle from of control. In the group that she was a part of the co-ordinator exercised control; *"Patricia was the co-ordinator and she organised the membership and everything; everything went through her - - - - everything was done in her house, you know. All the meetings and everything were held in her house - - - - she really had to be in control"*.

6.4.2 The self-interested leader

In the questionnaire responses, having a focus on themselves rather than the group or other members of the group was a strong reason for not wanting to follow a leader. Being "ego-centric", "self-interested", "self-serving", "self-focused", interested in "self-advancement" and "self-profit" were among the reasons given. One person said it is "someone who is only interested in self advancement to the detriment of others, someone who isn't willing to share knowledge and power". Another said it would be a "selfish leader that no longer has the good of the overall group in mind".

Again this was born out in Joan's case where she accused Patricia of abusing her position as co-ordinator to take advantage of opportunities to purchase goods and services from new members before others had an opportunity *"because she was the first point of contact, she'd get in and……… buy what they were offering..... right. So basically, that's what was happening; she was getting in before everyone."* Joan says the occasion that caused her the most anger and that brought about a serious clash with Patricia was when Patricia *"bought a car, right. And that didn't even go into the offering for anyone else. She was in there and got it before anyone else."*

Patricia's position of privilege arose from her position of control. By doing most of the group's work, especially the administration put her in a position of power Joan says, *"she organised the membership and everything; everything went through her"*. This went further as *"everything was done in her house, you know. All the meetings and everything were held in her house"*. It could be argued that Patricia deserved her position of privilege as *"in terms of the mechanics of making sure that, em, trades were logged and all that sort of stuff, and, em, applying for funding and all*

that sort of carry on, em, Patricia did all of that. Patricia was quite happy to do it." Joan appreciated and acknowledged Patricia's contribution, *"She put a lot of work into it; she really did. And I'm not going to take that away from her. It's because of Patricia that the monthly markets went ahead; that there was so many members; that there was so much available; that jobs were done".*

6.4.3   Lack of integrity and values

The lack of integrity; the lack of values or having values opposed to those of followers; and dishonest behaviour was another key area where potential followers marked down a leader.

In the questionnaires, being deceitful, dishonest, being a "constant liar", being untrustworthy and exploitative were some of the reasons given. Having "no core values" and "people who don't live what they teach or don't seem to aspire to [live what they teach]" were also cited.

Again, Joan's interview gives examples of how she didn't trust the co-ordinator of the group, Patricia. Joan said that

"I didn't trust her by that stage",

"she was dishonest. She was doing that stuff. She knew it and blatantly lied and pretended",

"you couldn't have an honest conversation with her"

She also saw Patricia as lacking or not honouring the values of the Green Dollar system as demonstrated by the following quotes:

"it's unethical and it's, you know, it's not good for who we are";

"For <u>me</u> the Green Dollar system, a lot of that's about moving away from traditional economic systems, right, and there's a value, there's a particular value base";

"she was doing things that I thought went against em,…………….. the way that it should have been. I mean, the group; they were all in it because of the value base; it was the same idea in terms of getting away from the system, right? And working as a community to support one another and to provide services and whatever."

"that stuff …….. damaged the fundamental values of what it's about, right?"

"there is this damage done to what it's truly about, you know. And for me it was, you know, it was being run like; it was starting to be run like; people were falling into the normal <u>traps</u> of, if you like …………………….. I don't know; our money based system, you know, where they could consume more and more because it was available, and that sort of stuff, right?"

6.4.4 Violence and threat

The use of, the threat of or the incitement of violence were also reasons that were given in the questionnaires for not following a leader. Behaviour that may not be actual physical violence but could imply the threat of violence was another reason, such as the use of "threats and abuse", humiliation, coercion, being "severe" and undermining people.

Sara experienced her manager as particularly aggressive. There was no physical violence but Sara says that she shouted at her and that her body language was aggressive:

> *"she was quite aggressive in her manner, em, she would actually shout at me; she shouted at me in front of colleagues a number of times, and…. just put me down in different situations. "Oh, you're too young to do that", or "what do you know; you don't have enough experience", or "you don't have any qualifications in community work, so what do you know". Do you know what I mean? It was always these smart comments, and this open hostility and, em…………. Just, it was really horrible period of employment to be honest (laughter)."*

> *"Colette came in and started shouting the head off at me in front of the assistant youth worker that loudly that staff in the crèche next door could hear. And she left me in tears, really, really upset; physically shaken; bawling my eyes out."*

> *"seemingly unprovoked challenges, that are verging on hostility – and that's what it is. I did experience an aggressive tone"*

> *"If somebody is being really aggressive towards me and the language they use and the tone they use is really aggressive. It's that……….. it's that physicality of it, that physically stops me."*

> *"just the whole body language and tone …. aggression that goes with that … it just does something to me."*

Sara also felt that Colette put her down and undermined her confidence as a youth worker.

"pretty much from the second day of my employment my co-ordinator ..... treated me pretty badly; one of her comments was, "what age are you?" and I said, "twenty", and she said, "what! If I'd known you were twenty I wouldn't have given you the job"";

"just put me down in different situations. "Oh, you're too young to do that", or "what do you know; you don't have enough experience", or "you don't have any qualifications in community work, so what do you know". Do you know what I mean? It was always these smart comments";

"Colette said or told me it's only a City and Guilds (laughs) she had this thing that unless you had a formal third level qualification";

"she didn't recognise that I had this certificate. And a lot of experience - - -- - But again she didn't recognise that."

6.5   *Examples of leaders people would or would not respect or follow*

The questionnaire asked people to give examples of people they would or would not respect or follow. Table 1 ranks the responses to these questions according to the number of times a particular person was chosen. It should be noted that the questionnaire was sent in the week following the election of Barack Obama as president of the USA. This may have influenced the number of people who mentioned Barack Obama and George Bush, although it doesn't appear to have been directly influenced by the actual contestants in the election as John McCain is not mentioned either way, although his running mate Sarah Palin is.

Examples of leaders respondents would respect and follow		Examples of leaders respondents would not respect or follow	
Leader	**No.**	**Leader**	**No.**
Barack Obama	12	George W. Bush	14
Nelson Mandela	9	Margaret Thatcher	7
Mahatma Gandhi	8	Robert Mugabe	4
Arny Mindell	6	Hitler	3
Martin Luther King	4	Tony Blair	3
Amy Mindell	3	Bertie Ahern	2
Dalai Lama	3	Charlie Haughey	2
Desmond Tutu	3	Ian Paisley	2
Jesus Christ	2	Mary Harney	2
Mary Robinson	2	Osama Ben Laden	2
Mother Theresa	2	Saddam Hussein	2
Annelis Kaiser	1	Sarah Palin	2
Aung Sung Suky	1	the Pope	2
Club of Rome	1	Vladimir Putin	2
Francis Batten	1	Silvio Berlusconi	1
Franklin Roosevelt	1	boss	1
Groucho Marx	1	Cardinal Daly	1
Heidi Carter	1	competitor who will soon replace my boss	1
Hiro Takeuchi	1	Liam Lawler	1
James Connolly	1	My 5th grade teacher	1
John O Shea	1	my dad	1
Julie Diamond	1	neoliberals	1
Micheline Calmy-Rey	1	President of Iran	1
my father	1	Wen	1
my mum	1		
Myself	1		
Paulo Freire	1		
Peadar O'Donnell	1		
Pema Chödron	1		
Richard Branson	1		
Richard Whelan	1		
Ron Rieick	1		
Rosa Parkes	1		
Sharmi Chakrabati	1		
Sondra Fraleigh	1		
Tom and Ray Magliozzi	1		
Tom Boardman	1		
Tony Benn	1		

Table 1 Leaders who would or would not be respected or followed

Of those leaders people identified as ones that they would not respect or follow, 18 out of 24 are political leaders who have held political office. Whereas of those that people identified that they would follow 12 out of 38 are political leaders or took leadership in political campaigns but only six have held political office.

Four of the people who nominated Barack Obama qualified it by saying that they hoped he would be a leader that they could respect and follow.

7   Findings - Responses and reactions to the leader's behaviour

In this chapter I look at how the interviewees describe their responses to the leader in the conflict situation.

In all of the interviews, the behaviour of leaders was seen as the cause of the behaviour of the interviewees and of other participants in the group. In all cases, the interviewees cited specific behaviour of the leaders that caused them to respond or to react. Whereas there were differences of opinion on values, ideology or work practice it was the behaviour of the leader that the interviewees saw as problematic for them and to which they were reacting.

The interviewees also discussed the behaviour of other participants in their groups or organisations.

7.1   *Accepting, ignoring, passivity*

The interviewees describe the behaviours of other participants within their organisations in various ways that were accepting of the behaviour of the leader where the interviewee felt that the leader's behaviour was unacceptable. This behaviour could be viewed as a form of compliant followership where the non-leader acknowledges the leader as a dominant figure whose behaviour they have to accept due to their position within the organisation. They may also be responding in this way out of fear of the leader or they may be responding in this way accepting the leader's and their position within the organisation.

When Joan confronted Patricia for abusing her position in the Green Dollar group she felt that

> *"the others accepted that, because they were happy to have her on the board, but she did a lot of the work…. - - - - She did a lot of the administration and that, right? So that's really why they were happy to keep her there because they didn't want to be bothered with all the administration and she was happy enough to do it all"*.

Joan puts this acceptance down to the fact that *"they sort of just like wanted to chill out, didn't want to deal with any of the …………………. issues, in terms of managing things.- - - - they didn't really want to <u>do anything</u>."*. It could be seen that the others in the group accepted Patricia using her position to her own personal advantage as a justifiable perk of the job and as recompense for the work that she put in and that they weren't willing or perhaps able to do.

Sara also felt that other people in her workplace were prepared to accept or ignore the leader's behaviour. The leader's behaviour was different to Joan's case in that Sara describes her boss, Colette, as being quite aggressive, shouting and using put-downs. Sara says that:

> *"People didn't really pick up on it, because, I suppose you notice it when it's happening to you all the time, and 'oh god, there she goes again'. But if it's not really directly affecting you, you don't always connect all the boxes - - - - So people might have seen it and listened to it but might not have … connected to this was happening on a frequent basis – 'oh, there's Colette going off on another one'"*.

It doesn't seem that Colette's behaviour was isolated to her treatment of Sara. She talks about a colleague who she also regarded as a friend who

> *"would have listened to talk about Colette but she never would have mentioned about Colette; she would have mentioned an odd case about Colette would have put her down or something like that but we wouldn't really have talked about Colette's leadership role".*

She goes on to say that the friend *"still works there and has difficulties with her but she wouldn't challenge her; she puts up with it; she tolerates it"*.

She also mentions that she *"would have had some support from colleagues who would have em………. maybe listened to me em……..but never really stood up for me."*

This toleration of behaviour could be that people were accepting of this as in some way 'normal' leader behaviour although it is more likely that it is accepted out of fear that if they challenge it that they too will be treated in the same way.

7.2   *Following*

Sue disagreed with the style of leadership of the chairperson of the solidarity group. However she was not supported by all the others on the committee as they,

> *"would have felt that…. yes, I think, felt that she was very em ..... knowledgeable and ... eh ... competent ... and so they bowed to her expertise - - - - they were just glad of*

someone who was seen to be very confident and clear about what they knew about

because we were all so, naïve, and ..... new to the whole scene. So some of them were

very glad to have someone who didn't seem to be ..... as ..... unsure, and ...... unclear

about the issues."

It would appear that in this case people were prepared to follow the leader due to her expertise in and understanding of the issues. The leader also appears to have been decisive and able to demonstrate a clear vision of where the group should be going and what it should be doing. They don't seem to have been as exercised as Sara about the lack of debate or participation in decision making. They were happy that the leader was making decisions and showing direction.

7.3 Passive resistance

Although Sue said that she resisted the behaviour of the chairperson in the solidarity group it appears that she didn't actually challenge her on her behaviour as such. She said that,

"it never came to a particular head to head ...... on the broader issue of how she was

behaving .... challenged her on specifics; like that thing about deciding the venue

.... when it was an item for discussion ...... and she would come in and send us a

decision. So, we would have challenged her on things like that; and I would have

challenged her .... but no."

Instead she says that she *"would have grumbled about her to others - - - - we would have, you know, muttered and complained about it a bit..... But we never, we never got together to challenge her."* She described one situation where the chairperson presented a decision as a *fait*

accompli where rather than challenge her she keeps her thoughts to herself: *"You know, and **I think**[1], 'Come on a minute now, we're supposed to be; that's the item for discussion on the agenda. So you come in and <u>tell</u> us where it's going to be'"*.

Her resistance became one of not listening to her and of avoiding her. *"I wasn't able to hear anything she said, in the end. Whether it was valid or not - - - - I couldn't see when she did say things that made sense. In the end I didn't even want to hear them."* She also withdrew her support: *"I would avoid going to meetings that she went to; and avoided getting myself in positions where I would sit on committees with her".*

7.4   Leaving

Another common reaction to the behaviour of leaders was for the participant in the group to leave. Some did this in clear protest while others seemed to drift away gradually over time without making it clear why they were leaving.

Sue felt that she *"kind of moved on from that group more quickly than … I would have"*. She also felt that some other members of the group *"just left; they couldn't be arsed. They just didn't want to stay around. It was all voluntary; no paid workers, at the time. And, em. So some people had no patience for it and they left"*.

Ellen eventually left her job when she got a better offer. However, others didn't stay as long as she did, *"They left. It was almost a constant"*.

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[1] Author's emphasis

For Sara leaving was a more traumatic process and one of relief.

"I remember when I left and I went in to hand in my notice. I left a full-time job for a half-time job because I was that desperate to get out of the place. And I remember going in, feeling really sick to the pit of my stomach, thinking "Jesus, I don't really want to speak to her" and then also thinking, "I want to be free" and I remember going in and just as I was giving in my notice I burst out crying 'cause there was just this wave of relief that I was able to leave this job and you know."

Others left in protest. Brian describes how the manager, Kevin, of the work project *"felt undermined ………… and as a result he resigned his position."* Joan also left in protest, *"I left. I just sort of said, I'm not going to be involved if it's like this - - - - So I left. And said I didn't want to be a part of it"*.

Both of those who left in protest got a reaction from the leaders of the group. In Brian's case Kevin's resignation served as a rallying point that galvanised the rest of the community to confront the executive committee, eventually leading to their resignation.

When Joan resigned she was persuaded to return and the issues she had raised were addressed. There was agreement from the group that Joan had been correct; however, the agreement to change was not implemented. Joan says that when she herself left that others took over her role of challenging the co-ordinator's behaviour but it is not clear whether this led to the co-ordinator eventually leaving herself.

7.5   Confronting

In three of the cases, there was what could be described as an active reaction to the leader's behaviour where the leader was confronted and resisted by the participants. In one case this led to the leadership being overthrown; in one it may have eventually led to the leader's departure; and in the other case it appears that the leader remained in position.

In Ellen's case she refused to accept her employer's authority and directly refused to carry out his wishes or orders. It seems that this happened when Ellen felt that what he was proposing was not appropriate or practical and she opposed it on those grounds. This confrontational approach does however seem to have characterised the relationship and to have disempowered the leader.

When Ellen's employer, Greg, made what she considered to be an inappropriate or impractical proposal she confronted it. She says, *"I wouldn't get into an argument about it. I would just say, 'No', You know, em, that, 'No', and em 'that's not going to happen because x, y, z'; 'that's just not reasonable or feasible or possible', you know."* Ellen believes that he tried to fire her at one point, which she confronted: *"And I looked at him and said, 'No' [Laughter]. You know, em, 'No, not over this, you know. No, that's ridiculous, don't be ridiculous'"*.

She believes that this strategy worked because *"He was so unused to it ……… anybody arguing with him, that I think it really, em, put him off his game"*. Essentially, she seemed to be able to call his bluff and get him to back down.

Joan also confronted the leader in her group but in a more direct manner and naming specific behaviour that she disagreed with and found unacceptable. Her manner of confrontation was, she feels, not the most diplomatic and damaged the relationship between her and the group's leader.

Initially Joan tried to raise her concerns gently; *"I spoke up, basically, I sort of put out, and I sort of tried to raise it a wee bit in terms of, 'is this right?'"*. However, when Joan felt the group leader went too far Joan *"just lost the bottle basically at a meeting and just said, you know, this; in terms of the values; just challenged her and everyone else in the group for not saying anything and putting up with it"*. Joan felt that she went a bit over the top and

> *"said lots of things about, 'well no you're not, you're just operating as a business and you're like, you know……………….. the CEO, getting your [word]'. You know, all that sort of carry on - - - - I was just angry. And mad. I was just angry. No, I didn't call her names or anything like that. I just, sort of, I just, things like – 'I felt like you weren't applying to the values of the system' - - - - 'we may as well go and join the national frigging bank' and you know like, 'and get out loans', like and 'why don't we start charging people interest?'"*

In hindsight, Joan felt that the things she had said were *"not great for relationships type building things"* and that she had *"made a mess of the relationships, by that stage"*. There was an attempt by the group to find a resolution at this stage but Joan no longer had trust in the leader.

In Brian's case with the homeless charity, there was a direct confrontation between the wider membership of the community and the executive. This took place in a series of community meetings where *"the executive were asked to account for themselves"*.

These meetings were *"very communal and lots of people there; there would have been very big, high turn outs – 50, 60, 70 people"*. They were intense as there were *"a lot of personal relationships - - - - people were involved together and socialised together through it"*. Given the intensity of the situation and the depth of the relationships, *"the executive were very much defensive of their actions"*. The conflict seemed intractable and *"it seemed like nothing would sort it out it just took; no matter what was done or how it was done it was never good enough"*

Eventually *"the executive were made to resign their positions."* This parting was understandably quite acrimonious. Brian felt that *"when it splits, it really splits, you know, like a marriage or something. When it's bad, it's really bad. You know, after, and intensity, such an intensity that went before and; the highs and lows together; the shared experience. But then when it splits it becomes acrimonious; it's very hard to heal. You know, and that still is the case"*

8   Findings – How non-leaders see themselves

8.1   Role in relation to the leader or the group

Does the role that the participants see themselves in affect how they expect to be treated in the group and the type of relationship that they should have with the leader? This chapter looks at two positions where the participants were either employees and consequently dependent on their employer and as members of a group where there was not the same dependency in the relationship based on employment.

8.1.1   Employee

Both Ellen and Sara were employees of organisations and as such were subordinate to the leader who was their employer. Ellen says that she *"was the first one hired for the facility - - - - I worked with him"*. I notice that she says that she was hired *"**for** the facility"*. She sees herself as working for the facility rather than for Greg her superior. She goes on to say that she *"worked with him"[2]*. She thus removes herself from his authority and places herself on an equal footing with her superior.

Ellen describes her interactions with Greg throughout the interview as challenging and combative. She says that they fought a lot and that she refused to respect his authority and obey his directions – even when he tried to dismiss her from her job. So, although she was technically his subordinate she did not see herself in that way and did not behave in a subordinate manner.

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[2] Author's emphasis

Sara starts off describing how she *"was employed as a youth worker with a community project and pretty much from the second day of my employment my co-ordinator ..... treated me pretty badly"*. She refers throughout the interview as it being a *"period of employment"*. She places Colette in a superior position referring to her as a *"manger of staff"*, as being *"managed by"* her and referring to her management skills. She also refers to her, in a not too respectful way, as *"the boss"*.

Sara describes herself throughout the interview as being in a subordinate position to Colette. She sees Colette or any employer as having the right to direct her work and places them, by virtue of their position as employers, in a superior position to her. At the same time, she has an expectation of a more egalitarian work environment where there is an attitude of *"we work together"*. She refers to a different employment experience where *"they could give you orders if necessary but you really felt part of a team, you really felt that they valued you and you valued them. There was mutual respect and openness".* In this she clearly acknowledges the employers relative superior position but experienced their management in a more participatory and respectful way.

8.1.2 Fellow member

Joan and Sue were committee members of organisations working for social change. As such they were there in a voluntary capacity. Brian was also a member of the management of a 'work project' within a larger organisation, although at other times he had occupied different roles within the organisation including being a member of the executive committee.

Joan joined the group and became a member of the committee. It is not clear how she viewed the position of co-ordinator of the group in question. She describes herself in a similar position in a similar organisation where she says, *"we would bring people in; I'd train them around the administration and the office. We had a roster system, you know, that sort of stuff. So it meant that people gained skills by being, you know, like as a part of the group as well, you know."* She paints a picture of the role being an enabling one that supports people to gain skills and competence and to become active members of the group. It appears that she did not feel that Patricia, the co-ordinator of the group of which she was a member, had the same view of the post.

Joan does not seem to respect Patricia, as she does not live up to Joan's values and beliefs. Joan's behaviour indicates that she believes that her position as a member of the committee entitles her to challenge behaviour that she does not agree with and that she believes is counter to the values of the group. She does this initially on a one to one basis but finally confronts Patricia and the rest of the group at a meeting. As part of that confrontation, she feels that it is up to her to leave rather than expecting Patricia to resign or leave the group.

After Joan is persuaded to return to the group there is a discussion and the group agrees with Joan's position. However, this does not satisfy Joan who continues to distrust Patricia. Yet she seems to feel that she doesn't have sufficient power to pursue the conflict further. Perhaps as other members of the group support or are content with Patricia's behaviour. She states that *"others accepted* [her behaviour]*, because they were happy to have her on the board".*

Sue starts out by saying that she was *"involved"* with the solidarity group. She then goes on to say that *"instructions would come from one or two people on the central executive committee, which I was part of"*. This seems to indicate a certain ambiguity around her involvement with the group and her status within the executive committee.

There is also ambiguity around how she sees the role of the person with whom she is in conflict. She talks about how this person would make decisions for the committee and then inform them of her decisions. Although this woman was the chairperson of the committee and was elected to this position, Sue at no stage refers to her as the chairperson or acknowledges her authority in any way. She feels that the committee *"had no power to discuss anything, because she had already sent the decision"*.

It seems that, unlike Joan, Sue didn't directly challenge the leader. Instead she would keep her thoughts to herself and although she grumbled with some others on the committee felt that *"some of the others, then, would have felt that…. yes, I think, felt that she was very em ..... knowledgeable and ... eh ... competent ... and so they **bowed**[3] to her expertise."* Again, she is dismissing the leaders position and rank, and being sarcastic about her and the people who felt that she was competent and knowledgeable.

Brian clearly sees himself as a member of the homeless charity. He was an active member and volunteer over a long period. He says that during his membership of the group he *"worked as a full-time volunteer, eh……, and I worked as a co-worker, that's a, sort of, voluntary co-working once a week experience working on soup projects, soup runs. And then I would have fulfilled,*

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[3] Authors emphasis

sort of, at one stage, an executive position on the executive" and at the time of the conflict was *"part of the small management group that oversaw the work project."*

The culture of the organisation he describes is one where the work of the group was central to the members' lives. The members' and presumably, Brian's *"social lives were built around it. It was very much like a, a very; central to lots of people's lives - - - - there was a lot of personal relationships - - - - people were involved together and socialised together through it; there was great intensity"*.

Brian's relationship with the executive committee is not clear. His loyalty seems to have been to the work project management and to Kevin who he describes as a friend and *"beloved amongst many"*. It appears that he did respect the executive initially as his criticism throughout is with their behaviour, and says he was *"very angered and very disillusioned"* with them as a result.

Brian describes the conflict as being very intense and acrimonious. He likens the fallout from the split that ensued to a marriage break up. Kevin, whose authority was removed by the executive, is described as feeling undermined resigned his post and triggered a series of intense community meetings of up to 70 people where they *"forensically went through everything"*. It may be that personal relationships and loyalties played as much, if not more of, a part in this conflict as did the issue of an approach to working with homeless people.

9   Findings – Impact on the organisation

My instinctive position in carrying out this research was that attacks on the leader of the organisation were detrimental to its success. I thought that such attacks on such a crucial member of the group were tantamount to group suicide. The actual effect on the groups of members conflicting with the leader seems to have been less dramatic.

Of the five groups that were the subject of the interviews one, the solidarity group, has ceased to exist. This came about due to a change in the wider political environment rather than due to internal conflicts within the group. The group itself merged with some similar organisations and some of the members are still active in it twenty years later.

Ellen is not sure if the educational facility for incarcerated youth is still operational or if Greg is still managing it.

The other three organisations are all going strong to this day. One, the homeless charity has grown and the other two have developed and matured considerably.

In only one case, the group working with Travellers, is the leader still in charge of the organisation. In all cases the interviewee has left the organisation.

When asked about the impact of the conflict on the organisations purpose the interviewees generally felt that although there was an impact on the dynamic of the group the effectiveness was not overly affected.

Brian felt that as a result of the conflict, including the departure of the entire executive committee that:

"[I]n terms of the vision of the Shelter, or how it worked and what it did or provided, I don't think anything like that changed - - - - I don't think it's gone through any radical shift as a result of that."

Similarly, although Joan felt that the values of the group were damaged, that it was very effective in doing what it set out to do:

"[I]t was working for the members - - - - Oh god yeah. Fabulous LETS system; fabulous LETS system, right. Lots of members; lots of activity - - - - It was fantastic. Really, really good system in terms of people being able to utilise it add value to their lives. So it did work in that way - - - - (although) I felt that that stuff ……. damaged the fundamental values of what it's about, right?"

Sue felt that the conflict with the leader did have an effect on the dynamic and effectiveness of the group. However she also felt that the group achieved and even exceeded its aims:

"I think it affected us….. em ……………………………………. We were probably less effective in our work. Em, I think we ………. em ………. We were less effective and less efficient because there was a lot of, kind of, scrabbling amongst ourselves, or discussions amongst ourselves. Rather than having discussion on the boarder issues we were having discussions on smaller issues. You know not <u>hugely</u> self destructive, but certainly time consuming - - - - But, the group, I think, did achieve its aims …………. to a large extent, in the sense that we did get a lot political support for Honduras, from Ireland, …. in the late 80's. And, I see it now, as well, which was an aim maybe we didn't have, but …… the number of people who were affected, and organisations who were influenced, by Honduras. So certainly, that, kind of, broader aim of development education, which is you bring the lessons from a developing country to Ireland; that happened, and it impacted on peoples individual lives and it impacted on organisations like trade unions and political parties, and that, at that time. So I think there was a massive impact."

Ellen also didn't feel that the conflict with the leader disrupted the work of the institution greatly. On the contrary, she was fulsome in her praise for the way that Greg developed and ran the facility:

"Ellen: *So he could be the great and the good, really, at the end of the day. But the system itself was frankly based on sound thinking.*

Tim: *And he developed this system?*

Ellen: *Yes*

Tim: *Ok*

Ellen: *Very, hugely, he did.*

Tim: *Ok*

Ellen: *Of course, he didn't invent, you know, behaviour mod or anything. But applied as it <u>was,</u> under those circumstances, yes. He was instrumental in setting up a number of schools in Southern California doing, operating from this model. Em …… em ……. Yeah. And he was good at it! And I ……..... later worked in, em, em a couple of other educational facilities attached to organisations that worked with incarcerated youth and they, they, they were nowhere near, nowhere near*

Tim: *Ok*

Ellen: *{he was probably}*

Tim: *{So he was a great} educationalist*

Ellen: <u>*Absolutely! Absolutely, absolutely!"*</u>

Sara did not state that the achievement of the organisations aims was affected by the conflict with the manager. On the other hand, she did not say that it was not. She was more concerned with the affect on the atmosphere of the workplace.

So it would appear that in the cases that I explored with the interviewees that the groups themselves seem to have been resilient enough to survive conflicts with the leader. The individuals that I interviewed were clearly affected by the conflict and in at least two of the cases felt it was necessary for them to leave.

9.1   Internalised Oppression

In looking at the attack on leaders in groups that have experienced marginalisation or oppression it might be expected that the group would take on the role of the oppressor and that the leader might be attacked as a consequence (Section 5.3.1). As only individuals were interviewed it is difficult to say whether this phenomenon was occurring. However, one interviewee, Sara, did discuss internalised oppression when I asked her if she felt it was relevant:

Sara: *"When you mention that, that internalised oppression. With both those women, they've faced oppression in different ways. Obviously as women in our society. And with Colette she had a very tough time as a single parent bringing up her son, em, so she had a lot of anger around that, and you know, you'd pick that up from the comments she would make about the state and how they treat lone parents and that would tie in with the passion she has for social justice, around Travellers. I think with Helen, too, it would be very much about being from a working class rural community, and ..... that comes through."*

Sara indicated that she felt that her managers, in two situations, were taking on the role of the oppressor at a societal level rather than within the group itself. Although they were working in organisations that were supposed to be empowering their behaviour was experienced as disempowering by their subordinates.

10 Discussion

This chapter will look at three main areas. Firstly, I will look at the impact of conflict with the leader on the organisation itself. Secondly, I will look at leaders and leadership, and what we expect of them. Finally, I will look at the new and emerging field of followership.

10.1 *How does conflict with the leader affect the organisation?*

When I began this project, I was speculating that the effect of attacking the leader was not good for the health of a group and could even be fatal to the organisation as a whole. This was based on my personal experience of groups as both a participant and as a leader. I had personally attacked leaders on several occasions and subsequently as a leader, I had experienced attacks myself. I was aware of how painful these attacks had been on leaders when I made them and had personally experienced the hurt of being attacked myself. From the inside of an organisation it can be difficult to get sufficient perspective to see what is really going on and to see what the impact on the organisation is.

For the organisations that featured in the interviews I conducted it does not appear that conflict with or attacks on the leader or leadership of the organisation are fatal. It would appear that organisations that have a purpose are sufficiently resilient to survive such conflict. All five organisations continued after the incidents discussed in the interviews and in some cases have thrived.

That is not to say that the way these conflicts were handled were healthy for the organisation or for the individuals involved. Clearly, some of the interviewees found the experience quite traumatic. Sara's description of the relief she felt on leaving her employment demonstrates the tension she was living with. Brian also described how the personal hurt caused during the conflict continues to affect relationships between former friends to this day.

10.2 What is behind the impact on individuals?

Although the organisations themselves survived, it cannot be said that the individuals interviewed survived unscathed whilst they were part of their organisation. Similarly, at least some of the respondents to the questionnaires indicated that they too had bad experiences with leaders in their past.

The causes of the hurt could be looked at in simple terms of what happened. For example, Sara's manager, Collette, shouted at her. This is an unpleasant experience and is hurtful. Or, in Joan's case, the co-ordinator could have been seen to be self-interested or perhaps dishonest. It is not nice to feel that someone has cheated you and this can also be hurtful. However, I think that there is something deeper at play here. I think that there was disappointment behind the feelings of hurt that the interviewees experienced. In some way, an ideal or high dream was not being met. Perhaps, the high dream was being dashed and a low dream was being realised.

The responses to the questionnaires indicated a pretty high expectation of leaders and leadership. Leaders are expected to be charismatic, visionary, confident people who support a group and the individuals within it. Leaders who do not command respect are seen as abusive of their power,

unsupportive, dictatorial or malevolent. The interviewees seem to have similar expectations of good leadership and similar concerns around bad leadership.

In both Sue and Joan's cases, they felt that the values of how the organisation should work and aspire, were not being supported or practiced by the leader. It did not appear that there had been a group agreement on the values, it was more the values that they had brought to the group and had expected to apply.

In all cases it is at least implicit that the interviewees expected the leader to use their power and authority well and not to abuse it. When they experienced abuse of power, either through controlling behaviour or self-interest, it appears that a part of their belief in leadership was being damaged. This indicates that there is a high dream not being met and a potentially low dream being realised.

Another area where expectations of the leader were not being met was in personal support and growth. Sara distinguished between the Traveller organisation and another organisation she worked for. In the Traveller organisation, she felt that she was discouraged and not supported to develop as an individual. In the other organisation, she felt that she was being supported to develop her own talents and approaches within the context of the organisation.

Similarly, Sue felt that she was not offered support or encouragement for the work that she was doing. She found the work challenging due to her youth and inexperience and felt that she was only criticised for her shortcomings but not praised for her achievements.

The responses to the questionnaires gave further examples of an expectation of leaders to support the development of followers as discussed in section 6.3.4., and these expectations correlate with Kelley's (1992) Paths of Followership for followers who are a means to transform themselves (see section 5.2.2 and Figure 3).

10.3 Dreams about leaders

There is a duality when it comes to how people view leaders. They have either a high dream of a leader who is a hero or a low dream of leaders who are tyrants. Although the vast majority of leaders probably fall somewhere between the two it seems that people firstly expect them to conform to the high dream and when this isn't realised quickly switch to the low dream. There does not seem to be much tolerance for the middle ground.

I think that Barbara Kellerman (2004) is quite right to criticise the tendency to see leaders and leadership as only refering to the good qualities of leaders. By only focusing on the high dream and denying the existence of the low dream we are setting leaders up for a fall and ourselves up for constant disappointment.

The role of leader and the associated behaviour of leadership have come to be seen as having good values and to being associated with behaviour that is approved of. This has been referred to by many writers on the subject of leadership and is well borne out by the interviews and questionnaires responses.

At least it seems to be so among the writers in the leadership industry and among the types of people I interviewed and who responded to my questionnaires. Others, who have been supporters of leaders who can be judged to be malevolent or evil by some, might not share the same understanding of what it means to be a good leader. Machiavelli, for instance, felt that a good leader is one who is effective and advised leaders to control their followers, something that the interviewees and respondents found objectionable in a leader.

When it comes to leaders most of the writers I have reviewed, the people I interviewed and the people who responded to the questionnaire share broadly similar high dreams for what makes a good leader. There is also general accord when it comes to the qualities that make for a bad leader. In the responses to the questionnaire there was quite a lot of agreement on the people seen as good leaders and bad leaders. Significantly no leader appeared on both lists, although, presumably, there are people who do think that at least some of the leaders named on the bad list are in fact good leaders and vice versa.

The interviewees were not specifically asked about their ideal leaders but the criticisms they made of the leaders in their organisations were similar to the qualities that the questionnaire respondents associated with bad leadership. It is therefore possible to infer that they would have also agreed with the good qualities of leaders.

The high dream of what a leader should be is indeed high. The participants in this study were looking for someone with charisma, with vision, with ideals, with honesty, with integrity, with wisdom. They want someone who is centred and self aware, who is grounded, who can nurture,

who can see and support all sides in a situation. Not everyone stated that they were looking for all of these qualities and traits in one individual but one could imagine that somewhere they all hold a dream that such a person can indeed exist. In contrast the dream of a bad leader was as low as the high dream was high.

It seems to me that people have a yearning for great leadership. There is a very high dream of leadership about which there is at least unspoken consensus. We have a hope that such a leader will appear; will rescue us; will show us the way. Yet we also hold a strong low dream that leaders will abuse power, will be self-centred and self-interested, will be cruel and callous, will be violent and abusive.

Figure 9 Obama walks on water, Tom Toles, 2008

There appears to be a tussle going on between the high dream and the low dream. As soon as a leader is seen to occupy part of the high dream it seems there is a search for the low dream that will in some way burst the bubble. The converse also seems to be true as demonstrated in the interviews where all the interviewees made a point of emphasising the good qualities of the leader to counteract the bad traits that they were criticising.

High dreams serve as a motivating factor in individuals and organisations. They are the ideal that people aspire to – even if it is never achieved. This is particularly the case in social action organisations where the members are motivated by an ideal for a better society. There seems to be a tendency to get stuck see-sawing between the potential of the high dream and the disaster of the low dream. This is likely to be more pronounced in a social action organisation which is more likely to attract people who Kellerman (2008) describes as Activists or Diehards (Section 5.2.2).

10.4 The Role of Non-Leaders

One could be excused for thinking that many leaders and writers on the subject of leadership see followers as a necessary evil. If you want to be a leader then you simply must have followers. Chaleff (2003) makes the point that most leaders prefer the type of follower he calls Implementers. This type of follower can be relied upon go get the job done without much supervision and are unlikely to give critical feedback. When it comes to followers who do give critical feedback or who attack the leader they are frequently seen as dysfunctional and much is written about how to manage and minimise such attacks.

Non-leaders are generally referred to as followers. This places their existence in relation to leaders and generally their role is seen as supporting the leader. The dictionary definition of follower clearly places them in a subordinate position to the leader. They are not seen as being on a par in terms of authority, power or vision. Barbara Kellerman (2003) makes the point that much of the talk of levelling of organisations and empowering followers doesn't really amount to much when push comes to shove.

Kelley (1992) and Chaleff (2003) are going some way to raising the profile and importance of followers and followership, yet they too are seeing their primary purpose as improving the quality of follower in order to support the leader. They do not minimise the risks that Courageous or Exemplary followers take in challenging the power and authority of leaders and counsel caution in doing so. Nevertheless, one gets an impression of a wish for a somewhat utopian relationship where leaders come to value and welcome the criticism of followers. Significantly, I think they focus on followers and don't really address the many in organisations who do not want to follow but are still not the leader.

The difficulty and risks involved in challenging a leader were well demonstrated in the interviews that I conducted. Sara and Sue both found it very difficult to challenge the leaders behaviour. Sara felt quite isolated and disempowered and Sue found herself silenced and avoiding confrontation. Joan did challenge but found that although her challenge was accepted there wasn't the support within the organisation for the changes she suggested to be embedded. I am not sure that Ellen could be classified as either a Courageous of Exemplary follower. There is no doubt that she was courageous in standing up to her employer but it was also apparent that she

did so at personal cost. In Brian's case the leadership was confronted and resisted however, the total removal of the executive and the subsequent damage to long-term relationships can hardly be seen as healthy or an ideal outcome.

Kellerman (2008) is somewhat less romantic about followers and their relationship to leaders just as she is not as rosy-eyed about the view that the only leader is a good leader.

This new field of followership is bringing a challenge to the way we have been focussing on the importance of leaders and leadership in organisations in the past few decades. It is challenging us to look more at the dynamic that exists within organisations and is calling for a raising of the status of followers and other non-leaders.

Process Work acknowledges the importance of every role in the field of an organisation. It seeks, in particular, to listen to dissenting and disturbing voices as these hold the key to unfolding the entirety of what is happening in a group. At the same time it also gives high rank to leaders and leadership and emphasises the development of elders and eldership. There is less acknowledgement or support for the role of follower as one of equal if not greater importance than the leader. Like most books on organisations and groups the indexes of Mindell's books lack reference to followers or followership.

Although books on followership do not see the various types or classifications of follower as permanent there is an implication that they are seen more as character traits rather than as the fluid roles that process work describes. Mindell uses the term "participant facilitator" (2002, p.

viii) to blend the two roles of facilitator and participant with every member of a group being responsible for both roles at the same time. In terms of leadership and followership this would require those in leadership positions to be prepared to cede some of their leadership status and role and to take on following the process of the group. Similarly, those in followership positions would take on responsibility for leading the process of the group and not leave it all to the leader, blaming them when things go wrong.

Clearly, with only three or four main texts on followership this is a field that requires greater exploration. Studying organisations whilst giving equal importance to the roles of followers and leaders and the dynamic between them will change the way that we work with groups. In my conclusion I would like to make some suggestions about how we can begin to look at this and make a start at changing our practice when working on the dynamic in groups.

11 Conclusion

11.1 Happy dreams?

The ideal situation is where all members of a group share a common dream or vision that is well grounded in the organisation and is owned by all the people in the group. In this case you do have a situation were as Chaleff (2003) put it the leader and the followers orbit around the purpose of the group.

How often does this ideal situation actually arise? Is it the common experience of groups or is the reality something different?

The situations and groups described by the people I interviewed seem to tell another story, one that is backed up by my experience and the experiences of many people I have talked to. Two of the interviewees referred to situations in other groups where they had positive experiences that were in contrast to the ones they were describing. I too have had such experiences as have others, but they are pretty limited experiences. In most cases groups are not the ideal high dream group.

Yet there is a high dream that such groups are possible and even that every group should be such a group. That would be wonderful. However, I want to propose that it is actually this high dream that gets in the way of groups achieving better outcomes, of leaders being better leaders and of followers being more fulfilled.

In the five scenarios that were described in the interviews, the groups were successful. The objectives of the groups were being achieved. Some of the interviewees were at pains to point out the good qualities of the leaders and of the achievements they were making. It is possible that the groups would have been worse without the leaders. Yet there was clearly a problem.

The interviewees were looking for more than the achievement of the task. They were looking for personal recognition for their contributions to the organisation. They were looking to be nurtured and given opportunities to develop themselves personally. They wanted to be involved in decision making. They wanted certain values upheld. They wanted their authority to be recognised and respected. They had personal expectations that they were expecting the leader to provide or to uphold. They were looking or their high dreams, which had motivated them to become involved in the first place, to be fulfilled by the leader. It would greatly benefit groups to explore the high dreams that they hold as individuals and as a group and to look at how they expect these to be fulfilled and by whom.

Similarly, the low dreams that arise when a high dream is shattered or not fulfilled need to be explored. How will individuals and groups deal with these low dreams? Where will blame and responsibility be placed and what effect will this have on the group?

11.2 Good-Enough Leadership

The leaders in the organisations that the interviewees were part of were working in difficult situations. In three cases they were doing so in a voluntary capacity. In only one case was it implied that they were doing the job for personal gain, although one was an employee and one was running a business.

Is it realistic to expect that all leaders are going to be the ideal leader? Is it not more likely that they are going to be human with faults just like the rest of us? Borrowing from Donald Winnicott (1999) is it possible that we could settle for "good-enough" leadership? Could good-enough leadership actually be better for organisations than living in a fantasy world where both leader's and follower's high dreams and unrealistic expectations are not being met? Or where the failure of the high dream leads to an exaggeration of the low dream?

We have elevated leaders to a position of worship with unrealistic expectations. People in leadership positions take on these expectations and responsibilities and then feel that they are personal failures if they do not live up to expectations. They isolate themselves and hide their failures which only amplifies the situation. Leaders need to be assisted to come down off the plinth.

Good-enough leadership means, first that the leader needs to take care of themselves. It would mean that care of those in positions of leadership is a necessary concern of the group if the group feels that it needs a person in the position of leader. Groups need to be clear about what level or type of leadership they want, both as a group and personally.

11.3 Responsible Followership

Until recently followers have not received a lot of attention in leadership and management literature and training. Although seen as an asset to an organisation, specific focus on the traits and qualities of followers has generally been on righting or mitigating what are seen as negative qualities, once followers have become a problem, having effectively ceased to be followers.

The responsibility for having good followers, for having contented followers, for having manageable followers has been placed on the shoulders of the leader. Moreover, when the followers are not happy it is the leader who is blamed.

Do followers not have some responsibility in this? Kelley, Chaleff and Kellerman are all arguing that they do. Kellerman is arguing that people should not be bystanders but have a moral obligation to take part and to ensure that wrong is not done. Kelley and Chaleff are arguing that there is a need for followers to be courageous and to challenge leaders when they are going to do something unethical or not in the interests of the organisation.

They all point out how difficult this is to do and highlight the power imbalances that can lead to negative consequences for challenging leaders. However, one of the difficulties with the high status of leaders is the high dream of followers. By having such high expectations of leaders and being so quick to criticise them for not meeting our high expectations we confer powers on them that they may not merit or indeed want.

Kelly, Chaleff and Kellerman focus on the followers' responsibility towards the organisation. In the interviews I conducted it was not just the purpose of the group that was of concern it was also, if not more so, issues personal to the interviewees that were coming forward. The interviewees were expecting the leaders to be responsible for these issues as well as the outcome of the group. There was a high dream that the leader would facilitate the follower in one of Kelley's paths of followership (Section 5.2.2).

I want to propose that there is responsibility in followership just as there is responsibility in leadership. Neither responsibility is easy to exercise but they are responsibilities nevertheless.

For followers the first responsibility is to take responsibility for themselves and, secondly, for the leader's role in the group. There may be a duty of care incumbent in an employment situation but that does not mean that an employee can abdicate all responsibility for themselves. In a voluntary organisation that has been formed or come together for a broader social purpose is it also reasonable to expect that all members of the group, not just the leader, be responsible for the achievement of goals and the wellbeing of the group?

11.4 Let's be explicit

Let us be explicit about the needs of the organisation and the needs of the individuals that make it up. Let us be very explicit about what is expected of everyone in the group and get agreement on what people are and are not willing to be responsible for. If we are looking for a leader who is a super-hero then let us be very clear that this is what we want and what our expectations are. Let us then see if there is anyone who feels that they can fully occupy that role. If there isn't such a person or we perhaps feel that our expectations are actually unrealistic let us see if we can't come up with a model of leadership that would be good enough for the job.

Let us also be explicit about what we expect from other members of the group. What is needed of followers for the group to work well? Do people just need to turn up or do we need them to take more responsibility and authority within the group. What level of responsibility do we need

followers to take for their own well being and development? How can we make the group experience a success for them in achieving this?

The high dreams that people have of leaders and leadership need to be explored as do the low dreams. These then need to be matched up with realistic expectations of reality and the actual needs of the group. This is not to say that high and low dreams should be dismissed, more that they should be placed in a context of reality and their influences recognised rather than to be allowed to unconsciously dominate.

11.5 The role of the process worker

Process work values all roles in a group and seeks to bring awareness to ones that are more marginalised. In doing so it can highlight some of the inequities and structures of domination and hierarchy that can otherwise go unnoticed.

The concept of the participant facilitator does two things. It addresses the rank differences that exist between facilitators and leaders, and it makes more explicit the role shift that takes place between these two roles. Applying this approach to the roles of leader and follower, as these roles are seen within organisations, can address some of the issues that arose in the course of this study.

The interviewees and respondents to the questionnaires predominantly saw the leader as a role composed of traits that were inspiring, supportive and courageous. These traits form part of the high dream that surrounds leaders and leadership and appear to be widely held in society and as part of individuals' own high dreams for themselves. If the leader is seen as a role that exists in

the field of the group rather than as an individual possessed of particular traits then it becomes a role that is open and available to anyone in the group.

The role of follower needs to be made more explicit, and in the way that the concept of participant facilitator has highlighted the fluidity of roles, seen as part of the role of the leader. If the role of leader is seen in a different light – as encompassing the role of the follower – then the role of the follower must also change. If it is the high dream or vision of the group that is followed rather than the person occupying the role of leader then the meaning of leading and following also change. In fact both "leader" and "follower" become followers of the group process or purpose in the world.

This could imply that there is no place for leaders and given the part that they play in people's high dreams is likely to be quite unsettling. The leader, therefore, needs to be seen as the one who is leading the following of the process or vision and not as the only one responsible for providing the vision and inspiration for the group. Correspondingly, the role and importance of followership needs to be elevated and the contribution of followers to the generation and fulfilment of the group's vision fully valued. The transitory and process nature of these roles can be given more emphasis in addition to the positional and hierarchical nature of the roles within an organisation.

The realities of power structures and relationships within organisations cannot be ignored and the social and situational rank of people in leadership positions needs to be recognised and accounted for. As Kellerman (2008) points out these power differences are a reality and

pretending otherwise is only deluding those with lower social and situational rank. However, the nature of psychological and spiritual rank is that they are more enduring and can overcome social and situational rank. Ignoring these elements of rank within an organisation and in the dynamic of the leader-follower relationship is just as unwise as ignoring social and situational rank.

The role of the process worker in addressing the conflicts that occur between those in leadership positions and those in non-leader positions is therefore:

- To bring awareness to the importance of the role of followership within an organisation, not just as a positional role, but as a process role that is occupied by everyone in the organisation.

- To bring awareness to the fluidity of the nature of roles within an organisation as distinct from the positional roles that people may occupy.

- To introduce the idea that everyone in the organisation is following the vision and purpose of the organisation so that the leader is also a follower and that followers can be leaders.

- To make explicit the high dreams and low dreams that surround leaders and to support the group to explore their expectations and the implications of these.

- To acknowledge and bring awareness to the rank differences within the organisation and the implications of social, situational, psychological and spiritual rank for everyone in every position.

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Appendix 1
Interview Transcripts

Interviewer Tim Spalding

Interviewee: "Sara"

Date: 2008-10-23

Tim: What I'm interested in is a group where you have experienced conflict with the leadership as it were, and where you where you weren't the leader, you were the participant, yeah.

Sara: I was a participant yes, I worked there.

Tim: So can you tell me a bit about what happened, a description of what happened, how it happened, or whatever.

Sara: Ok, so it was a long drawn out process, the whole conflict. I was employed as a youth worker with a community project and pretty much from the second day of my employment my co-ordinator ….. treated me pretty badly; one of her comments was, "what age are you?" and I said 20, and she said, "what! If I'd known you were 20 I wouldn't have given you the job" [laugh, nervous]

Tim: Hmmm,

Sara: This was day 2 of my employment and for over 2 years, her, the way she treated me was really poor, em, she was quite aggressive in her manner, em, she would actually shout at me; she shouted at me in front of colleagues a number of times, and…. just put me down in different situations. "Oh, your too young to do that", or "what do you know; you don't have enough experience", or "you don't have any qualifications in community work, so what do you know". Do you know what I mean? It was always these smart comments, and this open hostility and, em…………. Just, it was really horrible period of employment to be honest [laughter].

Tim: Right, right, right,

Sara: Bullying, you know…

Tim: Yeah, yeah. So this started at the very beginning?

Sara: Yeah

Tim: And, she had interviewed you for the job?

Sara: Yeah

Tim: Right, and was she much older than you?

Sara: Yeah, she would have been, I suppose, 20 years older than me

Tim: Ok, right

Sara: It's not a lot older but [laughter]

Tim: [Laughter] That's old when you are 20 years old. And where there other people involved in it? Or what she like that with anyone else?

Sara: She was yeah, em………. I suppose other people would have felt more confident to stand up for themselves; I was 20. It was my first …. job as a youth worker; I had loads of experience, obviously; that's how I got the job, but I hadn't been paid as a youth worker before. So I was coming in [words] and I couldn't stand up for myself. I'd never, you know, when she put me down I'd never have turned around and said, "that's not fair" or "you can't do that", you know, I'd never challenge her, but she would, yeah she did treat other people like that and they would have challenged her, definitely within the organisation; but it's ironic because we were working with Travellers, a real disadvantaged group, and her attitude was completely different towards them than the settled people that she worked with. So she would have been very ……………………. Really helpful, really open, a real advocate for Traveller rights, and you know, supporting them, going out of her way to welcome them and to treat them with respect, but with her staff, the settled staff, she was a completely different person.

Tim: Ok, and was she a Traveller herself?

Sara: No, she was settled

Tim: I don't think I actually know who you are talking about

Sara: [Laughs] Oh I think you do [laughs]

Tim: Ok, ok

Sara: [Laughs] You've experience with her yourself, I think. You've experience with her in a different way than I have I think

Tim: Do you mind telling me who you are talking about? It's not going to come out in the …

Sara: No, yeah, it's Colette; Colette O'Reilly

Tim: Oh, Colette, right. Oh, so it wasn't the youth co-ordinator it was the overall co-ordinator?

Sara: Yeah, right

Tim: So, yeah. So, when she was working with Travellers she had a completely different attitude, whereas when she was working with the settled staff; was it just you or was it

Sara: [interrupting] No, not everybody. Some settled people got on well with her….. But, I think her management skills were quite…….weak. Do you know, in terms of…..she could delegate, but, the interpersonal approach then, that interpersonal management stuff, she couldn't do very well, in terms of supporting your staff, or listening, and even telling you "you did a good job, you did something well", she didn't have those soft skills. And, so across the board that would have affected everybody but she wasn't openly hostile to everybody. She would have moments when she would get into conflict with somebody or challenge them in an aggressive way, you know, it wasn't across the board. Whereas with Travellers she worked with she was a whole different person. Which was really interesting, I thought

Tim: Right, and why do you think that was? Do you have any theory behind it?

Sara: Well, I don't know, I think she felt passionately about Traveller rights, you know that em ………………. I suppose in a way it was……………..and rightly so, Travellers have been discriminated their whole lives in every single aspect of their live. You know, and they have really negative experiences of settled people. So in a way it was trying to counteract that by being…the best she could be with them and trying to support them as best she could. She was so caught up in being…you know, a good worker with Travellers that she forgot that she's supposed to be a co-ordinator and a manger of staff as well. And I don't think that conflict ever got her, that fact that she…….. You know…..she might have difficulties with some Travellers….but at that stage, she would have had this really open personality, you know, and making an effort than with settled people in the organisation. She was like a different person. Not all the…..particularly with me I thought she was a different person.

Tim: So, did you get any support from any of the others, the other staff, or anybody else in the organisation?

Sara: At this stage I was managed directly by her. But I was also employed through a national organisation – the National Association of Traveller Centres – but I had never disclosed to them what was going on, but, when I look back, I thought it was partly my own fault, I thought "if I work harder maybe she won't treat me like this or if I do.." You know, you know if. When I think about it, it was pretty illogical but back then I thought maybe, I was doing something wrong; I know that I wasn't now but. I can't control her behaviour, or her personality. So within this national structure I didn't have any support, but I would have had some support from colleagues who would have em………. maybe listened to me em……..but never really stood up for me. I remember one time, [words], there was a lot of tension in the project with a worker from the VEC who was based up in the centre, and we had a room free in the youth project. So I was managed directly by Colette at that stage – afterwards the structures kind of changed; the childcare manager then managed the youth project; but at this stage I looked after the youth work and the assistant youth worker and we were managed by Colette. So, I went into the youth room one day and this person was in there that she had difficulty with and em…

Tim: This was the VEC worker?

Sara: Yes, who was in the youth room, and I came in to set up or something or to work because my computer was in there, and I said, "so are you working in here?", and he said "yeah, is that

alright?", and I said "Oh, that's grand", and he said, "do you want to come in here?" and I said, "well, that's ok, because I have to work here", because that's where I normally worked. But anyway, I didn't know at this stage that ……………………………….. I don't know what happened with the tension there, and he said he would leave and was really friendly and I said "ah no it's grand, don't worry about it and Colette came in and started shouting the head off at me in front of the assistant youth worker that loudly that staff in the crèche next door could hear. And she left me in tears, really, really upset; physically shaken; bawling my eyes out. That was the first time I really got support when one of the other staff came over when she saw me crying. She got really angry about it and challenged Colette about it as well but she didn't really tell her anything – "you can't do that to Sara, that's not fair" – but that was the only time I really felt that I had got support when I was directly managed by Colette. Em….then…when; near the end or my period we had a new childcare manager and she would have started supervising me; so direct line management was moved from Colette to the childcare manager, em, and she would have been more supportive, she would have……..if I had of had run-ins with Colette she would have listened to me, but I didn't have any dealings with Colette so it was a bit easier at that stage.

Tim: Yeah, yeah, em

Sara: And I also talked to my trade union about it, and got advice from them, though I didn't….

Tim: You never thought that you could actually challenge her or, directly confront her on it?

Sara: Ahhh, I was scared stupid of her. When I think about it now [laugh] it annoys me so much; I was terrified of the woman. I was scared that I'd say the wrong thing or look at her the wrong way and that she would, you know she would; even now I can't speak to her properly because I; d'you know, I still find it difficult to look at her because of her attitude…

Tim: yeah, yeah

Sara: …those 2 years

Tim: right, right, ok

Sara: [laugh] it sounds mental, like, but…..

Tim: right, and……what's interesting me there is that you were saying that with Travellers …. it's like she was almost like…

Sara: Jekyll and Hyde? [laughs]

Tim: Well, not Jekyll and Hyde, but that she was, there was a whole kind of reverse thing happening there. That she was identifying with the Travellers and then coming down on the settled staff, as it were

Sara: Yeah, I don't know. Partly it was identifying with Travellers. I think it was more about being the hero or being the advocate and sorting out Traveller rights – she felt so strongly about

it. And she was good at things, like she was good at advocating and she did a lot in that, in that post. But it's ironic that it's all about Travellers [words] and when it came to settled staff it was a very different approach. Sorry, I cut you off in your train of thought

Tim: No, no you didn't. I'm just trying to figure into the dynamic of it. That's what I'm interested in …… what it is that brings about this kind of conflict within organisations. At the beginning you said that she said that she didn't realise your age, although she'd

Sara: interviewed me

Tim: Interviewed you, seen your CV and all that sort of thing. And you were qualified as a youth worker?

Sara: I was very experienced and I had a qualification but as Colette said or told me it's only a City and Guilds [laughs] she had this thing that unless you had a formal third level qualification…. And it's ironic, I only did the Certificate in Community Studies because she bullied me …. At that stage she has supported 8 Travellers to sign up for the course. And I said I wanted to do it and that wasn't taken care of; so I ended up doing that in my own time while the 8 members of the Traveller all got to go in their work time – if they were working they got time out to go and it was supported; whereas I had to do it in my own time and she didn't really want me to do it. So this was a big thing with her; she didn't recognise that I had this certificate. And a lot of experience; I was only 20 but I had been working since I was 15 with youth clubs; really actively – 2 or 3 days a week – more than some paid workers; and I'd spent 6 months working with Carlow Youth Service and 2 months working abroad, so I'd a lot of experience at this young age. But again she didn't recognise that.

Tim: she didn't recognise the experience

Sara: I didn't have as many qualifications as she had. She was qualified because she had a post grad certificate in community development so she was an expert in community development [laughter].

Tim: And what about the Travellers, how did they view what was happening? You were saying she was shouting – this was happening very much in the open. How did they feel about it? What was their take on it?

Sara: It was open, but it wasn't in a way, do you know what I mean? It would have been – shouting episodes – the worst case was the time in front of David and the crèche workers who could hear in the next office, and the workers upstairs could hear. It was in, you know that back room we had, and everybody was really shocked, and "god, I'm really sorry about that". Other times she would have done it in staff meetings but…………….. People didn't really pick up on it, because, I suppose you notice it when it's happening to you all the time, and 'oh god, there she goes again'. But if it's not really directly affecting you, you don't always connect all the boxes – does that make sense?

Tim: Yeah,

Sara: So people might have seen it and listened to it but might not have … connected to this was happening on a frequent basis – 'oh, there's Colette going off on another one', d'you know what I mean? So she wouldn't have seemed… the only person who would have seen it a lot would have been David. But, for example, the Travellers working in the crèche mightn't have seen it apart from that one time, whoever heard that, or the people in the workshop wouldn't have heard it.

Tim: ok, right. So you weren't getting any support from them?

Sara: Nah,

Tim: You didn't get any support from anybody really?

Sara: No, not really

Tim: So, do you think it had any kind of affect on the group as a whole, or, the organisation, the way that this was happening within the organisation?

Sara: Yeah, I think it did. In a way it was very much a dictatorship; do you know what I mean? It's very strong, she controls everything, do you know, and it's a way of slotting people back into that follower role, d'ya know? It's not about "we work together" – ok there were some projects where we did work together but the majority of the decisions went through her, even though there was a voluntary management committee it still ended with her decisions; she decided what really happened. So I think it would have been a way of … people know their places and, … were, do what they're told rather than question what they're told or what they've been asked to do. So I think it was; so I think in that … it strengthened her leadership. I don't think it's really leadership. I think leadership is about responsibility and getting the best out of your employees [laughs] She didn't seem to have that and, d'you know, so I think it was about strengthening this dictatorship role rather than a leadership role.

Tim: I think there are different views about what a leader is.

Sara: [Laughter]

Tim: So, I'm getting a picture where she very much like where Colette was the centre of the whole thing in absolute control over everything

Sara: Yeah…. Yeah

Tim: Would that have been the picture

Sara: that's what I would have felt, yeah

Tim: And did others feel that at all, was there gossip, or did yis talk about this in any way?

Sara: Not really no. Well, I became good friends with one of my colleagues – she co-ordinated a project herself – and she would have listened to talk about Colette but she never would have mentioned about Colette; she would have mentioned an odd case about Colette would have put her down or something like that but we wouldn't really have talked about Colette's leadership role or Colette being the.. We would have made comments about – the management committee weren't really managing and that Colette did what she wanted. The management committee didn't really have all that much strength because a lot of it went through her.

Tim: Yeah, yeah

Sara: Most of it went through her actually. If a decision was made by the management committee that Colette didn't like she'd find her way around them. And that wouldn't happen anyway because Colette sat on the management committee and was very vocal in directing where things went

Tim: and you didn't challenge back at her. How do you think that was affecting her? If you could think into what this was like for Colette; being that kind of a leader, that kind of a manager, or whatever?

Sara: I don't know if she ever analysed this. I think Colette, in her own personality, she's a very busy person, she's involved in different things. She's a lot of stresses that affects her health and it affects, you know. And, I don't know if she analyses that side of herself because if she had I think she would have changed her attitude a bit, and she didn't. I remember when I left and I went in to hand in my notice. I left a full-time job for a half-time job because I was that desperate to get out of the place. And I remember going in, feeling really sick to the pit of my stomach, thinking "jesus, I don't really want to speak to her" and then also thinking, "I want to be free" and I remember going in and just as I was giving in my notice I burst out crying 'cause there was just this wave of relief that I was able to leave this job and you know. And she says "Oh Sara I'm really sorry to hear that 'cause I really liked you" [Laughter] I was really surprised to hear that, you know.

Tim: Really?

Sara: Yeah, 'cause I don't think she really realised what she was doing. I don't think she really knew the effect she was having on her staff. I don't think she has really changed that much 'cause I know my friend still works there and has difficulties with her but she wouldn't challenge her; she puts up with it; she tolerates it, because she sees a more human side to Colette than I saw. I didn't see; I seen parts of her human side but mostly it was about Colette was the boss and you knew your place.

Tim: Yeah, I think you said Jekyll and Hyde earlier, did you, or something like that?

Sara: Yeah, I did yeah, [laughs]

Tim: And do you think that's there in some way? I mean you were saying that the way she worked with Travellers and the way that she worked with settled people; that's when you said it, I think. Although Colette is from a settled background isn't she?

Sara: I wonder if it is around having a professional persona, so for her this is her way of being professional with Travellers. And she distanced herself – and she did, you know she didn't socialise with Travellers, apart from those she was friendly with, but as a whole she wouldn't have socialised with the Traveller community. So maybe it was a professional approach about how you approach, how you treat, how you value Travellers. But then when it comes to managing I think those management skills or maybe hadn't received training… It was more of a personal thing, it was more instinctive. So she acted how she felt but without…. does that make sense? She ……………. I don't think ………….. she did something but she wouldn't have thought about it afterwards 'cause that was just her normal behaviour. But I don't know if …… I don't think it was intentional either; I don't think that she is fundamentally a bad person, I just think that she has problems with how she talks to people and how she manages people…… [Laughter] and that's why I found it really funny that she said that she liked me because there was no indication of that over the 2 years of employment.

Tim: That was kind of weird

Sara: that was a really weird experience

Tim: And you didn't feel that it affected other people; your conflict with her?

Sara: It was open, but it wasn't open. Because it wasn't all the time; it might have been one thing one week that somebody might have seen. So it wasn't like, all the time that Colette was shouting at me in front of all the staff; it was more subtle sometimes. Yeah, it probably did because people knew that I was afraid of her; and I was, I was terrified of the woman. And it was ridiculous, because I was looking after the first Traveller youth project in the area; I did loads of work ….. and I was confident in so many areas of my work; and on the other hand I couldn't look at Colette I was so scared. People must have thought "what's wrong with her? She can't speak to Colette but she can do this?" So I think they would have picked up on that there was tensions there … obviously it changed the dynamic of the group on some level – I haven't thought about what way that was. But I also think that people have had runs in on their own level with her, so I think that overall, as a group, that we all had different sorts of conflict with her and that would have sort of concreted our place as….. employees …… as being directed what to do.

Tim: That's great……… I was wondering, you know the way that you didn't ever stand up to Colette; I'm just wondering…. in any other ….. can you think of any other situation where you actually did stand up to a leader or challenge a leader in any other organisation since then or has it affected you?

Sara: Oh, it has affected me, yeah. Even in my current post I was having difficulties with my manger and I couldn't stand up to her. And I …….

Tim: And have you, in any organisation, challenged the leader?

Sara: [laughter] I used to work in bars when I was younger and I would have challenged the manger there, d'you know….

Tim: Ok

Sara: Mmmmm, but when I was working for the ABC it was a whole different management approach….. When I left XYZ I went and worked for the ABC for 4 years and they had a real …….. a really great approach to management, and to leadership, where they really valued you and you really felt equal – Ok, you knew they were management and they could give you orders if necessary but you really felt part of a team, you really felt that they valued you and you valued them. There was mutual respect and openness; so they, yeah, I could challenge but I never had a situation where they put me down or anything that needed a strong response to because they had this really great way of management. I had two managers when I was with the ABC and they were just brilliant, just fantastic. And then, I've found in my current post that there are situations, and I can't stand up, and I've had to talk to my management committee because I felt, I found it really difficult to ……

Tim: To stand up to your current boss?

Sara: Yeah ……. I think that's part of what happened; that's a consequence of working with Colette. That I do find it difficult to stand up to people who are aggressive or hostile. I just freeze, which is really … because you know I'm a really confident person

Tim: Yeah, yeah. Well I would kind of see you as somebody who challenges things [Laughter]

Sara: [Laughter] And I do! I'm involved in so many campaigns that involve so much; and I do in so many other areas, I'm really challenging. But it's in that really personal, interpersonal thing, that when somebody is really aggressive or really hostile, it, it makes me freeze and I don't know how to react, and I can't answer back. Which is really ironic [laughs] I feel that I don't have any strength in that situation. In other situations where I challenge – I have, I have either the belief that what I'm doing is right or I have something that goes "hold on, I'm doing this for a reason", but when somebody challenges me for no obvious reason, I freeze. Does that make sense?

Tim: Yeah, yeah

Sara: So, I can be strong when I think that there's something ……

Tim: Where there's something that you can actually get your teeth into

Sara: Yeah, and that I know that what I'm being challenged about is wrong or whatever but that I have some sort of strength that goes "hold on", you know, but, when there's a seemingly unprovoked challenges, that are verging on hostility – and that's what it is. I did experience an aggressive tone and I really freeze. Maybe it's a fear of how the person is going to respond or

whether they'll actually.. On some unconscious level, I don't know; but I just, I really pa… I can't stand up for my self when that happens [laughs]

Tim: So it's this, what seems like an irrational attack from the leader, is what – What I'm hearing there, is that if you can see a logic behind something that you'll stand up to it, but that where it doesn't seem to have some kind of a ……

Sara: Well, not even a logic – I think it's about how the attack is done; if it's very hostile ……

Tim: right

Sara: ….. or aggressive. The language, or the <u>tone</u>; Like, I'm very perceptive …… to people's tone or body language, stuff like that. Probably more than I'm aware of my own body language. But I pick up on that. If somebody is being really aggressive towards me and the language they use and the tone they use is really aggressive. It's that……….. it's that physicality of it, that physically stops me. There's also, there's times … so…………. I think a lot of it is around that…. that physical thing. But sometimes when somebody is being physical with me if I know…. feel that I'm really right or that I'm standing up for something that I can challenge that. But a lot of it comes down to; I think in any case, where there's been conflict, where somebody's been aggressive I can't stand up, I just freeze.

Tim: ok, so it's that, it's the aggression that gets you

Sara: Yeah, it really freaks me….. It means that I'm not really used to dealing with it either……

Tim: Yeah, yeah

Sara: …… which is ironic, [laughs] because I've seen loads of aggression, you know, working in different areas and growing up in different areas. You know, it's not like I haven't seen it. It's just that, that, has that really personal impact on me

Tim: So, its when it's a direct, personal attack at you, rather than. Because, you've been at protests and all that sort of thing…

Sara: Oh yeah

Tim: ..where you can get a bit of aggression coming from the …..

Sara: I've been beaten up by Guards like [laughter]

Tim: [laughter] that's what I thought, yeah

Sara: Because I can deal with that; I can deal with that. Because, I know that what I'm doing is standing up for something that I really believe in, d'you know, and I analyse, and that makes sense to me. Even though it makes me really angry and, you know, it really pisses me, and I can

deal with that. But when… there's …. that physical, direct, personal,.. that aggression's directed at me it just…..

Tim: Ok, so you can deal with a Guard coming at you

Sara: Oh yeah

Tim: to attack you

Sara: yeah

Tim: That doesn't

Sara: no

Tim: freak you out?

Sara: no [laughs] well it does a little, yeah [laughter]

Tim: So it does a bit yeah, but when… when it's ….. Is it the authority the person has? That they're in a …. Because, both these situations you've talked about they're in work situations

Sara: yeah, yeah

Tim: where you've got a manager

Sara: Ahuh

Tim: And is it something about that authority of their position or

Sara: yeah, it possibly is….. I think too, what just came into my head there, you know when I was in school, we were very much shaped to shut up and not challenge, you know, and I remember, one teacher…………. again, I think, what I think about it, would have been a very strong figure and I would have had a real hard time with her, you know, and I wouldn't really have challenged her; so it probably ties in with that, yeah, with somebody in authority, because we went through school not to challenge authority at all. And then…… em …… when you're in that position with work. So when you're socialised into shutting up, you know, and then when it comes to work, for an unprovoked attack; for me it was seemingly unprovoked, yeah….yeah….. it's something to do with the position of authority … and the physicality of it. And I can't, it's amazing.

Tim: [interrupts] You keep saying the "physicality" … you weren't hit?

Sara: No, no, but I mean the physical energy..and..do you know when somebody is really aggressive and their body gets really tense and

Tim: [interrupts] so do you <u>fear</u> a physical attack? In that?

Sara: I don't know if; I don't consciously fear it, but I wonder if maybe unconsciously, maybe I do…

Tim: ok

Sara: … fear an attack. I don't know if it's that or just of the …….. Because, <u>now</u>, I expect people don't be aggressive, and, you know, that I work with, I expect people to have mutual respect; so it surprises me and shocks me when somebody is openly hostile; especially somebody that I work with

Tim: uhuh

Sara: It's one thing if you work in, you know, in a job and you're working with families at risk and there's some sort of violence going on and you know … And, yeah, I can support people through that; and I've been in situations where I've been at risk of physical violence … and I can deal with that. But, it's just, it's something, I don't know; It's something about that authority position and, it's not physically being hit, but just the whole body language and tone …. aggression that goes with that … it just does something to me.

Tim: Ok, and you were saying that it's; I mean I don't want to go anywhere unless, you don't want to go anywhere; you didn't agree to go anywhere in your current job …

Sara: yeah, yeah

Tim: ok, but is there anything similar; I mean I notice that, I mean, I know your current boss is a woman as well …

Sara: Yeah

Tim: Is there anything there, is there any similarity in it?

Sara: Yeah, yeah there is

Tim: Yeah, right

Sara: Except, this time I'm more confident…

Tim: <u>You're</u> more confident

Sara: Yeah; So I've tried to resolve; to sit down with her and talk about what's going on. And she stood up [laugh] and she shouted at me and she walked out the door [laughs]. So it's, it's been quite difficult and I've actually had to talk to the management committee about it, em, and I've said that I can't work under this situation. I'm not going to, because I spent 2 years putting up with it, being bullied. I've been stressed out and sick for the last couple of months … at work.

Although, the management committee has changed….. they've talked to her and her, her, attitude has changed towards me, but she, the last two weeks. Well I think because last week I was physically sick, I had a really bad respiratory infection; but it was because I was run down and stressed too; and I think that, that clicked with her that… that this tension was making me ill, you know, em. So this week she's been a bit better but…

Tim: I'm wondering, just from your own insight; what do you think it is that - in you - that provokes them?

Sara: Maybe it's; I think I have a persona of being strong, and being confident and being challenging.

Tim: That would have been my sense of you. Ok, it was somebody who was strong and confident and you know what you want and you know what's right and you stand up for justice and all that sort of thing. Em, so I'm just wondering what do you; if you could think; is there something that you think ……. makes them afraid of you in some way, that they feel they have to react or…..

Sara: I don't know. I think. I can't analyse that in the first job – this job I think it's partly because I'm really energetic and I got into some new project and I ….. you know. And I had energy, whereas my boss is feeling burnt out at that stage, I think she was threatened by the fact that I was going "AHHHHHH" and things were being set up and things were happening and, because, I had the energy to do it and she didn't. So I think it was part of ……… In a way she was happy things were happening for the project but I think she was threatened that she didn't have the energy to set up new initiatives or to really go after things and to support people in the way that I could. And in a way, in a way, there was a bit of jealousy there as well; D'you know, because "Aw, Sara did that!" and she goes, "what about me? I did stuff, like…" so I think there was a little bit of, a little bit of that, but I think ………….some people…………I can't make sense of, because my current boss and I were friends for 4 years, you know, we got on really well and we were really similar in so many ways, so I wonder if it is about the fact that I have this energy and this strong persona, that threatens people. Anyway I don't, I don't know; how do I change that? Because I know that – it's my favourite part of myself. Like, my energy's been really bad the last, you know, in terms of my going to work; like I've no energy for new initiatives, you know………. and it annoys me, because I love having energy and giving to things ………

Tim: And were you, when you started with ABC, with Colette, were you energetic then at that point?

Sara: Oh yeah, really energetic …. As I said, you know, I set up lots of new things, I got new things off the ground that hadn't been done before, and I wonder if that wasn't part of it too; because there was something new happening and ……..

Tim: Yes, I'm wondering; I'm thinking here is the whole thing around, you know, you were saying Colette wanted to control and be very much in charge and yet here are you coming in all enthusiastic and just….. I know, I remember when I was 20, I [laughs] thought I could do

everything. And it was – just start and there was no problem and that can be done – it was that kind of way, you know. I'm just wondering was there something about that where she felt threatened by you or…….?

Sara: That she couldn't control me?

Tim: Yeah, maybe

Sara: Maybe. Although that's why, in my current job, the problem is, because, she can't control me either. You know, she can't control my energy she can't control……… really. She can control my physical work – what I do and when I do it – and she has done and she's been very firm and "you can't go to that" and then I've been told I can't come to co-op meetings in my work time anymore. That's a form of control, because that's the only support network that I have and she took that away from me. So, there is that thing about, yeah, a control that "I will be the boss" superior, but partly [word], and I wonder if then is it because of the personal threat as well that "you can't control my energy" and I'm not going to let anybody control me……

Tim: Yeah,

Sara: …… but it's really hard when you're facing it all the time. I'm only starting to feel more confident that I can be myself and I'm not going to allow myself to be…………controlled to that level again…….. It's mad, yeah

Tim: Ok, right

Sara: 'Cause what I was thinking was, d'you know it's such a contra……..[sigh] The two jobs that I've had in the community sector, working with female voluntary managers are so different compared to – not voluntary managers, paid mangers – compared to the ABC, when they really appreciated my energy; they used my energy and encouraged me to do new projects under their guidance, and worked with me, and ….. were excited by my excitement and energy and didn't see it as a threat

Tim: Yeah, The ABC, I mean I think there's a difference between…you know, as you say, like you're working in the community sector where I think there's an awful lot of stresses and strains within….. and that's why I'm interested in people who are working there, rather than people who are working

Sara: in the statutory

Tim: the statutory sector, where, you know, they can afford to have HR department, and, you know, all sorts of things like that and …….. but there is a whole thing of internalised oppression that happens there and that gets picked up and gets acted out

Sara: when you mention that, that internalised oppression. With both those women, they've faced oppression in different ways. Obviously as women in our society. And with Colette she had a very tough time as a single parent bringing up her son, em, so she had a lot of anger around

that, and you know, you'd pick that up from the comments she would make about the state and how they treat lone parents and that would tie in with the passion she has for social justice, around Travellers. I think with Helen, too, it would be very much about being from a working class rural community, and ….. that comes through. But I would also wonder too if it's something about a system of supervision and support for managers or leaders, because … within …. XYZ Colette was, I know that Colette had line management and so you have management committees that support, but I think people get too caught up in, you know, "I'm the co-ordinator, I have to do this", that they take all the responsibility on and don't allow themselves to have support or supervision. In my current job I know that, you know, they get support and guidance in how to do their job, but when it comes to how you feel in your job and how you're supported, they won't allow themselves because they're so much the leader. And with Helen, like, the systems aren't in place for support and supervision because with a voluntary management committee, who are the best in the world, I think they are fantastic, and they're really trying, but there is no way of, there's nobody, there's physically nobody there to be her direct manager or direct supervisor. So, even for small stuff like time sheets, there's nobody there to do that, or to look at hours, or to look at areas of work. So that happens in an ad hoc way, through planning days that will direct the overall work of the centre, but there's nobody to say "for the next month we're going to focus on just that project", it's very ad hoc and Helen's quite creative, she comes up with new things all the time, but she doesn't realise that when she comes up with something new and she gives it to us that we have something from last week, that she came up with new, or the week before and that; because there's nobody to direct her there's really no way of keeping control of what's going on and for support in how she's managing her staff – she doesn't have that either. And when I made the complaint about the tension between us; the two voluntary managers met me, but then they took two and a half weeks to meet her. And now it's three weeks later and nothing's happened since. So, there's something there about the leader not allowing themselves support and supervision because they see it as a challenge to their leadership role, I wonder.

Tim: yes, I've seen that.

Sara: But even when there's support and supervision there. And Colette, I know has had line support since I was there, and I mean that's 7 years ago now, but Helen has never had that either. There's voluntary managers there who support her but there's nobody there's no strong guidance. I think that Helen would be more open to support and supervision than Colette would be; Colette's very much a strong, you know, "I know my mind and I know…………..I'm right" [laughter].

Tim: Ok. Can you think of anything else you want to add to any of that or ……….

Sara: I don't want to victimise people just because of their poor leadership skills. I mean, I know Collette is fundamentally not a bad person and I think that Helen is a really good person, it's just that….

Tim: I know, I get that from you. You don't seem to have a personal hatred for them. You're actually seeing their good sides, like, you know, you're not getting ….. You are seeing what their stresses are that are causing what's…..their behaviour towards you.

Sara: And then there's what do I need to do to change, what is it in me that's so ……….. in a way ………. sparks that reaction ………. And the interesting thing is, I've literally worked with a thousand people in the past couple of years in a really personal way ……….. you know and I've only had these things with people in leadership …… which is really interesting. I can't figure that out yet.

Tim: Well, that's what I'm interested in; why, what it is ………. from the point of view of the person who's having the issue with the person in leadership. Because a lot of the stuff looks at it from the leaders point of view so what I'm interested in is what is it from your point of view, in the leader that's causing this. And what is it that you're…….. What's your view, because we don't listen to that point of view, that's the bit that I think is missing, or one of the bits that's missing.

Sara: And then it feeds on. Because people who become leaders have often had negative experiences of leaders themselves and have picked up poor leadership. They may have internalised this as how you leader, how to be a leader. So then you're reproducing this negative cycle, unless there's a way of challenging, because you've people with [word] experience. Say if you're working in an agency that values, say, teamwork, which values shared leadership, which looks at people's skills, and is much more person centred, you're more likely to use that style yourself whenever you go on and lead groups. But if you're experience is – the management and you listen to the manager, I think that unless there is some way to shift and to challenge you and if you experience other experiences in a different way….

Tim: You said that in relationship to both Colette and Helen, that their background, that they have had experiences where they have been oppressed by authority in some way or another. And, do you think that there's some way that they're then acting that out as their model of leadership, it that what you're saying, is it?

Sara: Yeah, partly, yeah, I think so. And because they haven't experienced leadership training. I know Colette has done some leadership stuff so she would be, in terms of systems and organisations, would be a bit more professional than Helen would be……….. But part of it would be, yeah acting out.

Tim: Ok, that's the lines and the circles and the arrows but it's the personal leadership, as a personal style, is a different thing

Sara: Yeah, I think that's it. Internalised oppression does affect how you lead your life and how you interact with other people. If you've experienced oppression you will act differently. It could be systemic oppression or it could be oppression at a really personal level, and I think that's part of the issue. Because they haven't had a chance to deal with the issue ….. to really come to terms with the difficulties that they face. Like, I think with Colette she's still very passionate ……… em…… but in terms of, she's still burdened by the oppression she faced when she was a lone parent when she was at college and that still makes her angry. Now I haven't talked to Colette about this in years, but that's the impression I get. And I think with Helen she's very much [word] about, you know, working class community, and looking after her community. I do think

it does affect how you lead, your own experiences, and you don't know that you're doing that until you have a chance to reflect on that. Which also makes me think that we don't talk about, we don't talk about stuff; we don't allow reflection on ourselves either, in our sector, which is a massive problem. I think with both those women; they've had difficult lives. And I think until a person realises themselves that something's wrong it can be damaging for somebody else to tell them something's wrong, that there's something wrong with them. I think that people have to reach that level of self awareness themselves. And that can be gently prodded and pushed through discussions about like our leadership styles or how to reflect on ourselves. But if somebody goes, "You're a bad manager and you really hurt me", That can be really upsetting for the person, because they're going to react in a hostile way that won't allow for self reflection. And in a way that goes, "how dare they; I know I'm right" and then you're closing up the channels for further self reflection.

Tim: so it's really quite difficult for the leader to express, to show, their own vulnerability in this.

Sara: oh yeah, big time. It's about having this persona of being "I'm in charge, I'm the boss. I'm not a boss with children or a boss with a life, I'm The Boss". So it does, that role, does have those personal elements in it.

Tim: Ok, so thank you, will we stop this thing now

Sara: yeah

Interviewer Tim Spalding

Interviewee: "Brian"

Date: 2008-10-27

Tim: I'm switching this on now so that it's just running……. Alright, thanks a million. So, what I'm really interested in is your experience of this group that you were in where there was conflict between you and the leader ………And you weren't the leader yourself, you were the participant….

Brian: Not at that time, no. I was an active member of the, d'you know, the project, yeah. So that was my position at the time. Do I go into the specifics of it?

Tim: Yeah, I want to….. If you could just tell me essentially what happened..

Brian: The background?

Tim: The background, whatever……

Brian: Personally, I was involved with the project up to maybe 10 years prior to that. It's the Shelter Community ……… the focus of the work would have been around the homeless. And at the time, within that 10 years, I worked as a full-time volunteer, eh……, and I worked as a co-worker, that's a, sort of, voluntary co-working once a week experience working on soup projects, soup runs. And then I would have fulfilled, sort of, at one stage, an executive position on the executive of the Cork Shelter Community. And I would have worked, at the time of the conflict or the issue, that, I would have been involved on the management of a work project.

Tim: Ok, so when that happened you were on the management, as opposed to as a volunteer?

Brian: As a volunteer, supporting, on the management of the work project

Tim: Ok

Brian: Yeah, so that was the background. So I had a lot of experience at the different levels within the organisation.

Tim: So you'd been in it for 10 years at that stage

Brian: I'd say, I'm just trying to guess, approximately, yeah. Ten or fifteen years, yeah

Tim: Ok

Brian: I'm not quite sure but I think, yeah. For a long spell

Tim: So what happened, in terms of this conflict with the leader? Who was it? What position where they in?

Brian: The conflict arose out of; well, em. Somebody was appointed to co-ordinate the activities of the work project. And they came, I suppose, with a different vision of what the work project might look like. Up to that, the basic focus of project would have been, very much a occupational work…… you know, breaking bottles, you know. It was very limited in what it was doing. It was basically giving people something to do; giving them a few bob…. And, so it was very limited; and I think

Tim: And you were the manager of that project?

Brian: I was on the management and I got involved in the management when this new person was taken on. And they, sh.., they had a different vision for what

Tim: [interrupts] Was it a he or a she?

Brian: A she. And I was, whilst reluctant, a bit kind of cynical in the beginning, I began to realise, d'you know, that there's; she just approached the work project in a different way. And she had been a recent graduate of Galway; and she was full of these ideas about, maybe doing more developmental pieces of work with the people who were using the service. So she introduced concepts like arts; and it all sounds very standard now, but at the time it was a very different way of working with a group of marginalised homeless people with …… eh, issues like alcoholic, alcohol and homelessness. So, art and writing, and all different kind of, eh, eh, art, creative ways of working with people were introduced. So, that just seemed not to sit well…. with the executive or with the. The Shelter would have had been very; classically; a group of people that were very; it was like. The people who were involved were very involved …….. at a personal level. Their social lives were built around it. It was very much like a; a very; central to lots of people's lives. Where as this woman came at it from very much a. Her job was to do this, so she hadn't built up relationships, or come through the era of volunteering. She came as a person with a job to do and it just seemed to cause the conflict. What she was doing and what she was like – she just didn't seem to fulfil a, the, what would you call it; the Shelter ideal of what….. you know…..

Tim: Right, so in terms of you and your relationship to her; what would you say was the conflict about for you?

Brian: Well, I didn't have a conflict with her, as such

Tim: Oh?

Brian: No, I was supportive of her and came to see what she was doing

Tim: Oh, ok, so you had the conflict with the executive!

Brian: The executive! Yes, sorry if I didn't…..

Tim: Right, right, right

Brian: I wasn't clear about that. No, the conflict arose out of. I suppose. I was very involved with the project. Could see the ….. positive aspects that were being introduced and what people were getting from it. People who were, traditionally, doing just very menial things were now involved in; involved in, do you know, very…….. different things, like art classes and writing workshops and ……. So I began to buy into it and could see the benefit of it and came very supportive of it …… in spite of the reservations that I was becoming aware of; and then the executive …. found; seemed to have it on their agenda to …. basically curb this kind of approach. And this lead to a conflict. So I was part of that conflict and in the resolution of the conflict.

Tim: Ok, ok. So, tell me about the conflict then.

Brian: Well, the conflict arose out of … There was somebody else within the organisation; the project leader of the shelter and the work project, who was also very supportive. The executive, I think, felt he was too supportive of it, and all she was doing; so they removed him; his responsibilities for the work project………… And as a result he felt undermined ………… And as a result he resigned his position. So, then, the focus of it all became ….. very different …………. the executive …………were ………… in conflict with a lot of members of the community. By the way things had got. They imposed a new management within the em… without reference to the management group. They imposed a new structure for managing, line managing, the person without reference to the management group.

Tim: This is this new worker, this new woman?

Brian: Ah, yeah. Right, so, no, sorry, maybe I'm getting a bit bogged down in all the detail now. No, Maggie, in the case, she was the person that was over the work project and she was overseen by this person who managed the whole site. So, his responsibilities for managing her was removed; because the executive viewed his support of her………….. It's not what they wanted so they imposed another person in to oversee the work project.

Tim: OK,

Brian: So, undermining her and, basically, him, in his capacity as the manager of the site. So that lead to the conflict; the executive were asked to account for themselves and what ensued then was a series of community meetings in which all of these issues were raised; and very emotionally; emotional for everybody. But that's how it came to be, and eventually the executive were made to resign their positions.

Tim: Right

Brian: Over it; the manner in which they had conducted themselves….. towards the project…. manager in particular; the one that was removed from …….. you know, it became a different focus, if you know what I mean? Whilst, it's all getting a bit complicated (laughs)

Tim: (laughs) It is.

Brian: You had the work project, right?

Tim: Right

Brian: And then you had this person who was over the whole site; the shelter and the work project. So they had somebody co-ordinating the activity of the work project who introduced all these different concepts. So, the overall manger was very supportive of her initiatives; but the executive didn't like what she was doing, how she was doing it; and they didn't like either that the person that was overseeing, and being supportive to her; they didn't like that either. So they removed him.

Tim: Yeah, and took control themselves.

Brian: And took control themselves. Yes, they imposed their own control on it. And that was met with the reaction, that subsequently lead to their ……

Tim: So, how did you feel about it? How was it for you; if you go back to that and think about that for you, for yourself, and how you felt towards the executive and how you…

Brian: Yeah

Tim: How did you see, I mean, how many of them were there….?

Brian: There was the usual collective, I'd say maybe about 12 executive members

Tim: [Interrupting] There were about 12 people there. And how did you feel towards them? What was your attitude towards them?

Brian: Well, I was, I have to say, I was very bitter. I was very involved with the people, at a personal as well, so that's an aspect to it. But, and I really was very angered and very disillusioned with the executive. That's how I felt.

Tim: Ok, and what did you do, in, in that, how did you

Brian: I participated in the eh, in the community meetings. And would have been supportive of; the initiative, I suppose, the groundswell of to, you know, remove the executive.

Tim: So, were you all working together then…

Brian: It was a very divided community

Tim: A 'them' and 'us'?

Brian: Very much. There was the executive and then there was 'us' ……. And I was on the 'us' side at that time. That's how it played out. We were very hurt by it all because, as I said, the community had this; whilst it was also a work that worked with; there was a great; there was very intense period of time and there was a lot of personal relationships; so, you know, when things went that; people were involved together and socialised together through it; there was great intensity, but then there was great divide, which still resonates to this day.

Tim: It still has

Brian: It would yeah. On a personal level. D'you know the way people can't look at each other or talk to each other….

Tim: It must have been pretty bitter then?

Brian: It was, yeah. It think the nature of those things are, when you're involved at that level, to the point where; you know when it splits, it really splits, you know, like a marriage or something. When it's bad, it's really bad. You know, after and intensity, such an intensity that went before and; the highs and lows together; the shared experience. But then when it splits it becomes acrimonious; it's very hard to heal. You know, and that still is the case, you know.

Tim: So how did you as the, eh…….. the 'us' group, workers, whatever; how did you behave, what did you do? You had these meetings? That didn't include the executive?

Brian: It did

Tim: It did?

Brian: It did; it would have, yeah

Tim: Ok, but were you meeting as a group outside of that?

Brian: Not in any formal way, no. An emphasis would have been to bring people together, to have the issues ……….. In fairness, now, they were very communal and lots of people there; there would have been very big, high turn outs – 50, 60, 70 people would have turned up for these. I think that would have reflected the kind of, the level of, I suppose, the nature of the organisation at that time.

Tim: Right

Brian: That there was that level of commitment to it in terms of what people turned up for and what people were willing to go through in terms of their volunteering as well as their commitment to things like this as well

Tim: Yeah, yeah

Brian: So it was keenly felt by all concerned

Tim: So, up to this happening it would have been, everybody was very much on the one side? The executive and…?

Brian: Well, there might have been little issues. You wouldn't say it was completely harmonious existence. There would have been levels of criticism and issues – but I don't know what they were at the time, you know, but, differences of opinion and differences of style; but this was, this was a very serious ……. issue and it, the persons concerned felt very undermined and so, eh, it just took on a life of it's own and became….. Because I went away for a period of time in the middle of it; for 6 weeks at the time; And I came back, and at that stage it was only beginning to happen. But I never thought it would take on the life that it did. And when I came back after 6 weeks

Tim: [interrupts] When you say it took on a life of its own, what do you mean by that?

Brian: It just, It seemed like nothing would sort it out it just took; no matter what was done or how it was done it was never good enough and there had to be another community meeting; so there was just a series of community meetings; that, you know, forensically went through everything. The executive were very much defensive of their actions.

Tim: Right

Brian: And a lot of it. They couldn't really direct it back to the initial issue, unfortunately, because that was subject to union procedures and it was at that stage; that was nearly a separate thing. So it was like that thing that couldn't dare speak its name…..

Tim: Right… What were you talking about?

Brian: Well we were talking about Kevin, the overall project manager of all the sites that was removed from his responsibility; that was one person, ok? He resigned over it, ok? Whilst the other component piece was the co-ordinator of the work project. She was dealing with the issue herself ……………… do you know what I mean?

Tim: Through the union?

Brian: Yeah, through the union. In a more formalised structured way, through, do you know? So a lot of stuff couldn't be dealt with, you know, aired at these meetings. But Kevin's could, because he had just resigned, and he wanted to highlight why he resigned; that he was undermined by having his responsibility for the project, the overall, you know, removed from him. So he felt undermined by it; that they didn't feel, him, there, that he wasn't managing properly. And he was trying to make the point that what he was doing was perfectly – and he was very supportive of her initiatives. Do you understand now?

Tim: Yes, and everybody, all the rest were supporting Kevin?

Brian: Yeah, which ultimately, if there was such a thing, a victory, if you want to call it that. But, you know, the side of Kevin's argument prevailed, in this.

Tim: So, what was it, what would you say most aggrieved you? All the rest of you, Kevin and yourself and people like that. What was it that was most hurtful or annoyed you so much?

Brian: It was our perceived, well knowing that, how they were going about their business, how calculated this seemed to be. In how they wanted to be rid of this individual; and how difficult they were making it for her. And that, in some way, Kevin just felt that, you know, he would have built up, eh, that he would have been undermined like this. He couldn't be; no matter; he was just; it was so blatant to him what they were about. They seemed to have had; well it seemed to us an agenda, to be rid of this ……. nuisance…..

Tim: What do you think was behind that agenda? Why did they …. Did they feel threatened or….?

Brian: Feel threatened, yeah. In hind sight; I mean, I'm only after being re-united with the person concerned and she would have had a very distant experience of it. She was very much outside the loop of all this communal, eh, debate.

Tim: Because she had just come in?

Brian: Yeah, she dealt with it and went home to her kids. She hadn't had that sort of "Shelter experience". She found it; you see it was a very middle class organisation; she came from, sort of, working class stock but had no experience of working, or being involved in an organisation like this… and, eh, it was that kind of a thing…..

Tim: So, when you say it was a very middle class organisation….

Brian: I'd say for the most part, most people in the organisation were all middle class

Tim: Who were working with people who were homeless?

Brian: Homeless. In this notion of community. But there was very much; and I suppose in hindsight; and, you know, I was in there as well as one. It was a 'them' and 'us'; there was quite a divide; and she was very clear about what she saw, and naming things and ……. you know …….

Tim: So, she disturbed more than just bringing in new ways of working?

Brian: Yeah, she just approached it in a way that she was expected to/ she'd done this Galway course and…. she thought that…… and d'you know, she was very amazed at what, at the culture of what Shelter was at the time. Nobody - she said to me the other day - nobody ever named something; that people were alcoholic; they were nearly afraid to say that; it was always the homeless issue….. that, you know……… but everywhere you went there was; everybody was; there was large amounts of people were alcoholic. Serious alcohol issues but….. a lot of the

focus of the debate was the homeless, or the lack of homes for people like this….. you know, so anyway, these were the kinds of things, so it was very much a benevolent kind of an organisation – looking after the needs; but basically. And if it, as she said, just made up its mind to be that and mind these people; but it was sort of going around…….em,…….. how would you call it; advocating for homes for the homeless. But, eh…… in the end we were nearly colluding with; like, providing services for people – food and bedding and friendship – and just assisting people to remain homeless and to remain in their sort or, eh, alcohol, alcoholic issues. So that was the kind of stuff. I only recently …………. But that's what it was like as an organisation – it was very much a do-gooders ……. I suppose great ideas about your fellow man ……..

Tim: So, you would have classed yourself as one of the do-gooders as well?

Brian: Yes, absolutely. Although, maybe that's one of the reasons, having done the course in Galway; I didn't consciously decide to give up but I found myself not, eh, eh………………… in tune with it any more, so I just drifted away. I retained some personal relationships but I haven't been involved. It's a very different organisation now. It's much more structured and more staff. It was a volunteer organisation; there was only a handful of staff; you could count them on one hand and now somebody told me there's 75 staff in it now. There was about 5 or 6 staff in those days. So, it's become very different now, and I don't know what it's like now.

Tim: So, what effect do you think this conflict actually had on the group and what it was trying to achieve

Brian: Eh……………………………………………….. I'm not really, d'you now what, whilst the cause, you know; I think there was a history of conflicts before like this, and they were often very much around personalities. But, whether it led to any significant change within the organisation, as a result of this, I'm not sure. I think the focus of it; I think a lot of it was personality stuff. It was around how people felt, how people were feeling undermined. But in terms of the vision of the Shelter, or how it worked and what it did or provided, I don't think anything like that changed.

Tim: So it still does what it

Brian: I'd still classify it as a very much a……. an organisation that provides for homeless. I don't think it's gone through any radical shift as a result of that.

Tim: But you said that the fall-out from it is still there to this day.

Brian: At a personal level; in terms of, people can't look at each other; if they ever get to meet.

Tim: Ok, and that's within it?

Brian: No, no, Ireland being Ireland and Cork being Cork, that you'd come across, and you'd hear about people; do you know what I mean? Cork is very small, you know, you'd hear of …. And there was a huge network of friends within Shelter, you know, you'd always know somebody that knew somebody.

Tim: And how did it affect you?

Brian: Well, eh, eh ….. I took some of it personally. But I was eh …………………………. charged by the whole experience because I felt, do y'know, I felt I was on the right side. And I felt, even though we ………………… got an outcome, we got …………

Tim: What was the outcome you got?

Brian: We got the executive to resign.

Tim: Oh, yeah, sorry, you said that at the very beginning.

Brian: So, that

Tim: The executive left, entirely?

Brian: They did yeah. They went away by/ Some left before it, you know they whittled away. And at the next community meeting one or two others would have left. So it was just a ………………. People would have left. Then there was a few left at the very end who remained; and then I suppose, there was a vote of confidence in them and whatever; and, you know; they were ……

Tim: And they went?

Brian: They had to go, I think

Tim: When you say it was community……….. So, when anybody joined, you joined Shelter and became a member?

Brian: You did, it was a membership organisation

Tim: Ok, and then everybody participated in these big community meetings?

Brian: Well, at around that time, yeah. In fairness, there was a huge commitment to it….

Tim: Oh, yeah, yeah

Brian: It was the …… era of volunteers

Tim: Oh, yeah, I always remember Shelter as being a very committed organisation

Brian: When you think back at things we used to, I mean people used to go in mid week, on a Tuesday night like; and they'd have jobs and then they'd go in there and do an overnight and oversee the welfare of 60 or 70; and opening doors to god knows who at 2 or 3 in the morning, on their own, to people who had often, often very disturbed backgrounds, with serious drink

problems. You know, men and a lot of women. So the level of commitment to the ideals of voluntarism was amazing, do y'know, for its time. Now I don't know what it's like now, I think, as I say, it's much more professional. It may have a core group of volunteers still operating, like, the soup run; but I think there's a lot more professional services.

Tim: I'm thinking, well, that was, to some degree what actually happened. Maggie, it is Maggie isn't it, she came in, was she possibly one of the first people who were actually qualified in community work, as such?

Brian: Yes. And I don't think they had really thought out themselves what it is they were looking for when, you know, "oh, we must get somebody that, maybe they'll do something", but when it came to it really ………

Tim: Somebody had a bright idea to employ a professional

Brian: Yeah, in hindsight, who was responsible for employing her? Because what she offered was completely at odds …. And what she offered, in terms of what she was doing, wasn't that radical. Basically she set some time aside for things like art and … There was some attempt at; I remember Mark and Donal. Those two came in and tried to offer a kind of workshops around… So she tried …

Tim: [interrupts] That would have been pretty radical…

Brian: Absolutely, yeah. I think it was, I remember being at college subsequently and Vera referred to Mark and Donal and you know, sometimes people can become so marginalised it can be very difficult to work with them and she remembered the time that Mark and Donal went in to work with a group of homeless people and I pepped up, "oh, I was there" (laughs)

Tim: (laughs)

Brian: They came in with their guitars and tried to do something, which is very difficult with people who had no experience of this, who were completely marginalised, who'd never had any …. choices about things in many ways, you know, for lots of years. So, I suppose, coming at it like that. But then there were the things like the programmes doing art; they were quite radical, believe it or not.

Tim: So, it has become a more professionalised organisation.

Brian: Yeah.

Tim: So, in a way, what was happening then and what you were actually…… I don't know; was it how the executive tried to remove Kevin; was it that, that annoyed people or was it the idea, was it the new work, was it the new approach that was being brought through?

Brian: No, I think you have to separate out these issues. What Maggie did and how she did it wasn't the issue for the exec/ for the general; there were a few of us around that were aware. It was more of the issue around Kevin, who was beloved amongst many.

Tim: Ok, Kevin had come up through the ranks.

Brian: He was the typical Shelter protégée. Did his full time duty, was a full time co-ordinator; was involved in different things around the place and took on to be the project leader of the shelter come, work project. And then, as I say, the work project part of his portfolio was taken from him because he was perceived. Because Kevin would have had a bit of a vision about how differently you could work with people in workshops.

Tim: So, he might have been in some way involved in employing Maggie as well?

Brian: He may have been, I'm not sure, I'd say likely he was, given his, he would have been, yeah.

Tim: ok

Brian: But he was very much in tune with her ideas, and what she was about, and what she was trying to do, what she was trying to achieve. I remember Maggie, for instance, organised a radical notion of having a meeting for women only. Which in the community; it was a very marginalised group of women. It was mostly men; out of a community of homeless there was about 60 or 70 men; there would have been 6 or 7 women. She tried to.

Tim: They were only about 1 in 10 really

Brian: Very few; so she tried to bring them together and… She was basically told of, you couldn't do that, you know community meetings were for everybody and there was no notion of having some little, you know, group, that only women could go to. I was just; but anyway that was the kind of thing that she came up against. So all that just chipped away at her and in the end she was….em…..reduced to have to go…..eh… the way she did. But she directed her issues

Tim: So, she left?

Brian: Well, she did eventually, but not at that particular time But she felt it was time to move on. No matter what she would always have this, you know. It suited her to go, you know, for her own reasons, it wasn't. As I say she didn't have that culture of experience of Shelter, so for her it was a job.

Tim: So, when it came down to it for you, it was the fact that they were trying to sideline Kevin?

Brian: Yes,

Tim: That's what the issue for you was?

Brian: That's what the issue was. Obviously I was more directly involved because I was part of the small management group that oversaw the work project. But then I was also part of… And then what happened to Kevin, how he was; And I was personally a friend of Kevin's. And how he felt about was happening to him being undermined.

Tim: So there weren't very many clear lines between whether somebody was a volunteer or somebody was a project manager or whether they were a shelter manager, or what ever?

Brian: No.

Tim: There weren't. I'm getting a picture where people were …… It was very much a community kind of a thing…

Brian: [interrupts] It was yeah

Tim: And there weren't very strict lines between

Brian: [interrupts] No, I would suggest they probably are now. Because there's more kind of staff and there probably is more systems to make those; but definitely then the lines between a paid project manager and a volunteer… And one of the things, I suppose it's classic of voluntary management stuff; you know, all the classic mistakes they went about; and their level of expectation of their staff and the procedures they put in were completely ….. at odds with any kind of proper way of managing anybody. It was all kind of, very novices at levels of the executive imposing their, kind of, views on somebody like Maggie. And if somebody like Maggie didn't come up to scratch in terms of their application, their time – you know, they were happy enough to go home at 5 o'clock rather than hang around, be around. There was all those kinds of – Maggie had 3 kids and she wasn't going to be….. It was very much, the previous one, the one that was there before Maggie; she was a legend; she was caring for them all; cutting their hair and doing their toes. Very much the Mother Theresa approach to their needs. Whereas she wasn't going to go there with these lads, you know. She had a relationship with them and she wasn't about to do their toes and, you know, she just had a different relationship with them and, you know she just was; rubbed people up the wrong way but eh, not in any way, she didn't set out to be different, she just was what she is….. But that wasn't……. Have you covered everything there?

Tim: I think so, yes, I can't think of anything else

Interviewer Tim Spalding

Interviewee: 'Sue'

Date: 2008-10-28

Tim: What I'm interested in is people who've had conflict with leaders within organisations; and particularly campaigning organisations, solidarity organisations or organisations working with marginalised people, or that are made up of marginalised people. That's the group that I'm particularly interested in.

Sue: Ok

Tim: And I'm interested in it from the point of view of the person, not the leader

Sue: Ok

Tim: but the follower; the person who had the trouble with the leader, is where I'm looking at.

Sue: ok

Tim: So, I'm interested in a…, you know, to focus on one group or one area of the group, or one incident where you had particular conflict with the leader or the leadership structures.

Sue: Ok

Tim: Ok. So can you tell me a bit about what happened?

Sue: I was involved in the Honduras Support Group in the 80's, mid 80's, and em, it was… a very exciting time because a lot of people who hadn't, probably, much experience of involvement in voluntary groups or campaigning organisations were working very hard and very actively on the issue of solidarity to Honduras; so, it was open to, I suppose a lot of interpretations of what the best way to work were, and; the best ways to work were; and also em, a lot of people coming in from different ideological stand points. So I think that was the basis of the conflict; was different people ………… presuming that their ideological stand points were the most valid and trying to impose them on others. So the debates were always, per se, about ideological issues; but really, in hind sight, I think they were about power.

Tim: Ok, right, and what happened in particular with you?

Sue: So, in particular; I suppose it wasn't a major trauma for me, but it was … frustrating … em … It was very hard to get anything done because there was people always saying that …. work shouldn't continue in a certain way…. So I was organising brigades; that was my job. So, it was a very clearly defined role, em. But how it impacted on us then was … eh… instructions would come from one or two people on the central executive committee, which I was part of,

about how people were to be vetted, how they were to be trained, and prepared, and what they were to bring out to Honduras …. with their preparation. So, it was tied up again with, em … the troubles in Northern Ireland, because those people had their own involvement or understanding of what was happening in Northern Ireland, and knew that when they went out to Honduras, that they would be questioned about, "what is happening in your own country?".

Tim: Yeah

Sue: And so there was an assumption from some people on the organising committee, or the executive committee, that we could train the volunteers to go out and say certain things. And I resisted that.

Tim: Right

Sue: Because, people coming from their own background. Now, at the same time, I would say that my own solution wasn't the best either, in the sense that if people didn't deal with the conflict here, it was going to be worse out there; and that's what happened.

Tim: Yeah, ok. So, there were some people on the executive, on the central group or whatever; was it called the central group at the time?

Sue: The Central Group, yeah

Tim: That you were, that they had this idea that you could….

Sue: You could vet people

Tim: And present a case

Sue: Present a case, yeah. And you would train people; and you would train people either to not talk about the issues out there. You know, they weren't allowed to present a group; present a view from the Honduras Support Group. Which; I agreed with that.

Tim: Yeah

Sue: You couldn't present one view from the Honduras Support Group of what was going on here; but at the same time you couldn't stop people representing their own understandings of what was going on.

Tim: Right. So what was it about this that got you; that annoyed you?

Sue: It was just very difficult to em….. You know, every meeting was about … who shouldn't have said what, and, em ……………. It just seemed to be very hard to get work done, as I saw. You know, there was a lot of discussions; a lot of talk; and a lot of instructions, was how I felt it; I was getting a lot of instructions ………. And I

Tim: [interrupts] You were saying earlier, you thought it was about power?

Sue: I think it was about power. I think it was about; one person, I think; for me it was …. bound up in one person; that I felt; that I had particular frustrations with. And in the end I just came to be a complete clash.

Tim: So what was it about this person then?

Sue: I wasn't able to hear anything she said, in the end. Whether it was valid or not, because I just couldn't cope with her at all.

Tim: Right, but what was it about her that …

Sue: She was a very strong person, very, I felt, very domineering …em, forceful and dismissive. And she had a particular manner, which I … in the end became the focus of all my …… annoyance; you know, this very imperist (sic) type of manner.

Tim: Right, ok. So she

Sue: I think it was her manner as well as; So, even if we were only discussing, em …….. the venue for the AGM, … In the end, you know, I used to get annoyed about how she would come in and say, "Well, the AGM is going to be in the Mansion House on Thursday". You know, and I think, "Come on a minute now, we're supposed to be; that's the item for discussion on the agenda. So you come in and <u>tell</u> us where it's going to be."

Tim: So, these were at the Central Group that you were having these clashes?

Sue: Mmm, Mmmm

Tim: Right

Sue: And, worse still, she wouldn't come to the Central Group meetings because she would send in a message.

Tim: Right, ok. So, it was this ……………. attitude where she was making decisions without

Sue: [interrupts] Yeah, and that she felt she knew best. She would often even send in messages… or she'd be too busy; you know, she'd send in a message that she couldn't come because she was at a conference or she was at somewhere <u>very</u> important. So, us, who had cycled in on our bikes …. in the pouring rain; we were all there; and yet we had nothing… we had no power to discuss anything, because she had already sent the decision. That's what I felt, yeah.

Tim: Wow. So, it wasn't just between you…… Were other people involved in this?

Sue: One or two others were annoyed, but some of the others, then, would have felt that…. yes, I think, felt that she was very em ….. knowledgeable and … eh … competent … and so they bowed to her expertise.

Tim: Uhuh, right

Sue: Whereas I felt, I, I resisted it; and probably over resisted it, in the end, because I couldn't see when she did say things that made sense. In the end I didn't even want to hear them.

Tim: So, how did this resistance play out, from you? How did, what did you do?

Sue: A lot of clashes. And then I would avoid going to meetings that she went to; and avoided getting myself in positions where I would sit on committees with her……. And I felt very… em ………….. I felt she was, kind of, very snooty towards me, you know, really felt I was… clueless or … you know. So any little doubts and fears I had about myself, certainly, ……. they were highlighted by …….. things… ways she behaved towards me.

Tim: Right, right. And were there other – you said there were a one or two, a couple of other people who were…… affected by it or disagreed …. did they clash with her as well?

Sue: Yes, yes, they would have clashed with her as well. And we would have, you know , muttered and complained about it a bit….. But we never, we never got together to challenge her.

Tim: Ok, so you never had a direct confrontation with her about it?

Sue: No

Tim: It was more…

Sue: Just confrontation on …… you know

Tim: On issues?

Sue: On issues…. Or on ……. Particular …….. So we. No, it never came to a particular head to head …… on the broader issue of how she was behaving ……. Challenged her on specifics; like that thing about deciding the venue …….. when it was an item for discussion …… and she would come in and send us a decision. So, we would have challenged her on things like that; and I would have challenged her ……………. but no. And, probably, I think that was … eh…. that was indicative of my own … kind of, political immaturity at the time. Because I didn't have a good understanding of what was going on………

Tim: How do you mean?

Sue: I wouldn't have a clear view, you know, of what is going on here, so it would have been issue by issue. And then I would have felt *"I don't like her"* ….. is how I would have analysed it, *"I just don't like her"*.

Tim: Ok, so you brought it down to a personal thing

Sue: [interrupts] I did

Tim: that "I don't like her attitude"

Sue: I did; " I don't like her, I don't like the way she behaves" and I would have grumbled about her to others, and ….

Tim: But, when you say the politics of it; do you mean the internal politics of, within the IHSG; or do you mean politics in taking in the wider political ….. things that were happening outside; what was happening in Honduras, what was happening in the North?

Sue: I think …….

Tim: You said your own political immaturity

Sue: Yeah, I didn't have a lot of experience of involvement in groups or organisations or campaigns. That was my first, you know, big involvement. I had been involved in a voluntary magazine before that. That was a very small group, and very cohesive group. And, em, this was a much larger group, and coming from a lot of different viewpoints and perspectives. And it was my first exposure to that. So I wasn't good at analysing power dynamics within a group, {I suppose is a better way of saying it.}

Tim: {Ok, so it was the internal politics of the group}

Sue: {The internal politics of the group}

Tim: How do you think all that affected the group?

Sue: ……………………… em …………………………………………… I think it affected us….. em ……………………………………. We were probably less effective in our work. Em, I think we ………. em ………. We were less effective and less efficient because there was a lot of, kind of, scrabbling amongst ourselves, or discussions amongst ourselves. Rather than having discussion on the boarder issues we were having discussions on smaller issues. You know not hugely self destructive, but certainly time consuming ………

Tim: And how did it affect you?

Sue: Em …………………………………………………… I think I; yeah, I felt a little bit undermined by it; or I have my own self doubts which would have been exacerbated by it …. I think. I got frustrated and then, em, kind of moved on from that group more quickly than … I would have …… em.

Tim: Had you moved on before the 90's when

Sue: {Yeah, yeah}

Tim: {it all fizzled}

Sue: {I had, yeah, mid-90's I had finished up} But, I suppose, I went to live in England, so ………. there wasn't the possibility of being involved.

Tim: Right, because it, kind of, all fizzled out a bit in the early/mid 90's

Sue: yeah, it did, yeah

Tim: And you'd gone by then?

Sue: I'd gone, yeah, in 1990, yeah

Tim: Right, and how do you think it affected this woman that you're talking about?

Sue: Oh yeah; how did it affect her? Em …… I'd say. I don't know. I <u>think</u> she had very little insight into it but. I notice now that when occasionally I would meet her she's far; she speaks to me, yeah, I think, with far more respect …. you know ……… but, em…..

Tim: Was she older than you?

Sue: Yeah, yeah. Not much older, but she was older than me.

Tim: Yeah, right. But how do you think that the clashing with you; or the …… or anybody else…

Sue: {How do I think it affected her at the time?}

Tim: {How it affected her at the time.}

Sue: I think she liked it.

Tim: She liked it?

Sue: Yeah. I think she thrived on that kind of ………… agro and buzz

Tim: Right, right, yeah.

Sue: I think she's that kind of person.

Tim: Ok. And other people. What. When you say "that kind of person" what do you mean, "that kind of person".

Sue: I think she's a kind of a person who, em …………… likes to be in charge ………… em ……………………………. I mean she probably does have a good clear vision of issues and events, but she's not a good people person. But I think, she thinks, it doesn't matter that she's not a good people person. Now I'm only speculating and it's probably being unfair to her; {I'm only speculating from my point of view}

Tim: {No, no. this is from} your point of view of this.

Sue: Yeah, I think she kind of feels, y'know, "you can't be mammy pammying around to people and their feelings; you want to get things done". Whereas, I think there's a bit of balance.

Tim: And how would you have described yourself at the time, then?

Sue: Em…….. well I was very ………………….. very young (giggle). I was open minded; very energetic; very willing to have the discussions and debates; and very frustrated by the lack of opportunity for good debate. Em ………… probably a bit, eh; well I was very naïve …… and, em …………would have needed a more …….. I suppose ………………… support in the role that I was doing. Because I had a very responsible role in it. And, em.

Tim: Yeah, I mean, you were quite young and you were in charge of setting up all the brigades

Sue: Yeah. And it was very hard work. And, yeah. So, you know … I did find it all very scary, a lot of times. So, I think there was an opportunity there for us to work together (word) and say, "this is new, this is new for Ireland as well as this is new for me"; And, to kind of, understand that. Whereas being, kind of, dismissed, you know, "oh, well". Or to be told afterwards, "Well, you should have done this or you should have done that". Often, which I had already seen myself ………. With the benefit of hind sight; yes, I should have. But at that stage it wasn't being very helpful to be saying it, and it was very, crushing (laughter, nervous).

Tim: Ok, right. And how do you think it affected other people in the group? Her attitude?

Sue: I think some people just left, they couldn't be arsed. They just didn't want to stay around. It was all voluntary; no paid workers, at the time. And, em. So some people had no patience for it and they left

Tim: Uhuh,

Sue: Other people, it think, lost a lot of energy. And then other people, yeah, they were ok; they were just glad of someone who was seen to be very confident and clear about what they knew about because we were all so, naïve, and ….. new to the whole scene. So some of them were very glad to have someone who didn't seem to be ….. as ….. unsure, and …… unclear about the issues. So I think different people. I think we lost some people, definitely.

Tim: And overall, …… in achieving the aims of the organisation, did it affect that or …….?

Sue: Em ……………………………………………………………… did it affect that? I think it did, yeah, you know, I think there was, there was things we could have done ……… better ….. in terms of solidarity with Honduras, em ….. if we didn't have those internal squabbles. But I am a bit inclined to think that they were inevitable. So, it's ok to say that … You know. I think …….

Tim: Inevitable in which way?

Sue: At that time, because it was such a new group and new to lots of people …. I think there was bound to have been some internal squabblings or wranglings, that would have detracted from the larger focus, or the long term focus. But, the group, I think, did achieve its aims ………….. to a large extent, in the sense that we did get a lot political support for Honduras, from Ireland, …. in the late 80's. And, I see it now, as well, which was an aim maybe we didn't have, but …… the number of people who were affected, and organisations who were influenced, by Honduras. So certainly, that, kind of, broader aim of development education, which is you bring the lessons from a developing country to Ireland; that happened, and it impacted on peoples individual lives and it impacted on organisations like trade unions and political parties, and that, at that time. So I think there was a massive impact. And I was very lucky, really, to have been part of it.

Tim: Yeah, ok…………………. I can't think of any other. That's great altogether, thank you very much.

Sue: You're welcome.

The interviewee came back about 15 minutes later saying she had something she wanted to add.

Sue: I think; yeah. If I look back on the time then; I think we had very little understanding of process, in decision making.

Tim: Right

Sue: And, em. So we were all focussed on what we wanted to achieve, but not how we were going to get there; or how we were going to achieve it. So that we had very little insight into our own behaviour as a group; or our individual behaviour, as a group; or what was going on for ourselves, within the group. So I think, I think that's the benefit of hindsight. So, I think that is what a lot of the difficulty was about; that we had no understanding of how important is was: How we arrived at decisions. We never gave any time, or energy into discussing how we were going to go about decision making, or planning, or evaluation, or anything like that.

Tim: So how do you think you were behaving? What were you behaving as, if you weren't behaving as a group? What were you behaving as?

Sue: Oh, we were behaving as a group. We didn't have any understanding of group dynamics, or processes within groups. You know. So that was all happening.

Tim: It was happening.

Sue: It was happening, but it wasn't explicit. And we didn't. We were all very young and naïve at the time and we didn't have any understanding of those issues. So in some ways that was very liberating, but in other ways, that meant that all those arguments went on without being dealt with or challenged at, kind of, a group level. So, that is all I wanted to say. Ok?

Tim: Ok, right. Thank you.

Interviewer Tim Spalding

Interviewee: 'Joan'

Date: 2008-11-13

Tim: Thanks for doing this for me.

Joan: It's a pleasure

Tim: So what I'm interested in is talking to you about your experience of this group where you've been in conflict with the leader; the identified leader or somebody who tried to take leadership?

Joan: It was the identified leader

Tim: Ok

Joan: But the way the group had ………………. formed, was that there was a small group of them that had heard about the idea… I mean, obviously, em, well they'd heard about the idea and they'd pulled themselves together to make it happen in the area. And…… the particular woman that … that … caused friction was one of those core people initially; and she remained so, she. It was sort of like an assumed leadership. Do you know what I mean?

Tim: So … she wasn't elected as a leader?

Joan: Well, she was, she was

Joan: She was, ok

Tim: But, when you say it was an assumed leader, what do you mean by that?

Joan: What I mean by that was that there wasn't …. I suppose the group probably felt like there wasn't any other option when they first 'cause, like. When I joined we were all sort of new, right, and she was one of the older ones; and I suppose people felt she knew what was going on and whatever so she was the logical … That's what I mean by assumptions; and it wasn't even a formal; there was nothing formal about. It became formal, but it was like, "oh do you want to do it? Your grand", so her name was written down. Like the infrastructure was there but it wasn't really done.

Tim: Yeah, I understand, I've seen that happen

Joan: All the time, yeah. It was like a nice little group of people that, you know, …. wanted to get involved in something that they had value out of and she'd been a part of it all along

Tim: So was this in Canada or Australia,

Joan: No, no, no, this was in New Zealand actually

Tim: In New Zealand, Ok

Joan: But I had been; I had been a member of the LETS system in Cairns, Northern Queensland. And I'd been the co-ordinator for that for a number of years.

Tim: Uhuh, So, you'd some experience in that

Joan: I was very familiar with the system, you know. And so when we moved to New Zealand and it happened to be in this town as well we joined, so ……..

Tim: Ok. So, can you tell me about what happened when, in this conflict?

Joan: Well, it was just. I have to say that the conflict was sort of ongoing, you know; in terms of ……………….. The conflict really lay with the fact, I suppose, she…. Well, it got down to this; it was this basic. People would join as members, or whatever, and they'd be offering services and whatever. But what happened was. Or they might be offering products or whatever. But what happened was, because she was the first point of contact, she'd get in and……… buy what they were offering….. right. So basically, that's what was happening; she was getting in before everyone.

Tim: She was cornering the market?

Joan: She was cornering the market, right [laughter]

Tim: [laughter]

Joan: And in her mind, she had it justified because, you know, it was giving these brand new people Green Dollars to spend straight away and they felt like they had something to offer and all that sort of stuff, right.

Tim: Ok

Joan: But she did actually take. I mean it was grand when they had sort of you know, ongoing. Obviously you join, and you have ongoing things, but some people would come into the system and maybe sell a car. Like, for example, she bought a car, right. And that didn't even go into the offering for anyone else. She was in there and got it before anyone else. And that was really sort of where…. the shit hit the fan and that sort of…

Tim: Right, so when you say, the shit hit the fan, what happened?

Joan: Well, what happened was, I spoke up, basically, I sort of put out, and I sort of tried to raise it a wee bit in terms of, "is this right?" And a few other things had happened, similar, where

164

she had purchased other things. But when that happened, I just lost the bottle basically at a meeting and just said, you know, this; in terms of the values; just challenged her and everyone else in the group for not saying anything and putting up with it

Tim: Ok, so the other people were putting up with it and you challenged her on this. And what happened after that? What panned out?

Joan: Well, …….. I left. I just sort of said, I'm not going to be involved if it's like this; it's unethical and it's, you know, it's not good for who we are and blah, blah, blah. And a number of things I shouldn't have said, you know. As in not great for relationships type building things, you know.

Tim: Right

Joan: Like. For <u>me</u> the Green Dollar system, a lot of that's about moving away from traditional economic systems, right, and there's a value, there's a particular value base that we had when we set up the system in Australia we had lots of conversations about how do you value services and products; and all this sort of stuff. And we wrote a constitution around not having it valued like normal society would; so if you came in as a doctor and were offering your services as a doctor you wouldn't be getting paid any more than someone who made cakes or something, right? So we had conversations like this and that's how we set up our system in Australia. Now they hadn't put that in the constitution in New Zealand but they were espousing that…. that's what they were saying they were about, right?

Tim: Right

Joan: So I said lots of things about, "well no you're not, you're just operating as a business and your like, you know………………… the CEO, getting your [word]". You know, all that sort of carry on. So I left. And said I didn't want to be a part of it; then was con-, like, convinced to come back, basically, so….

Tim: So you went back in?

Joan: The relationships were not, you know. I'd made a mess of the relationships, by that stage.

Tim: You had?

Joan: Hmm [agreeing], well just ……………….. because I'd said stuff like that; that she couldn't deal with. Her and her husband were part of it; it wasn't just her

Tim: And so what; how did it; you went back in and what happened then?

Joan: Em…………….[sigh]…………….. Em, well I just; I was there. I mean it was pointed out and em ………………. there was an agreement, really, from our conversation that it wasn't ok, you know, that, that, if you like, that behaviour was not ok; not my behaviour; her buying things, blah, blah, blah, was not ok. Em, so really there was a conversation around that. She said

that she did it for the reasons that I said, and so really, …………..that…………felt like for me…………………like a load of bullshit basically; you know, I thought that was just her covering up for her {behaviour}

Tim: {Her explanation}

Joan: but the others accepted that, because they were happy to have her on the board, but she did a lot of the work….

Tim: {Yeah I was wondering what, why}

Joan: {She did a lot of the administration and that}, right? So that's really why they were happy to keep her there, because they didn't want to be bothered with all the administration and she was happy enough to do it all. Right? And because…. And I mean, <u>in my mind</u>, she was happy enough to do it all because she could hide things and manipulate. I didn't trust her by that stage, you know [words]

Tim: So, you weren't being supported by anybody in this?

Joan: Well, people were – yes – but, I mean …………………. People were …………………………………………… probably less cynical about her than I was …………………………….. Em, this group of people, right. I mean you're talking about a group of people on the [Name] Peninsula of New Zealand. So a lot of them had been in communes for, like, twenty years and all this sort of. You know they sort of just like wanted to chill out, didn't want to deal with any of the …………………… issues, in terms of managing things. Do you know what I mean, like? They just wanted to – an easy life, like. They were happy to be a member of the co-ordinating group because they thought it was valuable and that there was a group of people that were there; but they didn't really want to <u>do anything</u>. Does that make sense?

Tim: And you did?

Joan: I did. Well I wanted it to be <u>right</u>, you know.

Tim: You said that you'd been running one in Australia

Joan: In Australia, yeah, right. Myself and a fellow, another guy, Malcolm, had been the main co-ordinators. It started before us by a friend of mine, Richard, had started it. And he was fantastic in terms of the energy and getting people involved and stuff; but administration and all that sort of stuff, he was just a nightmare and so he ….. sort of …..encouraged me to come on board as the co-ordinator. I did that. And then Malcolm came on and shared the role as co-ordinator. It was voluntary; it wasn't a paid role. And I did that for, I don't know, two or three years.

Tim: So when you came into the one in New Zealand; you were coming in with a lot of experience {of how it worked, and all that sort of thing}

Joan: {Yeah, yeah]}

Tim: So what was it about her that really upset? It was a clash of your values with her values? Was that where it came from?

Joan: Well, I suppose, yes, fundamentally, because …………………………. because she was doing things that I thought went against em,…………….. the way that it should have been. I mean, the group; they were all in it because of the value base; it was the same idea in terms of getting away from the system, right? And working as a community to support one another and to provide services and whatever. And of course a lot of the people – not all of them – but a lot of the people would have; low income earners, you know. And so it was <u>great</u> to be able to get honey from your man down the road and have your woman to provide you with fresh veggies from the garden, and stuff like that, you know; it was fantastic. And, I mean, that's what it was all about, fundamentally. Anything could go into the system and ideally that's what we wanted, you know, we wanted the dentists and whatever

Tim: It should have everything in it

Joan: Yeah, and for it to work in society you need everything, right?

Tim: And, so was this one working? Did it work?

Joan: Well, it was working {for the members}

Tim: {so it was working ok?}

Joan: <u>Oh god yeah</u>. <u>Fabulous LETS system; fabulous LETS system,</u> right. <u>Lots </u>of members; {<u>lots </u>of activity}

Tim: {Yeah, you were saying there were over 200 people}

Joan: {Yeah, we used} to have a market every month. And that of course, drew new members and people came and bought on Green Dollar and then shared, and whatever. It was <u>fantastic</u>. <u>Really, really</u> good system in terms of people being able to utilise it add value to their lives. So it <u>did work</u> in that way.

Tim: So, what, what, was, was, was her behaviour having any effect; negative effect on it?

Joan: Em ………………………………………………………… was it having a negative? Well, it's hard for me to say <u>no!</u> [Laughter]

Tim: [Laughter]

Joan: [Laughing] Do you know what I mean, in all honesty

Tim: I am asking you in all honesty

Joan: In all honesty, it's hard for me to say no, because, em, I felt that that stuff ……. damaged the fundamental values of what it's about, right? And I would be a bit of an idealist – myself ………. Em …… How it created the damage. I suppose, because. For me it's that, you know, there is this damage done to what it's truly about, you know. And for me it was, you know, it was being run like; it was starting to be run like; people were falling into the normal <u>traps</u> of, if you like …………………….. I don't know; our money based system, you know, where they could consume more and more because it was available, and that sort of stuff, right? Em, and that's what she was doing. You know, I mean, she …………………….. yeah, so

Tim: So it was a clash of principles from your

Joan: It was a clash of principles. But I felt that …… it's not just the principle ….. I felt

Tim: yeah, I'm wondering if there's something more about her or anything more about her that….?

Joan: Well. Because she was dishonest. She was doing that stuff. She knew it and blatantly lied and pretended it was all – you know what I mean?

Tim: Yeah, I hear what you're saying

Joan: And you couldn't, you couldn't have an honest conversation with her about it, you know. Because, I had tried. I had tried to say, well you know, "don't you think that this is blah, blah, blah and how does that look?" I'd tried to do all that. But she would just fob it off. She was very ………….. I'm trying to think……………… She was very clever at being ………… She was a manipulator …………. She was a manipulator, yeah

Tim: Ok……. And ………………………………….. Do you think that? What effect did it have on the group? You're saying it didn't really – it kept going.

Joan: It didn't have an effect on.. Well,

Tim: It was working ok?

Joan: It was working grand in terms of the members and people joining and all of that stuff, right?

Tim: In terms of; so is that, like, in terms of a turnover?

Joan: In terms of a turnover, if you like; and, and for me – turnover's not a great word but,

Tim: I know but it is turnover

Joan: In terms of people having access to things that added value to their lives. In New Zealand, right, you don't have – I mean, alright, there's a social welfare system but it's shite in comparison to here, right. You still got to pay to go to the doctor; there's no subsidy to go to the dentist, right. So if you want to go to the dentist – and right now in New Zealand, to go to the dentist will cost you anywhere between 70 and 120 dollars, right? And if you're on a benefit and all you're getting in the week is 100 dollars, right, to be able to go to the dentist and pay in Green Dollar was just amazing – to have that added value. And we did, we had a dentist on the system; we had a doctor and a herbologist; and it was; we had some great services in that system, right. Em, mechanics. Those people who, you know, when you're on a low income and your car stuffs up, you know; it's scary; where's the frigging money going to come from. So it really worked, because people could have access to that, you know. And people didn't over use it, really, except of Patricia.

Tim: Ok

Joan: There was the odd person that you'd sort of – but you're always going to get that, you're always going to get someone; like within a system. We used to have lots of conversations; well how do you manage that; what do you do with a member who buys, buys, and doesn't, but …….. It's all just made up anyway, Tim, in my world [laughter] in my world we just make up money anyway, do you know what I mean? Money's just a made up concept

Tim: Yes, yes, I understand

Joan: Green Dollars is exactly the same really

Tim: It's just the level of control you have over the making of it

Joan: It is but I never really worried about it; I just thought let people just, sort of, buy away, d'you know, as long as you can see that there's some commitment that they will provide as well for people, if they can

Tim: Ok, so. I'm interested here in how it affected you, Patricia was it, and other people within the group; in terms of how the group, not necessarily the output or the throughput of Green Dollars or whatever, but the group itself and the way the relationships, the functioning, the dynamic of the group. How did it effect you; Patricia; and the others?

Joan: Well………………. I don't really know how it affected Patricia because she just wasn't really very honest about it, right. And for me there was the anger, and what goes with that, and the annoyance and the frustration, being tired, you know, and that; fighting; messing your head up with bullshit, you know. And I spent, you know, I used to tie myself in knots about it. I wouldn't anymore. I mean I'm, do you know what I mean? Back then I didn't have, sort of, the tools to manage it as well as I do now, in terms of being annoyed with some one and let it, letting it go, basically, you know. And I used to get, I was a bit like a dog with a bone about it, you know, because, I suppose I valued the system so much and … em…. I felt very strongly about it, I really did, so, you know; tired, angry, annoyed, that sort of carry on, you know. Em, and; amazingly the group hung in there, you know.

Tim: Ok, so what was it that

Joan: [interrupts] It was a very – because Patricia did everything …….. do you know what I mean, they didn't, the other members didn't really have to ….

Tim: Have to do anything…

Joan: No, they didn't have to do anything, so it was just, I don't know. I mean they'd come and do things on, like, market day and stuff, you know, that, the hands on stuff; but in terms of the mechanics of making sure that, em, trades were logged and all that sort of stuff, and, em, applying for funding and all that sort of carry on, em, Patricia did all of that. Patricia was quite happy to do it.

Tim: And did you do any of that kind of work?

Joan: Never did for Patricia, no

Tim: Ok, {so she did all of the}

Joan: {I offered but, it was, she just} found a way to avoid having me help her.

Tim: And how long were you a member of it?

Joan: In that group, just for a year and a half

Tim: Ok, right

Joan: Then I joined the one in New Plymouth and left that one behind. Because they are local economic systems, they're not national or

Tim: Yeah, I know, yeah. I do know that. I've never been part of one but I have thought of getting one going

Joan: Yeah, well let's talk about it

Tim: Yeah, we can talk about that when we've finished [laughter]

Joan: [laughter]

Tim: [laughing] I don't want to have to transcribe all that

Joan: [laughing] No, no, no

Tim: And, do you know did it, did it… Because I'm interested; in when people have a clash with the leader and does it affect the group, and does it affect the functioning of the group in a negative way, {and you're saying}

Joan: {Well it did, it did Tim} I mean, the group – because……. People withdrew more and more, you know what I mean, and let her have more and more control. That's what happened with that group basically.

Tim: You don't know what happened after you left; you haven't heard of it?

Joan: I have, I have. The shit hit the fan with other people after I left

Tim: Ok, ok

Joan: But she was around. I don't know how it stands now. We're talking about, well that's eight years ago now for me; no longer than that. But whatever. I don't know what's going on now but probably about four years after I left, she left. But it continued and somebody else took over and whatever. Em, but, it was continually. I mean there was someone else, basically, who came in and took my role in terms of……..

Tim: Challenging her

Joan: Challenging her, you know

Tim: And so when she left, did somebody come in and take her role again and; in the same manner?

Joan: No, no, no, no, no, it was different. But……….. I mean ………… like I said…. She put a lot of work into it; she really did. And I'm not going to take that away from her. It's because of Patricia that the monthly markets went ahead; that there was so many members; that there was so much   available;   that   jobs   were   done;   you   know.   Em,   now ……………………………………………… You could arr – I mean, and one of the things that was said around that was that - by one of the other members - was that, well she was able to because – Patricia had come to New Zealand wealthy, right. So her and her husband had moved to New Zealand for a change of lifestyle and had, you know, ………. arrived with enough cash to buy a house and rental properties and stuff like that, and so they didn't, they weren't in it, if you like, ….. because they needed to be, like other people. So she didn't have to work and he didn't have to work, so they had the full time – that was her focus.

Tim: That could be her hobby, like?

Joan: Well, it was – it became her job, right.

Tim: Ok, but unpaid

Joan: It was unpaid. All of it was unpaid. But she had the…. She had the time to do it; whereas everyone else was part work or run their hobby farms or… and nobody had the time like she had, if you like, to do it. So ………. in one way the group was lucky; because she really got it going, in terms of members …… but the impact, of course, was – I mean, I'm a great believer that people should get involved in things for their own – <u>yes</u> for what they can offer but also for their growth and development as well. And what it meant with that group was that people weren't given the opportunity to grow and develop. Like, in Cairns, we would bring people in; I'd train them around the administration and the office. We had a roster system, you know, that sort of stuff. So it meant that people gained skills by being, you know, like as a part of the group as well, you know.

Tim: So, when you came in and here was somebody in what had been your role in Cairns, as it were, but {doing it in a different way.}

Joan: {A very different way}

Tim: How did you feel about that?

Joan: Well, I'm open to things being done in a different way; I don't mind, you know. If it works, it works.

Tim: Right

Joan: You know, em. I mean I did, I mean, obviously

Tim: [interrupts] But you were saying about how; you know your ideas about bringing people in, getting them involved, letting

Joan: [interrupts] I did try to suggest all of that. And what would happen was, yes, it was a great idea, you know, everyone would agree it was a great idea, and there'd be some effort put into putting a system in place and because everything was done in Patricia's house, right; so the office was in Patricia's house too

Tim: Yeah

Joan: Ok, so. So all the systems would be put in place and whatever, and then she'd just; things would just happen, and it wouldn't happen like. You know, someone would be rostered on and then ……….. Patricia would have to go somewhere and when they could be there, she couldn't be there, and …… It was very manipulative in that way, you know. There was the odd person who, sort of, came in and did a day or whatever, but, em ………. You know what it's like with volunteers; they need to feel like they've really done something that's of value or else it will peter out if they're just licking envelopes and that's not of any…

Tim: Packing bags and whatever

Joan: Yeah, so what I heard is that when people would go in they were given jobs that weren't really ……………. it was like trying to find work for them. You know, it was more of a hassle for her, than anything, so it didn't work. So I did try to bring that element into it, but …… that……. it just didn't work and that's why I think it didn't work.

Tim: You were saying she was manipulative. What else was it about her?

Joan: [very softly and quietly] She was very nice

Tim: [laughter]

Joan: She was very nice

Tim: You sound like you like her?

Joan: I did like her initially. She's got some great things. But I can't get over that, that……. I could never trust her, you know, because of what I've. At first you meet her and she's <u>welcoming</u> and she's <u>warm</u> and, you know like, she's one of these, I can't even remember what the type; but she'll hook you in with this person and hook you in. She'll support you to get going. And I was new to the community, new to New Zealand, you know. So, em, <u>really helpful</u>, you know. ……………. But it was all control; it was all……. You know it was like this …………

Tim: She needed to be in control

Joan: Yeah, she really had to be in control. And she was so <u>good</u> at it. And, <u>really</u>, I cannot believe that she was unconscious of it. Maybe she was. Maybe she

Tim: Well, you tried to tell her? Or you tried to communicate it to her? Although you said you didn't do it in, maybe, the best possible way

Joan: When   she   bought   the   car   for   the   son   I   didn't   do   it   in   a   very …………………………………….

Tim: What happened? Did you call her names or?

Joan: Oh no! Not at all. I was just angry. And mad. I was just angry. No, I didn't call her names or anything like that. I just, sort of, I just, things like – "I felt like you weren't applying to the values of the system", I wasn't ……………. I don't know the right words. I felt she was manipulating for her own good, you know and "we may as well go and join the national frigging bank" and you know like, "and get out loans, like" and "why don't we start charging people interest" and you know, [laughter] that sort of carry on

Tim: You went a little over the top?

Joan: I went really mad. I was really mad and I went a little over the top. Em, but I had tried previously. Even one to one, I'd sort of said to her, like. But it was done so subtly, Tim, you know, as well, you know. You're meeting regularly; you say you'll do this and that; and then nothing will happen of it. You know if you're one to one it's… I don't know ………….. it's all so ……………… So, …………… she may have been operating unconsciously. Even though I did say, "look, you know, I don't think this is right", and all that sort of stuff. And, em, …………..and, and……… "how does this look to other people in terms of blah, blah, blah?", and all this sort of stuff. I had tried that prior to that meeting. But ……………..she always had a…… I mean it was her line was, "well, I'm just trying to", and you know, very nice; just this; she had this way about her, you know. Em, quite a powerful woman: "I'm just trying to keep the membership going; and if people feel like they've got dollars to spend straight away, then they will; and they'll really feel part of the community…" And that's a great story; right? [chuckles] And it really worked for her, you know……………

Tim: In a way, it's hard to argue against it either

Joan: Well it is hard to argue against it 'cause it's right! I mean, when people join they want to see it's going to work for them and how it's going to work for them; of course. But, there are other ways to do it. You can get them hooked up with someone. And if you are – and Patricia was in contact with people all the time – and, I mean, we used to do it amongst ourselves; we'd know of someone who knew something and some [word] who wanted something, you know, maybe someone was building their house and wanted a particular skill. So; and we would actively go out and seek people with those skills to come in; and so straight away they could start contributing and offering things and stuff like that. And to me …. that's a better way of doing it, you know. And some of that went on. But, because Patricia was the co-ordinator and she organised the membership and everything; everything went through her …………………

Tim: Yeah; no, I can see the structure of it, you know, yeah, yeah

Joan: The phone number was her house. You know what I mean, like. There was no avoiding [laughter]

Tim: [laughter]

Joan: Yeah, so. Like I say, I was only a part of it for a year and a half. Which is not really that long ……………………… but, it was not just a healthy sort of group

Tim: Yeah, yeah

Joan: I suppose, fundamentally, like you're saying: it was a clash of values and principles ……. And she was a manipulative cow!

Tim: [laughter] How would you describe; how do you think she, em, saw you?

Joan: At first I think; oh well I suppose she saw me as a pain in the arse … in the end ………. You know ….. and ………… I mean, Patricia; I mean, no one likes anger and aggression. Well,

my experience is most people don't like anger and aggression, right. And when they're faced with it they …. you know. And, em ………….. So she would have got that from me, you know. Not for the first, I don't know, six months or so. But when I started to really understand what was going on, and tried to get more involved, and, you know, tried to make changes and stuff like that that I felt would have been more useful and it just wasn't happening. I was getting more frustrated and she picked up on that. I mean she's ……. sensitive, like, in that way. She has to be, because if you couldn't pick up on the way people are; how would you manipulate them? [laughing] That's really cynical!

Tim: [laughing] I'd never thought of that, that you'd need to be sensitive to help people or if you are going to manipulate them.

Joan: You do, you <u>have to</u> know how people operate. I mean, that's what I picked up on there. She was <u>so</u> good with people in that way. Do you know what I mean, like? Like, she <u>won</u> people over ………

Tim: Right

Joan: ……. in just her way of being. So then people would be doing things, you know like ……………………… And before they knew, they'd done it like. Because she was …. she was very good at it.

Tim: Ok, {so she saw you as}

Joan: {in the nicest possible way, right} You know, with the whole <u>hippy look</u> going on …. Do you know what I mean like? They'd – the whole environment looked like she was you know ………. the earth …. loving goddess

Tim: [chuckle]

Joan: And yet underneath was this …………. person that was operating like …….. like a bank manager ……….

Tim: Right, ok, so she was giving you a double message and, well you say, might say, …… that she was manipulating; that it was all a show or something?

Joan: Yeah, but she believed it! She was…………… She ……………….. I don't know, it worked for her somehow, you know, but ……………. I don't know. I mean I suppose as some level, she; her and her husband had a very successful business in Canada; so they were; there was that <u>basis</u>, you know. And she knew how to run businesses and whatever, and …….. So that's obviously why she was great at the administration and all that sort of stuff, too. But, she'd win people over by the whole environment and she – they had this fabulous house…. We called it the beehive; it was a round house; it was the most beautiful house, right by the river; spectacular, spectacular, <u>beautiful</u>, you know and em …………….. she was very welcoming. Everything was done in her house, you know. All the meetings and everything were held in her house, so ……………..

Tim: yeah ……… yeah ………… yeah

Joan: ………. no shoes, and candles ………….. the open fire…. I mean, the whole thing ………… you'd go in; it was like you were ……………… <u>seduced</u> by the environment, you know …………. I know that sounds really cynical {but}

Tim: {No, no, yeah, yeah}

Joan: {It really was} just right there……

Tim: No I can hear it in you, that you were seduced by it {like, it was lovely} and

Joan: {Yeah, god it was} It was a great environment. You'd sit – it was the sort of place you'd go to and you'd think …….. [sigh] ………….. ah, I could stay here. You know, just a really nice environment; hammocks; and the dogs running around in the little orchard beside the house… You know, just <u>beautiful</u> [laughter]

Tim: [laughing] yeah, right

Joan: [laughing] all the organic food and you know; honey sourced from the local beekeeper and. That was normal around there anyway; you got all that sort of stuff anyway… from people, you know. The whole community was a bit like that anyway; the environment, in that area… [softly] I don't know why I left, but I did………. [laughs] That's it

Tim: All right, that's it. Great

Joan: That's it. It's a pleasure

Tim: I'll just switch this thing off

Interviewer Tim Spalding

Interviewee: 'Ellen'

Date: 2008-11-19

Tim: Ok, Thanks a million for doing this, great

Ellen: No bother

Tim: What I'm interested in is your experience of this group where there was conflict with the leader – it was the identified leader?

Ellen: Oh yeah, surely; in post and, em, any other way you'd want to see it frankly [laughs]

Tim: Ok, well you can tell me a bit more about that. Ok, so, yeah, it's the conflict – I'm looking at the issues you had with that person …………….. it was just one person, was it?

Ellen: Yeah

Tim: Ok, so can you tell me how it began or where it came from, or just the basics of how it happened?

Ellen: [sigh] …………….. I think, probably it's sort of a situation of, em, over time realising just, sort of, em, - to say he liked to have a hierarchical system where he was in control is to almost diminish [laugh] it, you know; to make it seem simple; when really it wasn't at all. Em, it wasn't just the relationship between myself and him – I was the first one hired for the facility; so I spent a lot of time; I worked with him the most, em, prob, yeah, I'd say I worked with him the most.

Tim: So you started together?

Ellen: Yeah,

Tim: Ok

Ellen: And, em, it became …. Obvious over, over a period of time that it wasn't – I can handle – sometimes hierarchy is the best reality for something; I can handle that when it has purpose in it; intent. Em, and it wasn't just about hierarchy, it was about things; it was about character traits, really, when it came down to it. Em, like the fact that he couldn't, em, accept a good idea unless it was his good idea……………………. em, kind of a situation. You'd, em, you'd put an idea on the table, and, em, he'd, em, dismiss it as a bad idea. Three months later, six months later, he'd put it back on the table; same idea; but now it was his idea and it was a good idea. And it got to the point where we all, em, recognised it, that, and there were those that that drove absolutely mad. Em….em….. I just got to the point with it where – a good idea is a good idea; I don't really

give a shit where it comes from. So it doesn't matter to me if he needs to own it, em, all I care about is a good system or something is put in place. So fine, grand, if he has to own it; let him own it, you know. But at the same time what it did was delay things, um, um, ridiculously delay a good idea happening, so that there could be the time for him to reinvent it as his own idea. I mean, just madness. Stuff that was just absolutely mad. Em ………………………… I suppose ……. that was one of the biggest things. He was also a very rude person; just in general. Work, work was the centre of his universe; and he presumed that work was the centre of everyone's universe. Em,…… literally, the day my mother died he asked me to come into work ……………… No sense of ……..

Tim: Not very sensitive!

Ellen: No! That's putting it mildly! This man had no sense of, em, of, of any, people, emotions people might have in life. Yet, yet! The thing he created – and this is what, you know, kept me there for as long as I did – the thing he was able to create was absolutely very sensitive to the young people involved in it.

Tim: Ok. So he was very sensitive with them {words}

Ellen: {Yeah! He actually} but not with the, not with staff at all. You know. And, he, what was created was a school based on behaviour modification. And really small group realities with, em, em, - Of course the big thing is that these were all incarcerated youth and there was a huge spectrum of em, of, em, of educational attainment but the vast majority had massive disabilities around learning; or had not been at school. We worked with kids that, that, we literally had a sixteen year old that could not recognise the alphabet. That is the one, sort of, end to that. And not to mention the, you know, the, em, emotional, em, stuff – baggage – coming with a lot of these kids. Some of these kids really should have been in, eh, mental healthcare facilties, you know, there would have been a few that should have been actually in mental healthcare facilites.

Tim: Right

Ellen: Em, there was great sensitivity to that. And to, em, work in the programme; because it did work for these kids.

Tim: Did he have direct contact with them of {was his role; overseeing others doing that}

Ellen: {He wasn't, no. Exactly, yes, that's right, that's right}. And where he did have contact - it was, it was kind of like, you know, the weekend parent coming, kind of thing. He could be great, and generous, and em, because he wasn't dealing on a minute by minute basis with, em, with issues, you know; he wasn't in the classroom ….. very often; he wasn't dealing with disciplinary issues, em, others were dealing with those.

Tim: Ok

Ellen: So he could be the great and the good, really, at the end of the day. But the system itself was frankly based on sound thinking.

Tim: And he developed this system?

Ellen: Yes

Tim: Ok

Ellen: Very, hugely, he did.

Tim: Ok

Ellen: Of course, he didn't invent, you know, behaviour mod or anything. But applied as it <u>was,</u> under those circumstances, yes. He was instrumental in setting up a number of schools in Southern California doing, operating from this model. Em …… em ……. Yeah. And he was good at it! And I ……….. later worked in, em, em a couple of other educational facilities attached to organisations that worked with incarcerated youth and they, they, they were nowhere near, nowhere near

Tim: Ok

Ellen: {he was probably}

Tim: {So he was a great} educationalist

Ellen: <u>Absolutely! Absolutely, absolutely!</u>

Tim: So, then, was it him, then, that really got you? And how did the conflict; well how did the conflict actually progress to the point where it became intense, or …….?

Ellen: <u>He was just so abrasive!</u>

Tim: Ok

Ellen: Like twenty four – seven abrasive. He, there was never a moment when the man was not abrasive. He was <u>constantly</u> abrasive on <u>every possible level</u> that one could be abrasive. Em….

Tim: What was that abrasiveness like?

Ellen: Em, [sigh], I know that there are people who find me really, you know, [giggle] on the aggressive side of life, but I'm like <u>Playtime!</u> [claps hands] in comparison to this guy, you know. Just everything that came out of his mouth, em, <u>jarred</u> people. And I'm talking about <u>straight Americans</u>, you know, who would tend towards straight into things anyway, you know, of being really <u>direct</u> about stuff. Em, <u>judgemental</u>, em, em, em,……. He ordered people around. He expected people to be at his beck and call. Almost a kind of servitude, em, he expected a kind of servitude. Em, Em, while you know – generally speaking Americans tend to work punctuality anyway; you know, it was, it was; people, for the most part, turned up on time – but literally

something like three minutes and he'd be on somebody's back about timekeeping. Literally that sort of, em, timeframe, we're talking about. Em………. But the biggest part was not being able to em ……………. recognise other people's, sort of, skills – what they, sort of, brought to the table.

Tim: Ok, so you felt that he didn't recognise your skills {words}

Ellen: {Oh no, mine, other people's} Em, em,

Tim: And how did you respond to that? What happened then?

Ellen: What………………… Initially, it was just a pain in the head …… in attempting to get certain things done ….. like …. it turned out to be a handy thing that I had some skills around - with Spanish. He had not recognised – and for a very long time, would not recognise – that he actually needed bi-lingual people. This was an essential. We had, em, em, clients who were non-English speaking! Simple as! you know. Em, and, eh, that became a really big thing we fought about, was the fact that there was the need. A – there was the need for somebody else, em, em, to be working in the environment; my sort of, like my. I was doing the job of two or three people. I was doing the job of three people. By the time I left, there were three people doing the job that I did … for a long time. And that came through arguing with him about it.

Tim: Ok, so you argued with him {you actually confronted him?}

Ellen: {Yes, I confronted him} You know, I argued with him and, em, you know

Tim: How did that go?

Ellen: He was so unused to it ……… anybody arguing with him, that I think it really, em, put him off his game, so to speak. He, em, he, you know. I think, I think, I reckon he tried to sack me twice ………..

Tim: You reckon he tried to sack you twice.

Ellen: I that's probably what he was getting at. [Laughter] And I looked at him and said, "No" [Laughter]. You know, em, "No, not over this, you know. No, that's ridiculous, don't be ridiculous"

Tim: Right

Ellen: And, em, you know. And then again I also knew he also had a real, sort of, cheap streak, right. And so, em, if he could save a buck; he would do it. And in America, when you sack somebody, you, the employer, has to pay a portion of their benefits ………………………

Tim: Right, ok

Ellen: So, you know, from working with him, like, you know, over a number of years, I realised that he was never going to sack me, really. He might, he would try to pressure me to leave, but he would never sack me because that would mean he would have to pay – and he was never going to do it, you know, em, you know, kind of a situation. Em, and but, and really. I remember once his business partner, em, they were having a meeting, and, em, he said to me, em – and your man was there. He obviously had a, em, similar relationship with him as I did, you know. Em, he looked at me and goes, "My god, you've been working with him for how long; is it two years?", it was something like two years at that point, and he goes, "Do you realise you're, you've worked with him the longest in his entire life? No one else has ever worked with him for as long as two years"

Tim: Right. So, do you think that he, in some way, was in a good relationship with you; or got off with you in some way; or found that he could work with you; or {words}?

Ellen: [interrupts] {<u>We actually worked really well together</u>}

Tim: {the relationship}

Ellen: <u>Yeah, we actually worked really – it was a fraught</u> relationship; but we actually did really good things together. And I think on <u>some level</u> he had to – because he was actually a practical guy on a level. Do you know what I mean? He had to have recognised that. He would never voice it. Em, like that, he wouldn't sack me. You know. He, ah, eh, em, em, But he didn't like that I did challenge him. He <u>really</u> didn't like it. This was a <u>big deal</u> in his universe. He was the boss. And em, eh, you know. And because his work was his life, you know, that was a big deal, that was, that was, <u>him</u>!

Tim: And how do you think he saw you?

Ellen: Oh, that's a curious one

Tim: If you were to put yourself into his shoes; what did he see?

Ellen: I, I, I think I surprised him over and over and over and over again because, em ……. For all his care of these really marginalised kids, em, he saw people in caricature. Like, like, I remember, at one point we had to share an office – which was <u>hell</u> – I had to share an office with him initially, and it was truly hell. And, I remember, em, he, em, he met with this one teacher. And he used to quiz people on their personal life ……………….. Which I found really irritating, (A), and, em, and not his bloody business, you know. So I would tell him to, to, you know. I'd get – I'm not one of those people that has much to <u>hide</u>, generally, you know. So, initially it didn't; wasn't put off by him. But over time, it just became intrusive, frankly. And, em, he had this meeting with this one teacher; and I was in the office working as well; and he spent, I don't know how long of that meeting quizzing her about her personal life. And, em, the one salacious bit of information he got out of the whole thing, basically, was, is that she was a single parent, right, with, like, three kids….. And, em, they were with three different fathers. And, after she left he said, he was, "Can you believe it?", em, em, "a white woman from the mid-west with three kids, with three different fathers!" And I was like, "You racist <u>twat!</u>" Which is basically what; I

probably didn't say "twat", but I did give him loads about how racist he; you know, how, you know, "Is that all you see of that woman?"

Tim: Right

Ellen: And, "That's supposed to be something only, you know, em, uneducated <u>black</u> women do; is it?"

Tim: Right

Ellen: "That happens in their lives; is that it?"

Tim: He was white, was he?

Ellen: Uh hm. And, you know. And …….. wouldn't ………….. wouldn't put in place – There were certain things, because there was cost attached to them. Wouldn't put in place certain security issues

Tim: Security issues, meaning?

Ellen: Security; you know; sort of, em……. We needed things like panic buttons

Tim: Oh right, for your safety

Ellen: Yes, do you know. We needed stuff like panic buttons; we needed good intercom systems; we needed, you know, we needed things like that …… to happen – and he wouldn't spend the money on it.

Tim: Right.

Ellen: Which was a dangerous thing and it did, em, it, and I left not long after a particular incident, where …….. it was sort of a combined thing. He, sort of, he gradually after about a year realised that there was more than one job in my job, you know, and hired this totally inappropriate person, em, for the location. She was absolutely petrified ……… of every kid that walked in the door of …. She literally shook ……………… from fear. How this woman got up every morning and went to this job …… I'll never know. She must have <u>needed</u> to be there, em, because she was petrified; the entire time. Eight hours a day that woman was petrified; of being there……… And this one day, this, em, this kid came in, raging, as they do, and, em, and, with that. We would keep – one of the things he was big on was, you know, celebrating the kids' birthdays; so there was always this, like, big bread knife in the, in our office, the little kitchen unit, right. Kid comes in, snatches up the bread knife. That's it. He's going to stab this teacher to death, right. Em, and ………… the kid goes running out the door to stab the teacher. I'm like, get the phone, ring, get the phone, ring, you know, ring the security. I go out the door; just as that, he comes back in with the knife. Now he's going to stab us, you know. And he can't get to the teacher; the teacher he's looking for is already gone. He's back in the door. Em, basically had to disarm the kid, em, with, with a blade about that long [demonstrated the size of the knife].

And your woman, em, all she did was climb under a desk ……….. <u>She didn't even take the phone with her! I wouldn't even have minded if she took the phone with her, right? you know? but, no, she didn't take the phone with her.</u> She climbed under her desk, and I had to disarm a kid, em, with an eight inch blade; for which I am not really trained to do.

Tim: No

Ellen: Certainly not on my own. And, but, em, that's what I [noises]. No other option, you know? And, em, and, em, just after that happened, the call I had made earlier, you know, to get, sort of, security down, em, came in the door and pinned – but, you know, [laugh] it was a done deal by then, you know.

Tim: Yeah

Ellen: Kind of situation. Which was very frightening, {very frightening}

Tim: {Yeah, I can imagine}

Ellen: {I was very frightened} I vomited

Tim: {Sure, yeah}

Ellen: with the fear, you know, just afterwards. You know, that, you know, that could have been it. And, em, you know, all it would have taken; all we needed was a panic button.

Tim: Yeah, yeah

Ellen: You know? And we didn't. It's a simple mechanism. You know? That's all we needed. And then, you know, to inappropriately, you know, em …………………………… employ your woman ………………… Em, And it was so obvious she was {inappropriately employed}

Tim: {ok} So, I'm getting a picture that you had a {series of confrontations with this guy}

Ellen: {Oh, <u>millions, millions. You know</u>}

Tim: {Ok, and how did? Right}

Ellen: From small things, so, to the fact that he would walk in, in the morning, you know. We started work at seven o'clock in the morning. Em, in L.A. that's a big deal; you've already driven, or whatever, you know, an hour and a half, two hours to get – So you've been up, you know, kind of – And I used to get there at quarter to seven every morning, and get a cup of coffee, you know, and try to get my, you know, get my head together at seven o'clock in the morning. And he'd walk in at five to seven and start roaring, barking, sort of orders at, at you. You know, <u>everyone</u>, but, you know….. You know, from that level to the sort of, em, big things, yeah…

Tim: And did anybody else confront him or clash with him or …. was it you?

Ellen: They left.

Tim: They left.

Ellen: They left. It was almost a constant. One of the things I did almost constantly was recruit staff.

Tim: Ok, ok. And, so how long did you last?

Ellen: I lasted, I'd say, something like two and a half years…..

Tim: Ok. And what; how, how come you left? If that's not a silly question [laugh]

Ellen: Well, yeah, it, yeah, well. I left. I mean, I dealt with the toxic environment for, you know, eh, I wasn't confused by a year [laughter] into it, or less, how toxic it was. Em, but I wanted to, sort of, stay working in an area [clears throat] in a similar, sort of, you know, em, community voluntary, sort of reality. Not easy jobs to come by in L.A., you know, really, in the end of the day, and, basically, I was head-hunted from that job; so I took it…….. em, and moved.

Tim: Ok. The effect, then, on – I mean you were saying the school was doing really good work

Ellen: Yes.

Tim: Did the? Do you think? Or, what, or what effect do you think the conflict that you were having with him, or the conflict that was there, had on the school?

Ellen: We used to – It was really odd, em ……………….. The group of teaching staff and myself, administrative staff ………….. em …. used to – a lot of us would, on a Friday, em ………………. go out together, and get hammered, to be perfectly frank about it, get hammered, em, em, every Friday or, you know, or, a couple of Fridays a month or something…………….. And one of the ………. It was a combination of the environment itself; which was quite fraught and dangerous; em, along with the, eh, sort of, eh, bullying, eh, and harassing way that he managed the place. We [word]. And it was – and I know this sounds like some kind of overstatement but it really was not. Em, it was so bad …. that, em … it was like; when we did that, by getting together, we did it because nobody else would understand ………. It was like, em, ….. it was like, em, a war situation. It was like the only other people that is somebody else who had been to war. And we, we got together, em, and talked through both, you know both ends of that: of the mad things you had to deal with that day in relationship to the client population you were dealing with, um, alongside the, em, the madness you had to deal with, em, on an administrative level.

Tim: Do you see any connection between the, the client side, as you call it, and the administrative side, and what was happening in both?

Ellen: I, I never, at the time, made that link, em, but it obviously was his absolute, em, …. milieu, do you know what I mean; he was good at it, em, in, em, …… em. I wouldn't say that he ……. created the crazy at the, at the ground level. He didn't. We dealt with crazy kids. And, em, no matter what set you've got they still would have been the same crazy kids. Em, em, but I think there was a part of him that loved it, you know; loved having that level of crazy, you know, sort of, going. And we did talk about that. I, I, I remember this, talking about this was, em, one of those Fridays, that there were…….. there were day's you'd go in, and it was almost like you could <u>smell</u> something about to kick off; you could <u>feel</u> it. And you'd, you'd, you'd, you'd get; and it would just build in the pit of your stomach. And you'd be waiting for whatever it was that was about to pop off, to pop off. And, em, you could spend whole <u>days</u>, you know, sort of wound up with that; waiting for it to happen …………….. And how, em, how sick that was on a we, you know, talking about, how sick that was, because there was some little part that was almost, you know …. it, it got so bad that the adrenalin rush that you'd end up getting from something like that popping off becomes almost an addictive thing.

Tim: So you were getting addicted to it too?

Ellen: <u>Yeah! Oh most definitely! Absolutely!</u>

Tim: Do you think he was addicted to it?

Ellen: <u>Oh, I think he must have been</u>, you know, em

Tim: Right

Ellen: On so, em, in, in, you know, every sort of level, do you know what I mean? He <u>lived at that.</u> He <u>existed</u> at that level all the time. Everything he, he, almost, everything he did was about getting some kind of reaction from somebody. It <u>had to</u> have been. You know, em ………. Everything he did spoke to that …………. Em, ………….

Tim: Did you think that you're confronting him had any impact on him, or, what impact did it have on him?

Ellen: ………………………… I think it really did shock him. I, I, I, I, ge, ge, get a visual now of the shocked look on – because he really – most people wouldn't ……. you know ……………. I wouldn't get into an argument about it. I would just say, "<u>No</u>", You know, em, that, "No", and em "that's not going to happen because x, y, z"; "that's just not reasonable or feasible or possible", you know. And em, and em, and, that would really irritate him. Really make him angry that somebody, sort of, wasn't hopping to. Even though it would make no sense to, to, sort of, like, do that, you know, that particular. It'd usually about something; a system, a system thing that he didn't <u>actually</u> understand; the system you were working with, you know. He didn't really give a shit about how you did something. You know. It was about the output, if you get my drift? Em, em, and he, he most certainly had no sense of, say like, em, everything. One of the things I got him to do was computerise a lot of stuff. <u>Everything</u> we did – because he didn't understand computers at all; <u>at all</u>! Em,

Tim: But at a personal level, how did it affect him with you?

Ellen: ………………………………………………….

Tim: I'm wondering did he, you know, react to that? Get off on that? Enjoy it, in some way, even?

Ellen: I don't think so.

Tim: No

Ellen: You would think he would considering his person(ality) – put I don't thing he did. There was, em, you know I really don't think he did. I think he found it absolutely jarring, frankly. Because I think he would have preferred it if I did get into an argument with him. I didn't really get into argum(ents), if you get my drift, I didn't really argue with him. Em …………………………. And, eh, …………………….. you know …………..

Tim: So how did it affect you, then?

Ellen: Oh, <u>awful</u>

Tim: Ok

Ellen: I, just, I, em, …………. I became hyper-aware, most certainly, em, of, em ………………………… the community I was working and living in. Do you know what I mean? ……….em, I don't know if you do?

Tim: No, I don't, no

Ellen: Em, ………… Dangerous environment on so many levels, you know,

Tim: Where you were living?

Ellen: <u>Both</u>

Tim: Both

Ellen: Both. And em, and em, that was really frightening, you know. It was getting to the point, in relationship to sort of the environment. I was getting to the point where, em, over the course of, you know, a year, we'd maybe dealt with a thousand, eh, young people, em, and in …

Tim: Right. That's a huge throughput!

Ellen: Yes

Tim: Yeah

Ellen: Yeah. And, ……… em, ………… eh, And I was beginning to meet them out in the community. Do you know what I mean? It was getting – I was reaching that critical [laugh] mass. Even in a place the size of L.A. We are talking about in the hood, you know. I was beginning to meet them when I was out doing my shopping, you know. It was actually becoming reasonably dangerous. And, two, …… em, I have to honestly admit there was a shift in my thinking when, the day after my; I wouldn't go in the day my mother died.

Tim: Uhuh

Ellen: But I went the next day

Tim: Mmm ……mmm

Ellen: And, I was; the only rationale that I even have for doing that; is that I was still zombified. You know? And I remember being there ………………………. And we ……..em …… and …….. at one point the thought entered my brain, "what are you doing?" And, ehm, and, and turning to him and saying, "I'm leaving. You know, this is crazy!......."

Tim: {Is that when you actually handed in your notice, or…?}

Ellen: {You know, "my mother died yesterday"} That was a turning point for me, yes.

Tim: Ok

Ellen: Yeah, and I knew I had to go. Yeah. It felt abusive. Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Ellen: And of course it had been abusive the, ehm, the entire time. But, that was really, you know; that wasn't, ehm, …. debatable …… as abuse, in my head. Do you know what I mean? There were no grey areas…..

Tim: So had it seemed grey to you up to that?

Ellen: To some degree, yeah, because, do you know; you know; you might be able to dismiss the way he was as some sort of particular, you know, his own particular style of being [laugh] or whatever, or you know. And, and I think things are quite significantly different, ehm, ehm ……………………….. in terms of the whole working world in, in, in America, for the most part. You know? Ehm …… as far as he was concerned we were just, we were all expendable. You know? Ehm, [verbal noise] you know, there'd be another one to come along, when this one goes. If, emh, you know, if at two years I had worked with him the longest in his entire [laughs] working career; I think that gives [laugh] away a lot, you know. And his business partner literally looking and like, "how do you do it?", "how, how, how", you know?

Tim: How long had his business partner stayed with him?

Ellen: A long time. They had been business partners, but they, they, they……. They ran separate things. If you know what I mean? They did the same thing but they ran; they each took responsibility of different things. So they didn't spend a whole lot of time in the same room. Really. At the end of the day.

Tim: Right. Whereas, you spent a lot of time in the same room as him?

Ellen: Yeah,

Tim: Yeah, ok

Ellen: ………………….. Ehm, and there was another part of me, you know, oddly enough, that was, ehm ……………………. I don't even know how to; what would you say, strangely fond of him.

Tim: Yeah. I'm getting that. I mean you admired his abilities

Ellen: Oh, surely

Tim: But you say strangely fond – how was that?

Ellen: Because he, because was an asshole [laughter] He was truly an asshole [laughter]. You know. Absolutely an asshole. But, ehm, on, ehm. There was a part of me that really felt sorry for him; he was lonely. He was a lonely man. I mean, literally, work was everything…… And, ehm, ….. he was also gay. Ehm, and, ehm, and not exactly the most attractive gay man in the universe. Which in California, you know, is a difficult thing. Ehm, and, ehm, not the stereotypical image in California at all. You know. There were a lot; there were a number of things in his world that really would have been difficult. You know…… Ehm. He was so …………… impressed by money that, ehm, that I - This I find sad; I don't see that, do you know what I mean; that doesn't always anger me; sometimes it saddens me, and; for someone that, you know, that that's their yardstick of life, or, you know, or ehm, what they achieve, or whatever it is, you know. 'Cause it's a kind of a hollow kind of a thing, at the end of the day. And that was it. In terms of a personal life it was a bit hollow for him….. And that was really obvious………………..

Tim: And that had you feeling fond of him?

Ellen: He could also be quite funny, which I, I, you know, I do; I'm easily swayed by humour [laugh]. Yeah, he could be very funny. <u>Sarcastic</u> and, and, and <u>jabbing</u> but <u>funny</u>, you know? Em………………… but, ehm ………… You know. Yeah. …… Em, yeah….. Oddly fond of him.

Tim: And do you think he was fond of you too?

Ellen: [laughing] I think on some bizarre level, yes

Tim: Right

Ellen: On some bizarre level, yeah, I do. Otherwise, you know, em, yeah; he probably could have sacked me. You know what I mean. I'm sure that it would have made his life a whole lot easier on one level… [lights cigarette]

Tim: Ok

Ellen: I think he actually was…… you know…….em ……… Yeah. Because I did treat him like a human being! You know. Ehm…….. And would say to him, like, you know, "that's not going to", you know, "What are you at?" There were times I just, like, you know, "Are you trying to be the most unpopular person in the world, or what? What's the goal here? You're doing pretty good!" Ehm,………………

Tim: And could he hear that; when you said that sort of thing there?

Ellen: Ehm…………… You know. He would go, like, "What do you mean?" I'd sort of have to explain why he had just, you know, slammed everybody in the room, you know. Or how he had just, you know, ehm, made everybody feel about that big [demonstrated half an inch with fingers], in the room, you know, ehm……….. 'Cause he didn't seem to get it. That, sort of, interpersonal thing at all. No sense of it at all.

Tim: But. To go back. I was. I mean. You were saying he was like the weekend parent, or whatever. Did he have an ability to have a personal relationship with young people? Your clients?

Ellen: ………………He. Yeah. You know something? I'd say he did. He was able to do that somehow. Ehm. You know he was a psychologist, you know. Clinical psychologist. And he somehow <u>did</u> manage to have, ehm, ehm, ehm, an interaction when he needed – Particularly, you know, in certain, sort of, disciplinary levels, sort of, kind of thing. Or, ehm, be able to have, ehm………….. interaction with, with, yeah, young people, he did………………………….. And I learned a lot from, from, ehm, being there for a lot of that, you know, I learned a lot from that.

Tim: From…..?

Ellen: From him, yeah, that's right. I absolutely did, you know. But, ehm. Yeah! He was good at what he did on a professional level, eh, ehm, with the client. But where he interacted with adults……. ehm ………… Not good.

Tim: Right, ok.

Ellen: I'd actually be curious as to, his, you know….. <u>Not what he's doing professionally;</u> I would suspect that he would succeed, professionally, at what he did, you know, ehm. Particularly; and I'm not surprised, because really what; the way this was, sort of, structured ……… ehm ……… was that he didn't really work for the organisation. …………. He the

school; and it's like a separate entity – money making. It's like a money making branch of, of, of, this, sort of, the organisation, so to speak. And he took a cut of that.

Tim: Right

Ellen: Ehm….. And, ehm, I could see why he, you know, he would work in that sort of way. Ehm…. As opposed to be integrated in the part of an organisation. Do you know what?

Tim: Alright, ok. I'm just checking there to see if there's anything else there I can think of. …….. I think that's about it, Ellen:; that's all the questions I have

Ellen: Is that useful at all Tim?

Tim: It is in a lot of ways yeah, yeah, yeah. It is. No, it's very useful. I'm actually seeing quite a few patterns over the interviews

Ellen: Are you? Now I did do one crazy thing; do you want to hear about the crazy thing? [laughter]

Tim: Ok, tell me the crazy thing

Ellen: Because I think it sort of speaks to my fondness of him in a very strange and crazy sort of way. Ehm, when I got the new job; I had a going away do, do you know. And I got hammered. And, ehm, he eventually, you know, turned up at the do. By this point I was well, well on. And, I was just like; I remember looking at him and just saying, "Greg, you've got to change!" You know, "there's nothing else for it. If you don't change, you will die alone. But there's no need for it." You know, "Just don't do this" And of course it's a terrible thing to say to somebody, you know, on that level. But I felt the need, you know, to <u>say</u> it to him. That, what, what, did nobody have the balls to say it to him? You know? That, ehm, you know…….. "This is what happens." You know. "If you live your life in such a, sort of, acidic, sort of way", do you know, "Who's going to want to hang out with you?" "As a real friend and lover", do you know what I mean? "Who's going to want to do that? You know, you're <u>acid</u>" And I got very emotional about it, because, you know, I <u>meant it</u>, you know?

Tim: No, I can hear that, yeah, yeah

Ellen: "What are you going to do about this?" But, of course, I did it. That was my last day. Out of there! You know?

Tim: Yeah. And that was the last you seen of him?

Ellen: That was the last I saw of him.

Tim: Right

Ellen: I'd be curious. I would be curious. You know. There's a part – [laughing] I'm sure he'd run a mile if he saw me coming. [laughing] He probably wouldn't actually.

Tim: [laughing] Probably not

Ellen: Yeah. There's a part of me that would <u>love</u> to know how he's getting on.

Tim: Right

Ellen: You know. On the human, on the human side. I would be thoroughly convinced; because I have googled him, you know; that work is still going; that he's still doing that; and probably doing a very good job at it. But, you know, on a personal level; has he sorted himself out? And it used to make me - the curious part was the fact that he was, this psychologist, you know; but none of it was ever applied, you know, the other way around. It was always all, you know, external………………

Tim: Ok, I'll switch this thing off

Ellen: Ok, right

Tim: Where's the stop? There!

Appendix 2

Participant Information Sheet

Title: An exploration of leadership conflicts in groups

Researcher: Tim Spalding

I am studying for a Masters of Arts in Conflict Facilitation and Organisational Change with the Process Work Institute in Portland, Oregon, USA (www.processwork.org). For my final project I have chosen to look at the leaders and leadership within groups. In particular I am interested in people's troublesome experiences of leaders and of leadership, where there has been tension or conflict. I hope that this research will add to our understanding of how groups and leaders interact.

I would like to interview you to explore your experiences with leaders in groups and would like to look at questions like:
- ☯ Your experiences of leaders and leadership
- ☯ What difficulties have you had with leaders or people who take leadership?
- ☯ Have you experienced conflict with leaders?
- ☯ Are there particular styles or approaches of leadership that you have found difficult?
- ☯ Have you had experiences where you felt put down by a leader?
- ☯ What have been your reactions to these experiences?

These are just some ideas of what I am interested in talking with you about. I am interested in and would like to explore your own particular experience.

In the interview I would like to focus on one situation where there was tension or conflict between you and the leader. By leader I mean an identified person who has been given a leadership position by the group (they may have been elected or appointed) or an emergent leader (a person who takes a leadership position and who people in the group identify as a leader).

I hope that you will also find the experience useful and that you will gain some insight into your personal experiences in groups, what happens around leaders and leadership, and how groups operate in general. I will be recording the interview and will be typing up the interview afterwards. I will give you a copy transcript for yourself, if you wish.

The interview will be confidential; I will be the only person with access to the recording. You will not be identified in the transcript or the final report. I will also change the names of anyone you mention or any group, organisation or situation that you mention so that they cannot be identified.

If you want to contact me to discuss any of the above or if you have any questions please feel free to do so:

Mobile: 086 833 9796
Email: timspalding@eircom.net

Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary, and you are free to not answer questions, end your participation, or withdraw from the research at any time. If you do, this will not affect how you are treated in anyway. In any event, your interest and involvement is respected and very much appreciated.

Appendix 3
Consent form

Title: An exploration of leadership conflicts in groups

Researcher: Tim Spalding

This research project is being conducted as part of the Masters of Arts in Conflict Facilitation and Organisational Change

Superisor: Julie Diamond

College: Process Work Institute, Portland Oregon, USA

About this study:
This research will explore the conflicts that occur between leaders and participants, particularly in groups that have experienced oppression or marginalisation.

Participation in this research involves:
If you agree to take part in this research I will interview you for approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours. I will record the interview and will then transcribe the interview. If you would like a copy of the transcript I am happy to give it to you

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to not answer questions, end your participation, or withdraw from the research at any time. Your refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect how you are treated in any way.

If you would like to discuss this research further, please contact Tim Spalding on 086 833 9796 or my supervisor Julie Diamond at the Process Work Institute (+1 503 2259784). If you have any inquiries regarding the conduct of this research please contact the Process Work Institute, 2049 NW Hoyt St. Portland. OR 97209, USA; Phone: +1 503 2259784.

Research Title: An exploration of leadership conflicts in groups

I , ……………………………………………………………, consent to participate in the research conducted by Tim Spalding as it has been described to me in the information sheet.

I understand that the data collected will be used for research purposes as outlined in the information sheet, and I consent for the data to be used in that manner.

Signed   ……..………. ………………………………… Date ………………

Appendix 4
Interview Schedule

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to the interview

Interview

In this interview I am interested in talking to you about your experience of a group where there has been conflict with the identified or emergent leader. I would like you to focus on one group where there was an intense or disturbing conflict between you and a leader where you were a participant.

1. Tell me about what happened when you were in conflict with the leader.
    a. What was the conflict about?
    b. How did it start?
    c. What happened next etc?
    d. Where there other people involved?
    e. did you at any point feel that other people were on your side?
2. What was it about the leader or what the leader did that made you angry/afraid/upset/caused you to ……?
3. What affect do you think the conflict had on the group and what the group was trying to achieve?
    a. How did it affect you?
    b. How did it affect the leader?
    c. How did it affect others?

Closure

Thank you for participating
Valuable information
Re-offer transcript
Contact details

Appendix 5

Questionnaire

As part of my MA in Conflict Facilitation and Organisational Change I am doing a project on leaders and people who have difficulties with them. So I am trying to find out a bit about how people see leaders and leadership. I would greatly appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete this short questionnaire and return it to me by email.

Many thanks, Tim

1. How do you define or describe a leader?

2. How do you define or describe leadership?

3. What are the qualities of a leader that you would respect and follow?

4. Please give examples of leaders you would respect and follow

5. What are the qualities of a leader that you would not respect and would not follow?

6. Please give examples of leaders you would not respect and would not follow

Appendix 6

Questionnaire Analysis

ID	1. How do you define or describe a leader?	2. How do you define or describe leadership?	3. What are the qualities of a leader that you would respect and follow?	4. Please give examples of leaders you would respect and follow	5. What are the qualities of a leader that you would not respect and would not follow?	6. Please give examples of leaders you would not respect and would not follow
A	As a person who can influence others through vision, words, actions, values or presence	The capacity to influence others and initiate action that wouldn't otherwise happen	Integrity, love, compassion, courage, oversight, practicality	The Dalai Lama	Lack of integrity, deceitfulness, bigotry, knee-jerk reactions, hidden agendas, agenda driven by vested interests that are not transparent	Ian Paisley, Mugabe, Putin, Wen , Bush Any leader who spreads hatred, fear and division. Any national leader who would put his own personal interests before his nation. Any leader who deals violently with dissent.
B	One who leads, either by force or charisma	Leadership is taking charge and directing others	I would respect and follow a leader who gave me latitude in implementing projects, who listened to my ideas and didn't have to add "superfluous value" and who really cared about me	My current boss, Hiro Takeuchi	Someone who steals my ideas and takes credit for them, someone who humiliates me in public, someone who bosses me around or dismisses my ideas when I have suggested a more cost-efficient way	My competitor who will soon replace my boss
C	Someone who has an identified position at the head of at least one other; someone without an identified position but whose vision/style/other commands others' attention, and who they may choose to follow. Part of a time spirit.	Tough….a capacity to believe in yourself and your vision even if others disagree; an awareness of the field around a system, whatever that field may be; an ability to communicate with others, to inspire others, to believe in others, and to create community.	Wisdom, humanity, overview, courage, integrity, tenacity, conviction, determination, relatedness, capacity to facilitate where necessary, power emerges out of him/her, rather than wearing it as a mantle. Need to have a compatible ideology to me, to inspire me, for me to follow them.	Arny! Julie Diamond. Ghandi, Mandela, ML King, at first Blair but he lost it. Watching Obama – not yet tried and tested! Sharmi Chakrabati (Liberty). Also I can respect some leaders but not follow them because their ideology is different to mine.	Dictatorship! Lack of capacity to hear the other side. Caught up in power and control. Limited vision. Lack of a team. Lack of concern for the good of the whole. Bad temper. Shy to address the real issues, the difficult issues.	My current boss in Belize! Bush. Thatcher. Putin.

D	Someone who is nominated by a community or group or team to coordinate and manage programmes, initiatives etc., on their behalf	As a constantly evolving role, accessible to everyone, capable of directing actions and aware of and responsive to feedback	Openness, transparency, accountability , ability to take their own side in a conflict but also capable of stepping into the other side in the conflict. Someone who is creative, innovative and compassionate and can think inside and outside of the box. Some one who has the well being of the community at the heart of their interventions , suggestions and plans.	Ghandi, Rosa Parkes, James Connolly	Some one who is only interested in self advancement to the detriment of others, someone who isn't willing to share knowledge and power	Bertie Ahern, Charlie Haughey, Mary Harney
E	Someone who possesses great eldership, who is chosen to be a leader by the spirit, either for a moment or for years. She or he follows this calling to the best of their ability, and lets it go when the Tao chooses another leader	Leadership is the ability to facilitate what is trying to happen, to be a midwife, midhusband to the background process as it is trying to come forward, and who can not only channel that but hold all the people and sides in their hear. Also leadership is constantly modified and affected by signal and rank awareness	Centeredness, awareness, personal power, love, compassion, intelligence, eldership.	Barak Obama, Aung Sung Suky Mandela, Martin Luther King, Arny and Amy Mindell, Ghandi	Authoritarian, bigoted, incongruent, exploitative, violent	Bush, Sara Palin, the current Pope, President of Iran, Osama Ben Laden
F	As a person in whom the direction/dream of the group is temporarily embodied	The facilitation of group direction/collective dreaming	Openness, generosity, willingness to drop the role, playfulness – and understanding 'follow' as meaning that the leader is 'following' the group and thus, by following the leader, we're following our own larger dreams	Francis Batten (now dead); Arnie Mindell; Sondra Fraleigh. But almost anyone in the world at the right moment	Someone who believes that leadership is a permanent role; someone who re-interprets everything to justify their position as leader	Just about every politician in office on the planet at the moment – especially those who have been in power in the US and those who are still in power in the UK. Most managers in the post-Thatcherite UK system especially those in academia and the Health Service. I find Ireland marginally better – but leaders still kowtow to the

						rich and skew the system in their favour rather than working for the whole community. A willingness to re-introduce university fees is a perfect example – it disproprotionately affects the poorer members of the community – and then they'll lie about it.
G	A leader is a role, occupied at times by a person, who suggests a general direction to a group and then facilitates progress in that direction	The capacity to establish a direction for a group while respecting the cohesion of the group	1. Ability to clearly state own vision and direction 2. Readiness to modify and adapt that vision to the needs of the group 3. Readiness to view opposition as a side of self 4. A sense of membership in the group, that is, fluidity of role, being able to place self in the shoes of a group member. 5. A sense of humor about own role as leader – not taking that role so seriously	Groucho Marx, Tom and Ray Magliozzi, (hopefully) Barack Obama	1. Bulldozer-style that puts through own vision regardless of feedback 2. Inability to step outside of leadership role to critique that role 3. Lack of self-irony	George W. Bush, My 5th grade teacher
H	There are different kinds of leader; self prescribed ones and those that become leaders because people want to follow them. A leader is the one that inspires people and can bring them together for some cause; be it for a	Leadership is a quality that people have, can be temporary that will make them the person to bring people together. It is something that different people can have at different times. If we no longer represent the group	A leader needs to understand his or her power, and use it to the betterment of the group as a whole. It needs to be somebody that can connect with a deeper vision or cause and have the courage to not just pursue it herself	Right now I feel inspired by Barak Obama. I like the idea of the audacity of hope. He is not just smart but also very courageous and seems genuine	I hope I would be able to see a selfish leader that no longer has the good of the overall group in mind. We all have moments and qualities like that, but I guess I am talking about the overarching deeper	Bush seemed to be more carried away by his own inner philosophies and assumptions and was not able to see beyond himself.

201

	project or more long-term affair. A leader needs to be able to project into the future and help people to get there	spirit leadership will be passed on to somebody else that is able to represent that better	but also inspire others to want to do it and enable them to do it		motivation	
I	A person who provides social, business, spiritual, moral, cultural or political focus of ideas and practice for parties, social movements or individuals	Capacity to inspire in others a desire to adapt, follow or move in a specific outlined direction on a voluntary basis	Integrity, egalitarianism, wisdom, courage	Paulo Freire, Peadar O'Donnell, Emma Goldman	Dishonesty, nepotism, self serving, narcissistic, corrupt, elitist	Mary Harney, Berlusconi, Thatcher
J	It depends on the context… in most situations leaders are those in positions of power or authority irrespective of skill or capacity	Leadership is the process of using the position of power or rank to follow and influence others to follow a specific direction or value	Wisdom, sensitivity to the whole, fluidity, capacity to work on oneself, compassion	Nelson Mandela, Dalai Lama	Dictator based leadership, lack of wisdom, tendency to marginalize certain positions, lack of care for others etc	George Bush, Saddam Hussein
K	Someone who leads the way – how ever or where ever	Doing the above, usually with the expectation that they'll do it until 'the job's done'	They know my value as well as their own, compassionate, self aware, considered, open, creative, brave, they're focused on supporting me to be more myself not more like them	The guy who taught me psychotherapy – Ron Rieick, the Mindell's, Tony Benn	Aggression, forcefulness, self centred, controlling, secretive, undermine	Tony Blair, Margaret Thatcher
L	Someone who can always see a big picture and make strategies and be able to show the model behaviour to implement the strategy	Charismatic power to guide people toward the shared goals/objectives	Consistency, At ease even at the crisis time Walk the talk. Greeting with smile		Manage up well but don't care below— behaviours change depends on other's positional rank Not walking the talk, accusing others and justify his/her own mistakes	
M	A leader: someone with enough belief in their vision to imbue others with that belief	Leadership: the capacity to hold and articulate a vision in a way that inspires or scares others to	They would inspire me and empower me to be my own leader in integrity with my own beliefs	Mandela, Tutu, Gandhi, Jesus, Obama, my mum	They would scare me and manipulate me to override my own beliefs	Hitler, Bush, my dad

		be motivated by it too				
N	Someone who inspires and motivates people to act on their convictions, leading by example	Inspiring and motivating people to act on their convictions	Caring for the needs of all who are represented, including those seen as "other." Practically grounded in reality, but not letting go of ideals. Willing to show own growth and mistakes. Flexible and open to hearing others	I really don't know. I don't trust any leaders. I hope Obama is a good one. I could name all the usual suspects, but that would just be listing. My favourite US president is Franklin Roosevelt	Getting out of touch with the needs of those they represent. Too much conviction that they are right. Not open to all viewpoints	Margaret Thatcher
O	One who can mobilize inspire and guide others in the directions that are beneficial for them	The qualities and abilities that enable someone to lead as above	Vision, connectedness, kindness, wisdom, diversity awareness	Barack Obama	Fundamentalist one sided out of touch bellicose mean-spirited negative	George Bush
P	One who is a good motivator, has vision, can bring people with them, walks the walk and uses the 'we' word	Leadership is the quality of being able to motivate groups of people in a way that is inclusive, that seeks no reward, that helps understanding and that grows good character	Takes time to relate, lays out solutions and recommends which one to follow, expects self-less responses but safeguards the integrity of individuals and seeks feedback	Mother Theresa, Jesus Christ, Mahatma Ghandi, Nelson Mandela, Bishop Tutu	The boss mentality when there has been no consultation, no learning, no sharing in the task, no vision and no followup with evaluation/review	Hitler, Charlie Haughey, Saddam Hussein, Maggie Thatcher
Q	A leader is a person, usually a man that occupies a role in a group, team, organisation, institution, political party or in the home, that has the authority/responsibility to direct, to control, to influence, to inspire, to protect and to envision and work towards a sustainable future for its organisation/group	Leadership refers to the category model that a leader could be described to be working within e g 'the servant leader' and the qualities that she/he manifests in the process of leading	For me to respect or follow any leader, first, their ideological and political views would have to be congruent with my views. The qualities I would respect of such a leader would be, trust and self belief in their capacity to occupy the role from a place of hope with a freedom, courage, wisdom, creativity, vision, compassion, openness to inspire supportive and new followers, to have self awareness of structural limitations and transform	I have very few examples of leaders that I would respect and follow, the person that comes to mind is Mary Robinson	any leader whose qualities are directly connected to political views that are incongruent with mine. Authoritian, autocratic, consistent liar, superior attitude, have God on their side, are comfortable/protector of a patriarchal society and all its injustice	Tony Blair, Margaret Thatcher and Bertie Ahern. I could include the majority of present and past political leaders

			them with justice and deep democracy		
R	Someone who sets the tone for those around them. People look to them for direction and for a voice. They have a point of view which is beyond their personal needs.	Leadership is about having a contextual purpose and creating a momentum which aligns to that purpose. Leadership seeks to achieve a goal and in doing so gets people to buy into that goal and therefore move in the required direction.	Trustworthy Congruent Has presence Is provocative when necessary Authentic Consistent Healthy self image Has a sense of humour	Obama Tom Boardman (CEO of Nedbank) Nelson Mandela Richard Branson Mother Theresa Heidi Carter (Founding partner of CCL)	Incongruent Untrustworthy Discriminatory Holds very closed views on issues Only Task orientated Incites violence Ego-centric	Robert Mugabe Hitler George Bush Osama Ben Laden Sarah Palin
S	The manager of a project/ driver of a specific aspiration	The management/guidance or direction of a specific project or aspiration	Intelligence, respect, good temperament, good listener, charismatic ability to identify with and engage people at all levels of society	Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama	Poor listener, impulsive, arrogant, dictator-like, self interested. Inability to rationalise distinctive thoughts and ideas that differ from their own	George Bush, Robert Mugabe
T	A leader is someone who identifies a need for leadership, clarifies a direction and what needs to be achieved, musters willing followers and aligns them in pursuit of a shared vision	Leadership is an event or interaction that takes place between leaders and followers which enables something to happen	Capacity - to "see" possible futures; to deal with complexity (process multi-level information internal and external); be passionate about what they are trying to achieve while remaining aware and connected to those impacted by their leadership activity; appreciative of their own and others talents accompanied by a commitment to learn	Arny Mindell, Mandela, Mary Robinson, Richard Whelans, John O Shea	Brutality, coercion, abuse of power, manipulation, dishonesty and overriding self interest	Bush Junior, Mugabe, Ian Paisley, Liam Lawler, Cardinal Daly, the Pope
U	People follow him due to his /her qualities of inspiring, motivating, guiding, visioning	Quality of inspiration, vision, dream making	Socially responsible, ethics, values similar to mine, walk his talk, models what he asks	ghandi, ml king, Mandela, hope for obama	Self focused, self-profit, extinguishing 'problems' by force/war – war on drugs for xample	Bush, neoliberals, thatcher, blair
V	One who helps a group clarify their vision and	Leadership helps a group move ahead towards	Honest, just, respect for the people they are with;	Barak Obama; Martin Luther King, Jr.; my father	manipulation; deception; no core values; resorts	George W. Bush

	purpose; supports the group in carrying out that vision and also holds people accountable for their commitments	health, healing, accomplishment…what ever their need and calling is at the moment. Leaders may help this happen through their own personal vision which they give to the group. But leaders do not impose a vision on a group. They call forth the deepest, most essential of the group itself	passionate for what's good and life-giving; a sense of humor; the ability to see their own strengths and limits		regularly to threats and abuse; shallow values or intelligence; no sense of humor; arrogance	
W	A person whose goal is to transform something for the better and to help develop others in the direction of that future. A leader can create a picture for the future, and communicate it, and inspire others to come along. A leader ideally is someone with personal power who can congruently step into her positional power as needed	A leader who inspires followership	Someone who can change with the needs of the context, who doesn't get locked into fixed ideas about what is the "right" thing to do- but who is able to sort through what is happening at the present time and act with awareness of the complexity of what is before him or her. This is not to say the person is always changing his or her mind- but is more oriented toward the process and context than 'an ideal or idea'. I respect a leader who is open with his or her vulnerability and what he or she doesn't know. I respect a leader who is willing to not be liked in a given moment because of making a choice he or she believes in. I respect leaders who show me who I can be.	Myself, Obama-that's all I can think of at the moment ☺	Someone who won't show vulnerability, someone who is defensive and does not act like a learner but a knower, people who don't live what they teach or don't seem to aspire to	Bush and all the others that smell like him

X	Someone who knows him- or herself well, strengths and limits (edges), and is ready to take responsibility for any group or people, assisting their common process and transformation, and has a caring overview of the whole situation. Someone who looks more for the overall situation than for him- or herself. Usually models his or her beliefs more than just talking about them. A leader very often has a vision, which could become the vision of a group, too and could help them to transform together.	Having and showing wisdom and humility, compassion and detachment, joy and discipline.... interest in the earth, wild life and human beings and their well-being and further transformation (and a feeling of responsibility towards it).	Good listener, open heart, wisdom, humor, integrity, genuinity, thouroughness, process-oriented, strong believe in people and their ability to grow	I probably would never follow just one leader, because I don´t believe in single leadership anymore, but here are some of them: Micheline Calmy-Rey (Swiss Bundesrat), Regina Wecker (my PhD tutor), Annelis Kaiser (Swiss Sufi-teacher), Dalai Lama, Pema Chödron, Barack Obama, Amy and Arny Mindell, Gandhi, Club of Rome,	Selfish, narrow-minded, authorative, not knowing him- or herself, without visions, severe, too discipline oriented, enforcing, not interested in people	I probably wouldn´t follow them, but still respect them, however, there are too many of those these days...