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Jane Ladner and Manuela Nocker

University of Essex
School of Entrepreneurship and Business
Southend-on-Sea
Essex SS1 1LW
e-mail: jaladn@essex.ac.uk
e-mail: mnocker@essex.ac.uk

(Work in progress)
The emergence of a new organisational identity within integrated public service delivery: a case study of the identity construction of 'The Children's Workforce' within a Local Authority.

Abstract

This ethnographic study attempts to broaden the understanding of the way in which discourse is used in identity work to support the construction of a new organisational identity entitled 'The Children's Workforce'. This workforce consists of professionals who have traditionally worked within single agency organisations but are now expected to work increasingly within integrated multi-agency teams. These welfare professionals have been subject to increased political and managerial scrutiny, strategy and control following tragedies such as Maria Caldwell (1973), Victoria Climbie (2003) and 'Baby P' (2007). This paper is part of wider ethnographic research undertaken as part of a doctoral thesis. This thesis will highlight some of the processes whereby individual welfare professionals, through identity work, will develop self-narratives shaped by dominant practices within the organisation. The findings reported in this paper reveal that certain professionals are more exposed and attuned to the dominant discourse whilst others tend to inhabit their default professional identity. Discourse analysis is used to reveal the particular genres and styles with which these professionals construct their habitual identities.

Key words*: organisational identity, identity work, discourse, regulation, public sector, critical ethnography*

This paper focuses on the construction of organisational identity of 'The Children's Workforce' as a dynamic process, heavily shaped by dominant discourses and practices of professionalism, in the public sector. During the past three decades, interest in organisational identity has proliferated in parallel with the growing body of research. Hatch and Schultz (2002) argued that this is a result of organisational struggles with globalisation, mergers, acquisitions and the dominance of conglomerates. Thus, organisational identity has become a major area for research into management and organisational themes within organisations and can broadly be researched at three levels: organisational, social and individual. Much of the research on organisational identity, however, has described a strong relationship and interlinking between these above three levels. It has been argued (Dutton & Duckerich, 1991; Humphreys & Brown, 2002) that focusing on separated levels of analysis can be unhelpful.

Current trends steer away from the monolithic view of organisational identity towards the concept of multiple identities which both connect and separate the individual from the organisational identity and from each other. It may also be argued that the centrality of identity is negotiated continually within the organisation (Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997) and that organisational members alternate between different identities depending on the context (Scott & Lane, 2000). When the question of 'who are we' is asked, there is often not a simple answer. Members of an organisation may have multiple views of that organisation (Albert & Whetten, 1985). In addition, an individual may belong to a number of groups within the organisation and his social identity is likely to be an amalgam of identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The concept of group identities within organisations has cogency within this article as the individuals under analysis can be considered in terms of their organisational, professional and hierarchical identities.

In the main, much of the research on the above has been undertaken through a theoretical lens that is predominantly deterministic (Habernas, 1972). This paper intends to use a different ontological model. On the one hand, the notion of power and authority is central to this research and this can be located both within and outside the organisation. On the other hand, this must be reconciled with the view that identity is a 'becoming' process rather than a 'being' entity. The ongoing debate concerning the role of structure and agency (Hardy, 2001; Giddens, 1984) is, therefore, pertinent to this paper. In order to reconcile and accommodate both positions, this paper will focus on discourse and identity construction within the context of a professional public sector service group

Here, identity work is initially considered as a 'top down' process initiated by government to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce. Government dissatisfaction with public sector workers is not new. This is one more 'identity project' on a trajectory that has resulted from a radical attack on the traditional power of the public sector and, in particular, on the autonomy of welfare professionals (Foster & Wilding, 2000). Arguably, over the past 40 years, successive governments and an increasingly critical society have questioned the integrity and efficiency of welfare professionalism (Foster &

Wilding, ibid) and public services, in general, have been transformed by what has been loosely termed 'New Public Management' (NPM). This is a reform programme that is loose, multifaceted and offers a 'shopping basket' of ideas imported from the private sector (Christensen & Laegreid, 2001; Skalen, 2004).

The transformation process within public services has led to a re-definition of the workforce and du Gay (1996) argued that NPM is an 'identity project'. Inherent in this process is the way in which the discourse of NPM has been used and the need to understand the many, complex and often creative ways in which individuals respond to the dominant discourses of the organisation and the managers within it (Thomas & Davies, 2005).

It is common practice for governments to use public policy to normalise and win acceptance of changes such as NPM. It is public policy that is the medium used to transform organisations and legitimate new organisational identities in an attempt to address social concerns (Motion & Leitch, 2009). Policy, therefore, is a form of identity work which exercises power within the organisation. Post-structuralists argue that this is because the text institutionalises and regulates ways of talking, thinking and acting (Jager & Maier, 2001).

Legitimation of organisational identity can be induced in different ways. Vaara et al. (2006: p.798) identified five legitimation strategies, all of which are pertinent to this paper. The first, normalization, is referenced to the "practices which are to be expected" thus establishing conformity. Authorization results from regulations or conventions or may be manifested through leadership and management. Rationalization focuses on benefits, purposes, functions and outcomes and moralization refers to specific values. Finally, narrativization refers to the mythopoetic aspect of legitimation; that which provides the evidence of what are deemed to be acceptable, appropriate and preferential behaviours.

The social actors presented in this paper, however, are subject to a number of ideologies through which their identities are constructed within relations of power (Mumby, 2001). The integration of these ideologies to form a dominant hegemony is arguably, problematic. It is possible that various hegemonic struggles, professional, economic, political and ideological take place within alliances in an attempt to gain precedence. Within the workforce being studied, it is often the professional identity that presents the dominant hegemony. Carroll and Levy (2008) argued that as organisational challenges and uncertainties are encountered, the individual is more likely to revert to their default identity (the professional identity) which provides a habitual, well known repertoire of assumptions, activities and processes.

During day-to-day working life, individuals within the workforce are subject to regulation and control in terms of their 'ways of being' or social identities. They also "form, repair, strengthen and revise their sense of self" through their engagement with the identity work of the organisation which is manifested in discursive practices (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002: p.619). Organisational

identity can, therefore be considered as a discursive construct. Initially, this occurs at macro level through identity work that is managed and subsequently at micro level through the roles and orientations that emerge within the discourse adopted by social actors.

This paper looks specifically at various identification processes through a critical theoretical lens. This approach increases the understanding of the relationship of identity construction with power, control and resistance. It investigates the regulation of organisational identification within political and managerially inspired discourses and the way in which these new discourses are incorporated into narratives or self-identity. It also studies the way in which social relations are manifested and communicated through a variety of different texts. These social relations are considered as being dialectical in nature (Fairclough, 1995).

The organisation of the paper is as follows. The first section elaborates on the meaning of identity work within organisations and the analysis of this process using Critical Discourse Analysis. The second section focuses on the context of the study which is being undertaken within a small local authority. This is followed by a section on the methods used for the ethnographic research and includes a description of the way in which the text is analysed and interpreted. The scene for the data collection is set and the findings are subsequently discussed through the analysis of genres, styles and legitimation strategies. The final section includes a discussion of the findings and concluding comments.

Introducing a dialectical approach to identity work

Until recently, the term 'identity work' was not commonly located in literature (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Rather, this concept has been implied by terms such as 'identity construction', 'identity management', 'identity achievement' and 'identity project' (Watson, 2008). There is a growing body of empirical research, however, which recognises the importance of the way in which individual social actors (and the group) work on the creation and maintenance of their identities.

Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock (1996) described identity work as a wide range of strategies that individuals and collectives use to create the signs, codes and rites of affirmation that facilitate identification. Examples which constitute identity work could include briefings, conferences, training, meetings and day-to-day conversations. Resources that facilitate identity work include logos, pamphlets, leaflets, policies and strategies.

Within the context of this paper, identity work may be viewed in two different ways. On the one hand, identity work may be undertaken as discourse within small groups and teams who wish to practise their roles. Discourse, in this sense, may be defined as a system of texts that bring objects into being (Parker, 1992). Power, therefore, is not a social reality beyond that created during interaction within the group. The group exercises control over the members as they reflect the expectations and perceived explanations of

others. Through a shared culture, roles and social controls exist and individuals have choices as to how they respond. This view of identity work limits the influence of social structures and is often referred to as social constructionism.

At macro level, work exercises power in an organisation because the process institutionalises and regulates ways of talking, thinking and acting. Discourse, comprising the identity work in this case, could be defined as "an institutionalised way of talking that regulates and reinforces action and thereby exerts power" (Jager & Maier, 2001: p. 35).

Attempts to reconcile this debate are evident in Structuration Theory (Giddens, 1984), Institutional Theory (Phillips et al., 2004) and The Social Theory of Discourse (Fairclough, 1992; 1995; 2001). The latter is a dialectical approach which encapsulates the relationship between discourse and social structure. On the one hand, discourse is shaped and constrained by the social structure and on the other, discourse is socially constitutive. In this sense, discourse is a practice that not only represents the world but constitutes and constructs the world in meaning (Fairclough, 1992).

Organisational transformation is thus, extensively discourse-led, in the sense that it is the discourse that changes first. As a new discourse enters and achieves salience or dominance within the organisation, or is re-contextualised within it, dialectical processes may ensue during which discourse is enacted through new procedures, routines and ways of thinking. Discourse is then inculcated within new social identities and subsequently materialised in a new physical form (Fairclough, 1995).

The specific modes of identification of 'The Children's Workforce' will be investigated using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA has three properties which are pertinent to this study. First, there is an emphasis on social relations of a group in relation to a variety of stakeholders. Secondly, the dialectical relations to be investigated will be power and discourse that aim to force identities onto professionals as well as the legitimation of the identity construction in terms of an analysis of the 'internal relations' of such discourses. Thirdly, CDA is trans-disciplinary and so will cut across the links between the political, social welfare, sociological and managerial discourses and practices supporting the enactment of particular identities that 'make up' the overall identity construction of 'The Children's Workforce'.

This study adopts a 'critical realist' approach which claims that there is a real world including a social world which exists independently of our knowledge about it (Bhaskar, 1986; Sayer, 2000). In the following section, we outline the context of the research.

The background for the case

The context for this paper focuses on the emergence of 'Integrated Children's Services' within a small local authority in the East of England during a critical five year period. Children's Services have been evolving in all local

authorities as a result of government legislation aimed at streamlining, and thereby improving, the protection of vulnerable children and young people from abuse. The integrated services that have developed as a result, have paved the way to a new organisational identity, 'The Children's Workforce', within this area of the public sector.

Since 2005, in her role as Children's Workforce Development Manager within this local authority, the first author has had a unique opportunity to manage and study the identification process of this workforce at an organisational level. More recently, she has taken responsibility for the evaluation of progress for this identification process as part of a government co-ordinated initiative. She is also a member of this workforce and interacts with professionals from a variety of backgrounds. This workforce is made up of 'multi-agency professionals' who work within both single and integrated teams and focused on the support of vulnerable children and young people.

'The Children's Workforce', therefore, is characterised by the notion of multidisciplinary working practices and the concept of blurred professional roles and boundaries. This shift is not just a response to government policy. Professional practices are also being challenged by a more demanding, sophisticated public who are critical of expert knowledge and professional autonomy (Wright & Rowe, 2005) and are morally outraged by recent child protection crises.

Although, in theory, the relationship between institutional, organisational and professional identity should be compatible, as a participant observer, the first author is increasingly aware that the reality is far more complex. For example, 'The Children's Workforce' currently includes those who have robust pre-existing identities which may be linked to their profession, hierarchies, teams or work groups.

Identity work resources designed by government agencies to develop new intergroup relationships, loyalty and commitment to 'The Children's Workforce' appear to challenge the pre-existing occupational and professional identities outlined above and traditional ways of working. The professional is now being asked to work in ways that are more flexible, reflective, team orientated, in continual development, market orientated, managerial and entrepreneurial (du Gay, 2000b, Laming, 2009). Traditional working practices, professional autonomy and role boundaries are seemingly under threat.

The identity work involved in the construction of 'The Children's Workforce' has been heavily politicised and is the subject of managerial control within the organisation. Government agencies have orchestrated the production of the resources and materials to be used in this identity work. Regular evaluation of progress has been built into the programme of identity construction. Not only is this process subject to government inspection, but considerable funding has been allocated to each service to underpin development work.

The following principles and values that characterise the identity of 'The Children's Workforce' have been located in government policy:

- The ambition and capacity to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for children and young people
- The competence and confidence to work safely with children and young people
- The ability to inspire trust and respect from children, young people, parents and colleagues
- The ability to communicate effectively and strategically with children, young people, parents and colleagues
- A knowledge and understanding of child and young person's social, emotional and behavioural development
- The ability to safeguard vulnerable children and young people and promote their welfare
- The capability to work effectively and productively in multi agency teams
- The understanding of the 'when and how' to share information about clients.

(Sources: HM Government (2005) Common Core of Skills and Knowledge)

This paper investigates how the above are legitimated during the operationalisation of identity construction.

The ethnographic case study

This article focuses on just one aspect of a larger ethnographic study undertaken by the first author as part of doctoral research into the construction of the identity of 'The Children's Workforce' since 2006. The workforce in this local authority is approximately 3000 in number and comprises (in the main) teachers, social workers, youth workers, parent support workers, early years workers health workers and police.

This is a 'close-up' investigation of an organisation undergoing a government-regulated transformation. The larger investigation will involve the analysis of data from a variety of sources within the organisation. This data, gathered through observation, listening, asking questions and collecting documents will illuminate issues that emerge throughout the inquiry. As far as possible, the social world of the organisation will be studied 'in situ' so as to enable access to meanings and interpretation.

The value of the data generated from the participants observed will enable the reader to view the social world of those being studied. The qualitative nature of this research will ensure that the researcher will "attempt to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: p.3).

As an ethnographer within the organisation, the first author will explore how individuals through interaction may develop shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs and discourse. A more critical stance will be adopted, however, as a response to the political power and authority vested in the identification

process in this organisation. Critical ethnographies attempt "to expose the hidden agenda, challenge oppressive assumptions, describe power relations, and generally critique the taken-for-granted. They are explicitly political and critical but do not consider this to undermine the scientific nature of what they do. Indeed, critical ethnographers argue that every attempt at representation has consequences and that there is no neutrality" (Madison, 2005: p.8).

For the purposes of this paper, we focus on one aspect of the ongoing identity work within a 'Team around the Child and Family' meeting. These meetings occur monthly and can last up to three hours. They are closed to the public and confidential. Their purpose is to discuss and address the needs of vulnerable children and young people. The meeting is led by a 'lead professional' and involves a range of different welfare practitioners working together to support an individual child or family. This team focuses on vulnerable children and young people with additional and complex needs. The family background and the social, emotional and behavioural health of the child are shared and discussed within the context of a CAF (Common Assessment Framework). These panels are chaired by a Locality Co-ordinator who oversees the conduct of the meeting and a lead professional is identified for each case. It is the responsibility of this lead professional to take responsibility for the interventions and the quality assurance of the assessments for each child.

These panels operate in each locality within the local authority and function to consider the needs of vulnerable children and families. A case is triggered by the completion of a CAF. Once the CAF has been processed, it is forwarded electronically to the Locality Co-ordinator (the Chair of the Panel). After discussion, multi-agency support (interventions) is put in place for these families and progress is reviewed after a three month period. A designated lead professional co-ordinates and supports the planning and review of these interventions.

The 'Team around the Child and Family' meeting analysed in this paper was filmed in May 2010. Nine welfare professionals were present and can be observed seated 'board room style' in a purpose built room. The welfare professions represented include: a Teacher / Head of Year, Connexions, Youth Offending Service, Early Years / Parent Support, Educational Psychology, Social Work, School Nurse and a Children's Centre Co-ordinator. A Chairman introduces the case for discussion but swiftly defers to the lead professionals who are a Head of Year at a local secondary school and a representative of Early Years / Parent Support.

A video recording of this 'Child and Family' meeting was undertaken as a means of producing a faithful and realistic representation of the social world of these multi-agency professionals. The main methodological issues that have arisen from this method concern the need for confidentiality and reflexivity. In order to ensure confidentiality, children have been referred to by their first name during filming and this is changed in the transcript.

Analysing and interpreting text

Reflexivity is a key issue that must be addressed due to the integral role of the first author in the identification process. Three aspects of reflexivity are considered. The first is introspective and describes the way in which the author is involved in the production of the ethnographic text. This is defined by the way in which she is involved with the organisational environment, the reliability and rigour of the ethnography and a discussion of problems encountered. Introspective reflexivity also covers the way in which the first author understands the organisational environment and how sense is made of this.

Within this context, the central issue that will have to be addressed is the sensitivity of the position of the first author as a senior manager within the organisation. She has a vested interest in the success of this identification process of this workforce. She also interacts continuously with the workforce over a considerable period of time, often using highly interactive methods. It could be argued that the preservation of 'objectivity' might prove difficult.

To reduce her impact on the conduct of the meeting, therefore, the first author did not attend the filming of the Child and Family Panel; this was undertaken by another member of the workforce. Despite this, consideration has been given to the possible impact of the filming on the behaviours of the group. In addition, observation of the Team around the Child and Family meeting was undertaken after the filming of this event. She has, therefore, minimised her impact and distanced herself from the data gathering process. The choice of the team meeting ensured that all professions and hierarchical groups were represented.

The second issue of reflexivity refers to the way in which the author understands and makes sense of the way in which all the different and multiple activities under observation construct and shape the identification process. This will include an explanation of the way in which observation of a range of activities can provide a "nuanced and reflexive account of the organisation and the myriad means which make and maintain the organisation" (Latour & Woolgar, 1986). This may be problematic as social constructionists contest the theory that language reflects reality. They argue that social actors conceptualise in a way that is decentred, fragmented, relational, evolving and incomplete (Kvale, 1992; Wetherell & Maybin, 1996). Their differing interpretations will, therefore, construct reality within a specific social situation. In addition, the focus of discourse analysis (the chosen method for analysis) is on the construction and function of texts.

Situated knowledge of the workforce under observation, however, may enable an enhanced understanding of the political nuances and influences and which will enrich and inform the data. It is only by being involved in this identity construction process over a number of years, that the first author fully understands the complexities and subtleties of the issues under investigation.

For example, she understands the jargon, vocabulary, vision and values of the workforce and can interpret the communications in the transcript.

The third issue concerns the first author's use of reflexivity as a social critique. As a researcher, she is observing people who are subject to the power and regulation of a variety of 'others' including herself. The issue will be to manage the power imbalance and openly acknowledge any tensions that may arise from these different social positions.

The issue of the distribution of power and status within this research process will, therefore, mirror her 'real life' role of project manager. She will have to reflect on the way in which she 'allows' the voices of all participants to be heard; a key feature of functional reflexivity. Although she has responsibility for the development of the research framework and the organisation of the fieldwork, she has chosen a research method that has neutralised her involvement.

The transcription of the discussion and description of the 'Team around the Child and Family' meeting will be undertaken using well established conventions for Critical Discourse Analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis is based on realist social ontology (Sayer, 2000). This viewpoint considers that social events such as 'talk and social structures (e.g. language) constitute social reality. The relationship between these two is mediated by social practices or 'orders of discourse' (Fairclough, 1995: p.265). An 'order of discourse' according to Fairclough (ibid) is a "specific configuration of discourses, genres and styles…which constitute distinctive resources for meaning making in texts".

Discourses are 'ways of representing' aspects of the social world and have a purely discursive or semiotic character. Genres may be defined as 'ways of acting' which includes interactions which occur, for example, during consultation or discussion. Styles may be viewed as 'ways of being' or a particular identity. Genres and styles, as depicted by professional consultations or managerial styles include behaviours and dispositions as well as ways of communicating. These 'orders of discourse' correspond to the differing aspects or facets of 'The Children's Workforce'. They also have the potential to conflict when relations are unequal and this is manifested, for instance, in resistance and marginalisation. In order to support the reader to interpret the empirical data, direct quotations will be used to ensure that the interpretation is transparent as discourse analysis can engender multiple meanings rather than fortify representations.

Setting the scene; the 'Team around the Child and Family' meeting

During the meeting of the Team around the Child and Family, the lead professionals narrate their stories regarding the family under scrutiny although it is inferred in the transcript that this family has already undergone a previous review. The family consists of a lone mother and her three children. Evidence of domestic abuse from previous relationships is discussed. The

mother is described as vulnerable and depressed and with complex financial problems. Her eldest child is fifteen. In his final few months at school, he is underachieving and truanting, has an older girlfriend and is known to the police.

The middle girl is thirteen; very reserved and shy. She does not have obvious problems and is producing satisfactory work at school. The youngest girl is four and appears to have emotional and behavioural problems which have been observed in the nursery school which she attends.

This case is discussed for approximately three quarters of an hour. Throughout the meeting, the family history is narrated and welfare professionals work together to discuss possible interventions and to organise systems and processes which will support and help this vulnerable family.

The conduct prescribed to 'The Children's Workforce' is set out in myriad government policies and strategies published between 2004 and 2010. It is overtly expressed as a set of principles entitled 'The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge' (HM Government 2005) and we have outlined these eight characteristics on page 6. According to Chiapello and Fairclough (2002; p.232) principles and values that characterise a dominant discourse such as 'The Children's Workforce' are enacted as a genre. They (ibid) define genres as "diverse ways of acting, of producing social life, in the semiotic mode".

Findings I: looking at work practices

The genre of 'The Children's Workforce' is manifest in practices such as: 'capacity to improve outcomes', 'competence to work safely', 'ability to communicate effectively', 'ability to safeguard', 'capability to work effectively with others', 'understanding how to share information'. These are integral characteristics of The Children's Workforce (p6). The transcript of the filmed 'Team around the Child and Family' meeting was analysed within the context of this genre.

Analysis of this transcript demonstrates that 'The Children's Workforce' has developed as a generic form and this is evidenced during the discussion. In the main, the particular practices located in the text focus on: (i) improving the effectiveness of communication and (ii) of the interventions that are put in place for the children.

The lead professionals demonstrate their capacity to communicate across the workforce and make the following comments:

"*We do try to keep meetings…between myself, the attendance officer and her so that she can get to know us and build a relationship*", (Transcript p.2:7)

"*I have spoken to Connexions*", (p.2:7)

"*I have spoken to our Police Liaison Officer*", (p.13:14-15)

Their ability to communicate effectively with children and young people is also overtly demonstrated throughout the meeting:

"We've sort of just had little chats", (p.1:16)

"She's quiet but will open up when she's been relaxed", (p11:1-2)

The second key work practice; the management of interventions is also discussed by both Lead Professionals:

"*There are huge money issues and I know we have spoken to mum…about is she getting all the right benefits etc"*, (p9:24-25)

"*We need to address with mum why Jason is becoming a young carer*", (p5: 23-24)

"*I have made an appointment with James Warner who deals with benefits and getting people back to a job"*, (p9: 30-31)

"I've got a Freedom Programme on at the moment which is... I don't know whether you are aware that it helps people out of abusive relationships", (p4:26-28)

"We have a thing called 'Coffee Mates' as well which is for people who have gone through depression", (p6:25-27)

During the meeting seventeen different types of intervention are mentioned and discussed. These range from formal processes of 'Targeted Support' such as supervision from the Police Liaison Officer to informal Interventions during a chat and a cup of coffee. However, members of the group other than lead professionals, merely offer to improve outcomes within their professional remit.

"*I can certainly liaise with the sexual health team and facilitate"*, (School Nurse, p.8: 33-34))

Both lead professionals relate conversations that have engaged children and parents in safeguarding strategies. It is more difficult to ascertain how the other professionals are, or have been, engaged in communication with these vulnerable clients.

All professionals demonstrate that they have the strategies to safeguard. They also demonstrate the ease with which they communicate as a 'multi-agency team'. The group members continually discuss the way in which each welfare organisation can provide help and support to the family.

The Chair lists the priorities at the end of the case conference and sums up:

"…The Freedom Programme for mum; Youth Offending Service Early Intervention for Jason; young Persons Drug and Alcohol Team for Jason; Relate for the whole family; Strengthening Families for mum and Janine; CHIL because Jason and Janine potentially are carers; and a school nurse and sexual health nurse working together with Jason". (p14:10-16)

Thus, the sharing of information is the main focus of discussion during the meeting. Although most service areas contribute a piece of the 'jigsaw' or the 'life tapestry' of this family, the lead professionals dominate this narrative. Throughout the meeting, the other members work together to enact 'integrated working' practices but the targeted support they offer is 'single agency'. As the meeting progresses, the emphasis shifts from the sharing of information to the organisation of the interventions required for protection and welfare. The Chair outlines these at the end of the meeting and they reflect the range of multi agency services on offer.

Findings II: looking at ways of being

During the meeting, members draw on a particular range of styles or 'ways of being'. These styles are related to the identification of members in the group, for example, the lead professionals demonstrate specific styles of leadership and management. Styles are also linked to value systems (Fairclough, 1995). The particular styles located in the text focus on the professional respect and knowledge demonstrated and generated by the individual members.

The lead professionals comment on:

"I'm building a relationship with her because that's what I do", (p.4:21-22)

"I'm concerned with the way she feels about things…so it would be good if we could get together", (p.4:8-9)

"*Jason and I have a very good relationship",* (p.1:27)

"*I often take her into our room where we sit and have coffee and sit and chat".* (p.5: 30-31)

Members of the group demonstrate tacitly how they inspire trust and respect in their clients and their confidence in working with children, young people and parents. In addition, there is evidence that members are also trying to earn the respect of their colleagues as they narrate the interventions that they have put in place and their knowledge of the family.

Reference is also made to their professional knowledge of the social, emotional and behavioural development of the clients.

"He is a bright boy", (p.2:23)

"The child is quite healthy but she has trouble interacting with other people and is quite aggressive sometimes, so I have concerns about her behaviour", (p.5:12-13)

."We are looking into helping him re- engage really with life in society and particularly with school", (p.2:12-13)

The lead professionals dominate the meeting. Their input takes up 64% of the duration of the meeting. The atmosphere is collegiate, purposeful and focused. All professionals appear keen to demonstrate their competence and their ability to inspire trust and confidence; particularly from their fellow colleagues.

Findings III: looking at legitimation strategies

The final order is 'discourse' and this is used to "win conviction and enhance the prospects for action" (Fairclough, 1995).   In order to achieve this, the text must address legitimation of the genre and style. The first author analysed the legitimation of the discourse by using the five strategies identified by Varra et al. (2006) and mentioned on p.2: normalization, authorization, rationalization, moralization and narrativization.

Throughout the meeting, the members of the group normalized and sanctioned practice, established transparency and reinforced accepted behaviours.

The Chair asks:

"*Obviously you've all had a copy of the CAF profile this afternoon",* (p.3:28-29)

The Educational Psychologist states;

"*I could bring some developmental charts and perhaps look where she is with her numbers and her pre-mathematical skills".* (p.4:15-16)

Members continued to demonstrate their professional authority and expertise. Typical examples included:

"*His case is being presented by his Head of Year",* (p.1:3-4)

"I have advised him", (p1:33)

"Yes, he's definitely suitable for early intervention", (p3:19-20)

Rationalization is achieved through the stating of the benefits, practices, purposes and outcomes of particular interventions and actions. The transcript is littered with proposals, ideas and possible outcomes from all professionals.

There are fewer examples of specific moral values to be found in the transcript. These included phrases such as

"..so I have concerns about her behaviour", (p.5:11)

"What on earth made you do that", (p9:18-19)

"We think he was missing a male role model", (p.3:3-4)

Finally, the transcript predominantly takes the form of narrative. Professionals narrate the story of the family and reported their response in terms of their actions and behaviours.

These legitimation strategies provide a sense of the ethical dilemmas experienced in the day-to-day practices of this workforce. In the main, these centre on professional authority which is manifested in their roles and the support systems they provide and professional accountability.

Discussion and conclusion

An initial analysis of the data appears to suggest that the identity of 'The Children's Workforce' has been inculcated within the team members as a set of universally understood values and principles inherent in the everyday working practices of the team under observation. Discourse analysis has distinguished three different practices:

(1) 'ways of doing' characterised by endeavours to improve the effectiveness of working practices such as communication and the management of interventions to protect the vulnerable;

(2) 'ways of being' manifested through demonstrations of professional respect and professional knowledge;

(3) the performance of strategies to legitimate identification. This is evidenced as (i) professional authority when acting out the roles and managing the support systems and (ii) professional accountability demonstrated by individual responsibility and the resulting actions necessary for the safety and protection of the vulnerable children under discussion.

The analysis of the transcript of the meeting indicates that the members of 'The Children's Workforce' observed are developing identity in a generic form. Communication systems have been formalised within the habitual practices of 'Team around the Child and Family' meetings. Panel members understand their roles, the importance of frank and informative discussion and are able to suggest a variety of solutions or interventions to safeguarding issues. It is also evident in the transcript that communication is dominated by a minority within the team; the lead professionals. These 'leads' demonstrate 'ways of doing' in an integrated way across all agencies, they appear familiar with a range of different professional practices; they communicate these and

manage the interventions. Most of the other members of the team continue to act and communicate as 'single agency professionals'.

Professional respect, although tacit, is manifested throughout the transcript as team members seek to demonstrate their professional knowledge and understanding of the problems experienced by the client group. Again, it is the lead professionals who are able to demonstrate, more convincingly, the way in which they are able to form productive and effective relationships based on mutual respect with both clients and fellow welfare professionals.

The legitimation of the identification process is normalized, rationalized and narrativized by all members of the team. Authority and control appear to be the main prerogative of the Chair and the lead professionals. They manage the procedures and protocols of the meeting, maintain the momentum and propose the interventions. Professional accountability also appears to rest with them and they take this responsibility seriously. The word 'concern' features regularly throughout the text.

In summary, it would appear that the discourse of this identification process has been legitimated and there are no dissenting voices. This hegemonic discourse describes what the representation of that identity should be; the 'imaginaries' (Fairclough, 1995). The analysis in this study infers that these imaginaries may have been inculcated but not necessarily universally enacted. Sayer (2000) suggested that there is a moderate form of 'social constructivism' which "recognises that discourses may construct and reconstruct social practices, social structures and social life, but which also recognises that there are no guarantees of such constructive effects" (Sayer, ibid)

Analysis of the discourse may indicate that although the organisational identity under investigation is of relevant permanence it may have 'limited dialectical flow between the elements' (Harvey, 1996). This may be due to the habitus of the members (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) which may limit professional knowledge and understanding. It could also be a result of their lack of access to a client base. Finally, it may be a result of the internal structures of the organisation. For example, a particular service area may not internalise the need to change the discourse at the same rate as other service areas within the organisation.

In conclusion, the process of identification in this case study is ambiguous. This process is also highly subjective and individual members of a team may adhere to their own views and values at the expense of those of the rest of the team or group. In this sense, this paper aims to contribute to the understanding of a complex and emergent organisational identity in the context of a highly regulated environment.

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