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The reconfiguration of social welfare according to neo-liberal principles has encroached on virtually all national welfare states since the 1980s. While its impact has been felt the most intensely within liberal or market-orientated economies, such as the USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and the UK, the convergence of social welfare since the 1990s means that social democratic welfare systems in Scandinavia and those in conservative corporatist states (for example German, France, Austria and Italy) have also been significantly reshaped (Inkeles 1998, Brooks and Manza 2007). Where human service professions were previously associated with work that encouraged emotional engagement, judgment, discretion and sensitivity to the needs of others, contemporary human service work has become increasingly characterised by the imperatives of performativity (Lyotard 1984). This decentres the worker by imposing a prescriptive framework so that performance at work can be scrutinised according to an instrumental rationality emphasising measurable outcomes (Friedson 1994, Clarke et al. 2000). Since the financial crisis of 2008, however, the status quo has been challenged. Far-reaching changes are underway and the expectation is that these will radically reshape the delivery of health and social care (Schmidt et al. 2010). The impact of these transitions is being experienced globally. In the UK, health and social care is now being embedded within a discourse of communitarian civic conservatism – or 'Red Toryism' (Blond 2009). This seeks both state retrenchment and the strengthening of intrinsic (rather than centrally imposed) values of social responsibility. Beyond the political specificities of the British context, however, a broader sociological debate is needed

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regarding how practice in health and social care is conceptualised and whether greater value should be attached to qualities such as goodwill, altruism and commitment.

While employment in the public sphere has traditionally been associated with a rational mindset that should preferably remain uncontaminated by emotion, feminist scholars have argued that the capacity to connect emotionally underpins attachment and care (Kittay 1999, Nussbaum 2001). In the field of political philosophy, others have pointed out that virtuous practice is not generally generated through abstract morality but instead involves concrete emotions that are directed at particular people in specific contexts (Korsgaard 1996, Stark 2004). On the basis that sociological studies are well placed to unravel the factors that contribute to moral choice by focusing on specific social contexts (Shilling and Mellor 2001:3 cited in Pickard 2010: 472), this paper considers the interface between identity and professional motivation, in particular how these are shaped by and articulate with emotions and values. It has relevance beyond the field of learning disabilities and should be of interest to those concerned with identity and professional practice in health and social care.

To understand the factors that influence how professionals construct their identity and how this shapes their orientation towards their work, we have drawn on MacIntyre's (2007) theoretical distinction between an ethic of excellence (internal goods) and the need for effectiveness in reaching specific outcomes (external goods). MacIntyre's (2007) conceptualisation of internal and external goods, a re-worked Aristotelean model, will be discussed in more detail below. Briefly, the internal and external goods of practice[i] can be described here as consistent with a Weberian division between value

rationality (*Wertrationalität*) and instrumental rationality (*Zwecktrationalität*) (Weber 1978). The latter is based on the most effective realisation of certain ends (the value of which is not open to scrutiny) whereas value rationality is behaviour derived from particular values. This is consistent with MacIntyre's (2007) notion of internal goods which he sees as emerging out of a quest for excellence intrinsic to a particular practice. In this paper, we link MacIntryre's distinction between internal and external goods to some of the sociological thinking on emotion work, suggesting that the pursuit of the internal goods of practice are bound up with an authentically experienced emotional engagement with work and with service users.

It is contended here that the identity of professionals working in learning disability services may be significantly motivated by emotionally driven aspirations to develop the internal goods of practice, interpreted as the desire to enhance service users' wellbeing and quality of life. This appears to lead to a form of reflexivity and criticality that sometimes challenges the official policy discourse regarding routes out of social exclusion for people with learning disabilities. The paper is structured as follows. First, the UK policy context is outlined. The general direction of this resonates with the prioritisation of service users' autonomy and sovereignty in many countries (WMA 2008). This is followed by the theoretical framework outlining MacIntyre's (2007) conceptualisation of the internal and external goods of practice, and how these relate to some contemporary sociological perspectives on emotion. The methods are then outlined before moving to the findings and conclusion.

Policy context

The policy document *Valuing People* (VP) (Department of Health 2001, 2009) heralded a new direction in learning disability services towards a human rights model of person centred care. While there is a lack of clarity regarding exactly what person centred care involves (Iles 2003), it is unambiguously associated with four key underpinning principles: rights, choice, inclusion and independence; these are often equated with measures designed to promote economic autonomy which is seen as a prerequisite for inclusive citizenship (see Prime Minster Strategy Unit, 2005, Department of Health 2005, 2006, HM Government 2007, Department for Work and Pensions, 2008). At the same time, it is important to stress that the commitment in VP to reposition people with learning disabilities as active citizens in their own right, and to provide a policy context to promote their social inclusion, can be regarded as a victory in a long struggle to ensure social justice for people with disabilities. The vision underpinning VP is one which sees people with learning disabilities leading autonomous lives, exercising control over their own finances, preferably in paid employment, and living as fully integrated members of the community in independent accommodation. Ostensibly, this appears consistent with the demands made by disability activists (Finkelstein 1980, Priestley 1999, Goodley, 2000). Notwithstanding this, VP has been viewed by some as Janus-faced in the sense that progressive critiques of the welfare state have been adopted to further essentially neo-liberal reforms (Burton and Kagan 2006, Cowden and Singh 2007: 11). In other words, empowered citizenship is conflated with consumer choice without taking account of the challenges many people face in making such choices (Dowse 2009). Within this policy context the role for learning disability professionals

has changed from 'care' to 'enabling', as measured by criteria such as living independently and exercising financial autonomy, particularly through managing personal budgets, and preferably by entering paid employment.

Theoretical framework: emotion and the internal and external goods of practice

(i)The internal and external goods of practice

Internal goods are derived from the search for excellence within particular practices; for instance playing a musical instrument, farming, carpentry, intellectual pursuits, or developing loving relationships. Practices are developed by building on existing expertise; therefore they initially require an obedience to and respect for the accepted rules. Ultimately, they involve the development of expertise that will change some of the rules and extend practice in ways that cannot be anticipated at the outset. This aspiration towards excellence within particular practices cultivates certain virtues, for instance, tenacity, courage, application, kindness. While generated within a practice, these virtues are transferable to other areas of life and become a central dimension of a coherent sense of self in a way that necessarily challenges ideological divisions between the private and public spheres.

External goods, such as money, prestige, status, are not specific to any particular practice, but may be gained from a variety of activities. They are often characterised by an instrumentalist mindset that prioritises success in obtaining pre-determined aims (effectiveness) whilst neglecting the values that underpin these. External goods may be achieved by an ontologically separate subject whereas internal goods tend to result in

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the good of a community. Practices are achieved intersubjectively by trans-historical communities of practitioners and as a consequence of practices developed through virtuous interpersonal relatedness. The virtues generated through the pursuit of internal goods 'are precisely those qualities the possession of which will enable an individual to achieve *eudaimonia'* [generally defined as wellbeing] (MacIntyre 2007: 148). Whereas the aims associated with external goods are clear (money, status, qualifications), the *telos* associated with internal goods is partially unknown; practice is developed in ways that that cannot always be anticipated (MacIntyre 2007: 218-219). Notwithstanding this, internal and external goods are mutually reinforcing – they are both forms of goods, although MacIntyre is clear that internal goods should be privileged over external goods if the good life is to be achieved.

Working with people with learning disabilities can be regarded as a professional practice in the Macintyrean sense. For professionals, the internal goods of practice relate to the satisfaction and rewards of developing practice that is person centered, defined as seeking to enhance the wellbeing and quality of life for service users. External goods are obtained by achieving outputs that are predetermined (for instance policy imperatives to move service users into independent living and to promote their economic autonomy). The professionals who participated in this study were frequently happy to provide the encouragement and practical support that is required for independent living. Consistent with UK policy, the management strategy was to discourage professionals from doing tasks *on behalf of* service users. Instead professionals were encouraged to *support* and *train service* users to acquire

independent life skills. These include, among other things, housework, cooking, shopping and using public transport. Professionals were also expected to motivate and support service users to enroll on training courses or to participate in other social activities that contribute to their integration into society, particularly if these potentially open up opportunities for employment. While activities such as these may be regarded as congruent with the aim of promoting independent living (an external good of practice), professionals regarded these tasks as entirely consistent with the internal good of enhancing the wellbeing of *some* service users. Nevertheless, there was also some evidence professionals felt under implicit (as opposed to direct) pressure to pursue the external goods even in cases where they felt that service users' wellbeing would be better served by alternative approaches to practice. This contributed to a certain sense of uneasiness which is discussed in our findings. As MacIntrye (2007) argues, the internal goods of practice are obtainable only when subjects perform a practice in a way that is consistent with personal values that are not compartmentalised within different spheres of life. In this paper we also propose that the values attached to the internal goods are bound up with a genuine emotional commitment to practice. This is considered in more detail below.

Since the publication of Hochschild's (1983) seminal book, *The Managed Heart*, there has been a burgeoning of work relating to emotion across a range of disciplines. While too extensive to cite fully here, key sociological contributions include; James and Gabe (1996), Bendelow and Williams (1997), Bendelow (2009) and Barbalet (2002). Of particular relevance to this paper, however, is the ongoing debate in relation to the

reassessment of Hochschild's (1983) thesis that distinguishes between emotion work and emotional labour. Hochschild applies the term emotion work to refer to the process of presenting and managing emotions in the private sphere, but applies the term emotional labour to describe 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display' (Hochschild 1983:7) by service workers. In other words, emotional labour involves the 'transmutation'[ii] of feelings associated with the private sphere into a commodity with exchange value. Hochschild (1983) describes differing degrees of affective engagement associated with emotional labour: some employees engage merely in superficial compliance, what Hochschild terms 'surface acting', whereas others seek to evoke emotional responses in themselves that are congruent with their professional roles. Over time, this may lead to workers being unable to distinguish between their own emotional responses and those that they experience as result of their internalisation of organisational culture. While workers may perceive their emotions as authentic, Hochschild (1983) sees this as a colonisation of the *lifeworld*. Similarly feminist scholars have tended to draw a boundary between commodified care and the nurturing relationship that underpins 'love labour' associated with the private sphere (Kittay 1999, Nussbaum 2001). This distinction between commodified care and care embedded in committed relationships was initially challenged by Bolton (2000) who developed a taxonomy of emotion work that included the concept of 'philanthropic emotion work'. This refers to human service work (performed in the public sphere) that involves authentic emotional engagement. Following Bolton (2000), a growing number of researchers have questioned the notion that emotion performed in the public sphere is necessarily commodified and dispiriting (Lewis 2005, McClure and Murphy

2007, O'Donohoe and Turley, 2006, Theodosius 2006, Lynch 2007, Fisher and Owen, 2008, Guy et al 2008, Deery and Fisher 2010). Detailed consideration of the various arguments relating to this discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, but our findings suggest that professionals working in human service work may be significantly motivated by the pursuit of the internal good of promoting service users' wellbeing. We suggest that this value is central to professionals' sense of self and that it is driven by authentically experienced emotional engagement with practice and with service users.

Methods

The study took place in a voluntary organisation in the North of England working with people with learning disabilities, and their family members and carers. Services provided include residential care, community support for independent living, day services, and a range of sporting, leisure and health activities. In the near future, service users will be supported to run a café as a financially viable enterprise open to the public. After we had obtained University ethical approval, the researcher, VB[iii], conducted ten interviews with seven professionals who work with adults with learning disabilities on a daily basis (these included residential support workers, day service support workers and community team workers) and with three managerial/administrative professionals (the chief executive, the residential operations manager and an administrator). While the small number of interviews conducted means that the findings here are presented as tentative, the interviews were in-depth, generally lasting in excess of an hour, and were supplemented by notes taken at numerous informal conversations and encounters in the organisation's head office. The scale of this study also means that the perspectives

of the service users were not included; we intend to address this absence in subsequent research. The central concern here was to gain data that would provide a holistic understanding of how these professionals working within learning disability services constructed their identity and we were mindful not to impose categories in our questioning that assumed distinctions between the private and the public, between policy discourse and practice 'on the ground' or between the cognitive and affective dimensions of practice. Our approach was based on the view that identity is not unified but constituted by a number of selves which may be in conflict with one another. Seen from this perspective, a person may simultaneously subscribe to conflicting views depending on the subject position adopted. The governed subject may therefore have a highly ambivalent relationship with official discourse. Rationales for conformity or non-conformity, compliance and resistance may operate variously or simultaneously within the context of an individual's life course. Notwithstanding this, we do not subscribe to the view that identity is a myth; our understanding is that there are integrative forces within subjectivity (Hoggett 2001) and that people construct life narratives in order to find meaning and to sustain themselves.

VB, spent several hours each week over a period of two months making observations at the organisation's headquarters where she was able to speak to professionals on an informal basis. During this time, positive relationships were formed and rapport built with many of the interviewees. VB approached staff for interviews informally and found that the professionals were happy to participate. When VB conducted the interviews, she adopted a conversational approach based on a few initial prompts that sought to elicit responses relating to identity and to work with learning disabled people, for instance

'describe your work', 'why do you work here?', 'what are the rewards and challenges of working here?, 'how do you understand your role?' The interviews were audio recorded and fully transcribed; pseudonyms are used in this paper to protect the anonymity of the participants except in the case of the chief executive who wished to be identified.

Initially an inductive approach towards the analysis of the data was applied (Charmaz 2006) This involved a process of initial coding when we examined data line by line to avoid imposing any preexisting conceptual framework. We noted that positive words associated with the affective domain, such as 'passion', 'love', 'happy', 'enjoyable', 'fun', 'enjoy' were commonly applied to descriptions of work. Over and above the official aims of facilitating independence, professionals emphasised the quality of their relationships with service users, using terms such as 'positive', 'worthwhile', 'happy', and sometimes 'hardwork' and 'taxing'. Having developed some initial analytical directions, we moved towards more focused coding in which we developed broader categories; these included 'feelings about the job', 'relationships with service users', 'emotional engagement and boundaries', 'professional pride', 'care versus enablement', 'policy and personal perspectives', 'personal and organisational values' and 'stresses and frustrations'. The analysis from the interviews was compared with the fieldnotes VB made when speaking informally to members of staff. This ensured that the interview findings were supplemented by informal encounters. Our focused codes were subsequently considered through the lens of MacIntyre's conceptualisation of the internal and external goods of practice, particularly as this relates to the sociology of emotion. In this paper, we focus on two interrelated analytical areas that emerged from

the analysis: these are 'professional identity and motivation' and 'organisational values and identity'.

Findings

(i) Professional identity, motivation and emotion

While Hochschild (1983) identified emotional labour with burnout and alienation, other studies have suggested that emotion work undertaken in the workplace may have a potentially motivating and joyful dimension to it that can be energising (see for example Bolton 2000, Deery and Fisher 2010). The discourses of the interviewees conveyed this impression irrespective of whether they worked in residential, day centres or in community services[iv]. Ruth, a residential operations manager explained,

> You know ours are vibrant places; we do believe passionately in person centred planning, person-centered approaches. We deliver care in a way that suits them.
>
> […]

William, a community team support worker had previously worked in a commercial enterprise but he emphasised the emotionally rewarding aspects of his current work,

> The satisfaction of knowing that I can work with someone and leave them and they're feeling happier and I think 'God I did well for so 'n' so today', you know, that was great that. It's nice to have that feeling that you're being well appreciated and liked and I'm, I'm in the happy position to say quite honestly that erm, all the service users that I work with like me…

William's response is a reminder that just as social action is relational, so too is emotion (Burkitt 2002, Theodisius 2006: 901). As Theodoisus points out, when a nurse gives

sympathy, he or she receives gratitude in response. The encounter is therefore mutually supportive, suggesting that the nurse is not only acting on the basis of conventionally expected 'feelings rules' associated with surface and deep acting (Hochschild 1983). In other words, the nurse is not shaping or experiencing an emotional response according to what is deemed socially appropriate in a given situation. Instead, the nurse may be experiencing authentic emotion that emerges from the encounter itself. We noted this same engagement among most interviewees who participated in this study, as exemplified by the extract from Jason, who is a day-centre worker, below,

> …this is great, you've got forty cheerful people, yeah everyone's generally cheerful, all the staff are really friendly…it's just a nice place to come to work, if you've been off a week everyone's like 'Hey! You're back, how you doing?'

While the professionals viewed social engagement as central to practice, they were aware that their interactions with service users were mutually beneficial. Their motivations, however, extended beyond a wish for superficial conviviality. Professionals were also keen to develop a virtuous relatedness with service users in the knowledge that relationships of trust are intrinsic to good practice. Hannah is a community support worker who hopes to have a role in the café run by service users that will open in the near future,

> It's all about trust really, they have to be able to trust you in a lot of ways, they need to be able to talk to you, they need to be able to trust you if they've got a problem, to come to you with it. Cos for them, it's just quite hard for them cos they're stuck in their own little rut so they need to break free from that and be able to talk to somebody.

As the extract above suggests, positive relationships with service users were regarded as intrinsic to practice. Consistent with MacIntyre's (2007) model of internal goods, practice necessarily had to be developed in collaboration with service users. The positive emotions engendered through this appeared to be strongly related to professional commitment. While there was little mention of the official goals of promoting independence (the external goods), the pursuit of the internal goods of excellence was constantly prioritised and associated with authentic emotional engagement. Christine, a day services support manager explained,

> […] I care about the fact – passionate about the fact – that I want to deliver quality care, not just any 'make do and mend' sort of care.

The interviewees overwhelmingly appeared to associate the pursuit of excellence (the internal goods) with enhancing service users' wellbeing and quality of life. As the extract from Hannah's interview below demonstrates, her desire that service users should experience 'joy' extends beyond an instrumentalist commitment to effectiveness. Hannah's emotional commitment to her work and to service users is expressed above all in her quest to enhance service users' wellbeing,

> It's like if somebody's not happy where they're living, for instance then you've to come in and to write […] a report about it, get in touch with the home, see what the problem is. If you don't get no joy there then you've to take it further, *you've to try and get joy for this person* [emphasis added].

Interestingly, this commitment to work and the emotional fulfillment gained through it could also be accessed when engaged in the most taxing forms of practice. After the audio recorder had been switched off, Bob, a residential support worker, spoke of working with the children at the crisis centre in more detail, providing the example of a fifteen year old boy who had been abused all his life and who had been placed in the centre's care whilst awaiting trial for murder. Many of the children placed there had suffered some kind of abuse. Bob explained that he would sometimes go home and cry about the experiences some of these children had been through. He went on to stress that he found working in this setting enjoyable, absorbing and valuable. Bob had no sense of emotional detachment at the crisis centre; far from being a professional 'enabler', Bob's work was bound up with a sense of identity that transcended traditional home/work boundaries. Despite the fact that Bob's work could be harrowing, its rewards could not be disentangled from his emotional investment in it.

The satisfaction that professionals gain from their work and from their relationships with service users cannot be dismissed as merely a desire to enjoy a stress free and lighthearted workplace; professional satisfaction appears to be enmeshed in rising to challenges within practice. Drawing on the work of Korsgaard (1996), Stark (2004) argues that a sympathetic person may help because helping is pleasant; the morally worthy person on the other hand will derive wellbeing from helping because it is ethically called for or required. Crucially, however, Stark (2004) takes the view that acting virtuously brings about an affective transformation of the agent. Similarly, MacIntyre (2007) argues that the virtues derived from the pursuit of the internal goods of

practice involve a process that is rewarding although not necessarily comfortable. As the subject develops the practice, he or she *transforms him* or *herself* through engagement in that practice.

Despite the professionals' apparent commitment to practice informed by internal goods, they often adopted ambivalent and sometimes even contradictory discourses in relation to emotion. Learning to disengage emotionally was often seen as a skill that had to be acquired in order to recover from the sometimes taxing nature of some of the work. In other cases, the dangers of fostering dependence among service users was emphasised, particularly the risk posed by service users' parents. Ruth was concerned that service users may opt to nominate friends and family to help them with the complexities of managing individualised budgets. She was particularly critical of parents who managed budgets on behalf of their children with the aim of 'buying friendship' from care workers rather than their professional services,

> ...we have, without [a] shadow of a doubt seen people using their individual budgets to buy support workers who will be a friend to their child...We've worked hard to get support workers to be valued as care *professionals* – they're not friends – you say this regularly to staff – you're not a surrogate friend, you're a professional support worker. Do you...expect your nurse on a ward to be your friend? No you don't, you expect her to deliver professional quality care.

In the extract above Ruth emphasises the more instrumental aspects of her profession in a way that is consistent with the current policy direction that promotes normative

citizenship based on autonomy. At a later stage in the interview, however, she measured best practice according to an affective yardstick,

> … think about the most important person in your life, think of the person you love most. Is the work you did yesterday, all the things you did yesterday, would they have been good enough for your nearest and dearest?

The interviewees' views frequently reflected tensions of a similar type. This resonates with previous research that addresses the discomfort that staff often feel with regard to their relationships with service users when these are characterised by the competing tensions of facilitating independence whilst also providing people with learning disabilities the 'friendship' that may be unavailable elsewhere (Pollock 2006). Jill Robson, the chief executive, was the participant who most clearly adopted the official position. Jill explained,

> …on the whole they have very good relationships. Almost too good sometimes, we do have problems, they can't see why they can't take the service user home, why they can't buy them presents and things like that… It's quite difficult getting that sort of professional/personal boundary sorted out. Particularly for some of the staff that have been here for years when it was a more cosy...thing.

Both Jill and Ruth felt it necessary in their managerial capacity to caution staff against emotional involvement, but agreed, nevertheless, that their position was characterised by a certain degree of ambivalence. As the study took place in a third sector organisation, no formal policy-related targets had been imposed. For the other interviewees, conflicting discourses of care and enablement were a constant preoccupation. As Sarah, a volunteer coordinator put it,

…you've got to have it here, all the time at the back of your head – am I making this person dependent on me? Are they – you know – are they leaning too much on me? Have I just got to give them a gentle nudge.

Sarah seems to be attempting to reconfigure her practice according to the official discourse that is consistent with the external goods of individual empowerment. As she endeavours to calibrate her practice towards the facilitation of independence, the effort that this requires evokes Hochschild's (1983) assertion that organisations seek to colonise the emotional *lifeworld* of employees. As previously noted (Clegg and Landsdale-Welfare 2010), the official discourse within learning disability services is constructed around a moral binary of 'individual good – collective bad'. This reflects more widely held societal discourses that define the independent and competitive as moral, and the dependent and non-competitive as immoral (Bauman 1988). However, while our interviewees expressed a certain ambivalence regarding the appropriateness of emotional engagement, it was evident that for most their motivation and professional commitment was significantly emotionally based.

Organisational values and identity

The significance of work on shaping personal identity is related to the degree of occupational self-direction (O'Neil 1999, Hotho 2008). Social work, it has been argued, has lost much of its previous scope for individual professional discretion and judgment in the face of managerialist imperatives. Assessments, targets and accountability dominate the agenda with professionals fearing blame and vilification (Horlick-Jones 2005, Mitchell and Gledinning 2008). The position of those working in voluntary

organisations is different. Generally less curtailed by the culture of performativity, they often view themselves as pioneers who should lead rather than comply with policy. The professionals that participated in this study clearly valued the opportunities for discretion which they felt were more available to them than to others working in human service work within the public sector. A number of the interviewees had left more lucrative work in the public sector to join a voluntary organisation which afforded them greater professional discretion. Ruth, who had previously worked in a public sector organisation, explained she found, 'the way the Council work, very restricting. You know, you couldn't go and be creative and do something because it would actually achieve results.' Similarly Jason stated, 'I like the fact that it's a charity, there's no one making any profit anywhere, whereas a lot of the other homes, someone's making money. That's why they're doing it.' Sarah, a volunteer coordinator explained, 'Well the main rewards I get are working in the voluntary sector. I've always worked in the voluntary sector, just about. I really enjoy the flexibility it gives you'.

Later in the interview she added,

> You tend not to be hide-bound by a huge bureaucracy as you would be if you say worked in the social sector for a, erm, local authority that are very big bureaucracies. So that's the main thing. […] I like to be down on the ground. And those, those are the rewards. I like to work with people; I like to work with really ordinary people, and I quite like to work with people stigmatised by the rest of society.

This suggests that Sarah is partially motivated by a form of activism that seeks to redress social injustice. The salience of emotion to forms of activism and social change

has been previously identified (see King, 2006). To a certain extent, therefore, the interviewees' identification with their organisation may be connected to its comparatively low levels of managerialist surveillance that provide the space to pursue the internal goods of practice. However, as argued above, professionals did not reject external goods of supporting people to move into independent living. On the contrary, the interviewees regarded this as entirely consistent with their values and those of the organisation; pride was sometimes expressed that *their* organisation had been among the pioneers that had shaped policy in the direction of facilitating greater independence for people with learning disabilities. What appeared to trouble the professionals who participated in this study was their perception that independent living was becoming a dogma that threatened to undermine the responsive and innovative practice that they regarded as core to their work within a voluntary organisation. Many spoke of the risk of a 'one size fits all' approach based on a view that people with learning disabilities constitute a homogeneous group with similar aspirations. Often, the interviewees adopted a reflective stance that was critical of the perspective that empowerment must necessarily be equated with independent living and financial autonomy. Bob was one of several who were anxious that economic autonomy could result in the financial exploitation of some service workers,

> I've got mixed feelings, I don't know, it worries me a bit...there's certain service users I can think of whose families would take advantage of that*,* that have already tried to do that. That would give them a sort of doorway to do that...

Bob's ambivalence regarding service users' integration in the community could raise suspicions that professional ambivalence regarding 'the community' may be based on

anxieties about the potential loss of professional relevance. Similar fears might be seen as underpinning the discursive tensions in most of the interviews (discussed above) regarding the need to facilitate independence whilst simultaneously viewing a trusting 'friendship' with service users as key to enabling practice. Ruth, for instance, expressed a high degree of passion for her work, indicating a high level of emotional engagement, but later emphasised the importance of a competence-based approach towards professionalism,

> There's no obligation under personalisation to train your personal assistant...we're required to make sure all our staff become professionally qualified...all those things will be gone under individualisation.

While suspicions regarding professionals' uncertainties about the facilitation of independence cannot be entirely allayed, the findings in this study point in the direction of a general scepticism regarding a one dimensional view of empowerment. If the external goods associated with facilitating independence were viewed as inappropriate in many cases, the interviewees maintained that the primary aim of practice should be to facilitate a meaningful and rewarding life – *however this is conceived*. In some cases interviewees appeared to critique the normative notion that worthwhile citizenship should necessarily be associated with financial independence. Christine, quoted below, was wary as to whether paid employment should always been seen as the unique portal towards a meaningful life,

> Somebody can sit at a coffee machine – they're working, and they're working to earn a wage, but they're doing the same thing all the time because the ultimate

aim is sort of a wage. [But] if somebody feels that what they're doing is

meaningful… then that also ought to be accepted.

As Gibson et al (2009) point out, if idleness is defined according to restrictive criteria, there is a risk of privileging certain activities and depriving people with disabilities from engaging in a range of rewarding activities.

It is inevitable and arguably desirable that practice will be caught up in a creative tension between the requirements of performance (external goods) and the more creative 'ecologies of practice' (internal goods) (Stronach et al. 2002; Fisher and Owen, 2008), and it was evident that these were not regarded as mutually exclusive by the participants in this study. However, the high levels of identification with organisational values seemed to be related to the scope for discretion that enabled professionals to work out solutions in collaboration with service users and others. Practice from this perspective was seen as a quest for excellence that values people for what they are rather than necessarily positioning them as subjects who must gain 'capacity' (in order to achieve a particular blueprint of active citizenship) (Pilnick et al. 2010: 433). It is worth noting that in adopting this stance, the learning disability professionals perspectives evoke the discourse identified among parents of disabled children (Fisher 2007, 2008). This similarity suggests that professional practice within this voluntary organisation rests on authentically experienced emotional engagement that transcends boundaries that are sometimes seen to properly separate both the private from the public; this again is one of the hallmarks of practice shaped by internal goods. In many respects the professionals regarded themselves as uniquely placed to negotiate and

develop practice innovatively and without the imposition of pre-determined outcomes. This seemed to fuel a strong attachment not only to their work but to the organisation itself, although encroaching peformativity remained a commonly expressed concern. As things stand, these pressures had apparently not reached a level at which they detracted substantially from the pursuit of the internal goods of practice.

Conclusion

This study suggests that a commitment to practice and to people with learning disabilities in the voluntary sector is rooted within professionals' affective lives and in a holistic sense of identity that transcends social compartmentalisation. Whereas external goods, such as competencies and benchmarks, may be regarded as exteriorised or separate from a person, internal goods are associated with the enrichment of personal identity through practice. This involves an orientation to practice that rests on the assumption that the self and others are ends in themselves that cannot be merely colonised in the interests of performativity (external goods).

While the emphasis on emotional commitment may be seen by some as turning back the pages of social history by re-infantilising people with learning disabilities, it could be countered that emotions are important for the development of excellence in practice insofar as they are partly constitutive of an agent's moral concern (Stark 2010). While late modernity may be characterised by the decline of grand narratives and universal values, personal narratives and identity remain attached to personal moral orientations of the good (Pickard 2010). Drawing on Touraine's *Critique of Modernism*, King (2006)

discusses how the subject emerges as an ethical actor through a process of reflexivity that leads to deintegration, enabling the subject to free him/herself from constraining social norms and roles. Deintegration is key to this; too much integration will lead to social norms being uncritically absorbed into a subject's identity to the extent that external discourses can only be consumed rather than produced. King (2006), while convinced by Touraine's argument that reflexivity enables the subject to transform him/herself into an actor able to initiate social change is, nevertheless, sceptical of Touraine's focus on the rational and cognitive dimensions of reflexivity. Instead, King suggests that Touraine's approach could be usefully combined with one that also incorporates the emotional self into the process of reflexivity.

Drawing on Elliott (1996), King (2006) argues that emotion unleashes a more creative reflexivity that extends beyond self-monitoring to the ability to be more critical. While King's (2006) study relates specifically to how this approach is applied within re-evaluation counseling, her perspective may have relevance here. While the professionals who participated in this study did not regard the internal and external goods of practice as mutually exclusive, they appeared to understand that the pursuit of internal goods cannot always be compatible with what has been described as the 'evangelical' approach to self-directed support evident in some quarters' (Henwood and Hudson 2008: 10). This sometimes led to a questioning of the preferred policy based routes out of social exclusion which specify desirable outcomes for people with learning disabilities (Hall 2010). At a broader level it may be that, for the professionals who participated in our study, practice involved both a cognitively and emotionally based

reflexivity engendered a form of criticality that resisted the erosion of their own and service users' identities by neo-liberal performance-related ideologies. While emotions prompt incorrect responses as well as virtuous ones, it can be countered that the types of emotions that are generated through the pursuit of internal goods within a practice will be constructive. As MacIntyre (2007) points outs, internal goods involve an open-ended quest for excellence which is achieved in collaboration with others. The qualities or virtues that emerge through this process are transferable to other areas of life.

This paper has considered the identities, professional motivations and perspectives of professionals employed in a voluntary sector organisation that works with people with learning disabilities. It has proposed that professionals are significantly motivated by the pursuit of the internal goods of excellence and that their commitment towards these is underpinned by a form of authentic and ostensibly vitalising emotional engagement. Finally, the study has suggested that in pursuing the internal goods of practice, professionals may transform themselves, developing a criticality that challenges some of the received wisdom regarding what constitutes an empowering intervention. While the scale of this study means that further research is required, the professional discourses discussed here pose questions in relation to how understandings of professional identity and commitment within human service may need to be reconsidered.

Acknowledgements

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[i] MacIntyre (2007: 187) defines practice as '…any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity though which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.'

[ii] Transmutation is the term that Hochschild (1983) applies to describe the process whereby emotions associated with and developed within the private sphere are used for commercial processes.

[iii] In September 2010, VB took up employment at one of the organisation's day centres for adults with learning disabilities. Her role involves personal care, activities such as arts, craft, games

and day trips. VB is currently working with colleagues to set up a café which will be significantly run by the people who attend the centre.

[iv] A larger scale study might reveal more nuanced differences between the perspectives of professionals working in different roles, but this was not the case in this study.