Professional integrity, social work and the ethics of distrust

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Abstract: This paper explores the relevance of the concept of professional integrity in the context of the current climate of managerialism and marketisation in the social welfare field. It considers the implications for professional integrity of the present organisational climate based on an 'ethics of distrust', the nature of the concepts of 'integrity' and 'professional integrity', and the possibility of professional integrity as part of an 'ethics of resistance'. It draws on literature from moral philosophy and on interviews with senior practitioners in social work and related occupations.

Key words: social work, integrity, ethics, distrust, resistance, narrative accounts

Introduction

> 'Integrity' is a word like 'honor' – its close kin – that sometimes seems all but archaic in the modern business world. (Solomon, 1997, p.215).

Social work and the ethics of distrust

As I will discuss in the next section, the term 'integrity' is generally used to refer to consistency in adhering to a set of principles and to people and actions that are honest, fair and truthful. 'Professional integrity' refers to integrity exhibited in professional life on the basis of a specific set of professional principles or values. If this characterisation of professional integrity is accepted, then it could be argued that there are certain features of the current organisational climate within which social work is practised that make professional integrity difficult to achieve. As Harris (2003, p. 56) comments, 'If markets and businesses are everywhere, it is much harder to think outside them'. In the context of market competition, economy of

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resources and maximising profit, then ruthlessness and high performance may be more important than honesty. In a managerialist culture (see Banks, 2004; Clarke, Gewirtz & McLaughlin, 2000), more concern may be placed on reaching predetermined targets and following prescribed procedures than that practitioners remain true to the values of their profession. The concern may be for doing a particular task 'well' (that is, according to the prescribed guidelines or procedures, in a fashion that is auditable), rather than for doing a 'good job' overall or for being a morally good practitioner.

As Harris acknowledges, it is managerialism rather than the quasi-marketisation of the social welfare field that has had the most profound effect. This move to regulate more closely the activities of professionals, by increased external monitoring and demands for accountability has been characterised by Chadwick and Levitt (1997, p.57) as 'the ethics of distrust'. Whilst they do not elaborate further on what they mean by 'the ethics of distrust', I think it is being used here to refer to a set of externally imposed standards (ethics) that are based on the premise that practitioners cannot be trusted (distrust). The term is apt in that, although such measures are designed to increase trustworthiness, they can actually contribute to a further decline in trust. As O'Neill (2002a; 2002b) points out, the bodies that impose and enforce the standards are no more trusted than the professionals themselves. Furthermore, as professionals become more alienated from their roles, and doing the right thing is equated with following the rule or procedure, then the grounds for placing trust in them diminishes yet further (see Smith, 2001 for a useful discussion of diminishing trust in social work). In such a context, it could be argued, professional integrity is not required or valued, as professional integrity is premised on independence from rules and procedures, standing back and linking them to a broader set of goals, purposes and values.

On the basis of this discussion, it may be tempting to agree with Solomon (quoted at the start of this paper), that the term 'integrity' seems somewhat archaic, not just in the modern business world, but in life generally - in a world characterised as 'postmodern', where people's lives are fragmented, their job roles specialised and specified and identities are fluid. The concept of integrity, with its connotations of continuity, perhaps of essentialism or a fixed identity, seems to belong to a former era of certainty and solidity. Sociologists and philosophers are theorising about fragility, fragmentation and superficiality. Professional associations and regulatory bodies are developing codes of ethics and practice guidelines with a focus on principles of action and rules of conduct, rather than enduring qualities of character. Professional practitioners are focusing on performance of tasks and attaining outputs and outcomes. These trends in theory, policy and practice could be taken to suggest that:

1. The achievement of professional integrity (as a kind of moral wholeness) is not possible. The world does not work in that way any more, even if it once did.
2. The aspiration or ideal of professional integrity (as something worth working towards, even if not achievable) is misguided, irrelevant or not useful.

In this paper I want to argue against both these propositions with particular reference to the social welfare work. In relation to the first statement, I will suggest that the achievement of integrity in professional life is difficult rather than impossible. This relies on a certain view of 'integrity' as involving competence in resolving conflicts and priorities, readjusting ideals and compromising principles. It is about the work people do to sustain their fragile selves - what Walker (1998) calls 'reliable accountability'. Regarding the second point, some features of policy guidance, codes of conduct and accounts given by professional practitioners suggest that integrity is still regarded as relevant and useful in public and private life.

Philosophical perspectives on the nature of integrity

We will now examine the concepts of 'integrity' and 'professional integrity' from a philosophical point of view.

'Integrity' as wholeness

'Integrity' is literally about 'wholeness'. Our ordinary usage of the term suggests that this 'wholeness' may be created through an act of unification of various aspects or parts, or it may be maintained or preserved (as in 'remaining intact'). It is often used to describe a quality of an object, person or action, for example: 'that vase has a certain integrity'; 'my father is a man of integrity'; 'she acted with integrity'. In this paper we are not concerned with the application of integrity to objects (often used in an aesthetic context), but are interested in integrity in relation to people and actions. In particular, we are interested in moral integrity – as distinct from other types of integrity that may not necessarily have a normative or moral content, such as intellectual integrity, artistic integrity or bodily integrity (de Raeve, 1997). Frequently when the term 'integrity' is used in relation to people and actions, it is 'moral integrity' that is meant. In this context, it is often used when people appear or claim to hold onto their moral principles or commitments (exhibiting consistency), often in the face

of adversity or pressures. The term integrity is used particularly when people exhibit what is generally regarded as honest, fair or truthful behaviour (McFall, 1987, p. 5). Sometimes the term is used loosely simply to refer to someone who upholds conventionally accepted moral standards.

In using the term 'integrity' as a moral quality (as in 'man of integrity'), philosophers have often focused on the person's conduct/actions taken as a whole, perhaps over the whole of a life lived so far (MacIntyre, 1981; Williams, 1981) . When referring to particular actions ('she acted with integrity') a judgement may be made in the context of consistency with past actions and coherence with known values and commitments. This is, however, a problematic account of 'integrity', as it tends to focus on the form of 'integrity' (consistency, wholeness) and can led to a view of integrity as part of a rather grandiose life plan, which can then be criticised as archaic in the (post)modern world. There are other accounts of integrity that may be more useful.

'Integrity' as reliable accountability

Cox *et al. (2002),* following Calhoun (1995), criticise accounts of integrity that have been given by various philosophers that focus simply on the form of integrity. They are particularly critical of what they call the 'integrated self' view (integration of desires, evaluations and commitments into a whole), and the 'identity' view (integrity as adherence to identity-conferring projects). These accounts allow for people and actions that are 'morally despicable' (for example Hitler and his project to eliminate the Jews) to be characterised as demonstrating integrity provided that they exhibit consistency and coherence. Cox *et al.* argue both for an essentially normative aspect to integrity and for an account of integrity that may require abandoning one's commitments. They argue for an account of integrity as 'a capacity to respond to change in one's values or circumstances, a kind of continual remaking of the self, as well as a capacity to balance responsibility for one's work and thought' (Cox *et al.*, 2002, p. 41). This is a much more dynamic account, which does not require a concept of an unchanging self or rigid identity.

This account does, however, rely on a version of virtue ethics theory and needs to be understood in this context. They characterise 'integrity' as a 'complex and thick virtue term'. A virtue is usually regarded as an excellence of character that contributes towards human flourishing (see Crisp & Slote, 1997; Hursthouse, 1999; Slote, 2000). Unlike many virtue theorists, Cox *et al.* regard integrity as a virtue in its own right, rather than simply the unification of all the other virtues. They use the Aristotelian characterisation of virtue as a mean between two excesses (although Aristotle himself does not discuss integrity as a virtue in this way). They suggest that it stands between the

qualities associated with inflexibility such as arrogance, rigidity, dogmatism, sanctimoniousness and those associated with superficiality and artificiality, such as capriciousness, weakness of will, self-deception, hypocrisy. The person of integrity, they suggest, 'lives in a fragile balance between every one of these all-too-human traits' (Cox *et al.*, 2002, p. 41). They also argue that there are normative restrictions on what a person of integrity may do, suggesting that attributions of integrity presuppose 'fundamental moral decency' (p. 41). That is, they act on commitments that a reasonable person could accept as important (p. 65). This, of course, leaves open for debate what is regarded as 'fundamental moral decency', but we can assume that the substantive content mentioned earlier (such as honesty, fairness, truth-telling) is what would count.

This account of integrity as a virtue (another archaic sounding word, but it is in current usage in moral philosophy to characterise an increasingly popular ethical theory) does seem a plausible view that takes account of many features of our ordinary usage of the term, including the fact that it is about both wholeness (form) and soundness (moral content). Walker (1998), writing from a feminist perspective, is equally critical of accounts of integrity that focus on its form, especially those that see integrity as requiring a whole life plan (Rawls, 1973), unconditional commitments or projects (Williams, 1981) or as part of a quest (MacIntyre, 1981). She develops an 'expressive-collaborative' approach to ethics, which regards the story as the basic form of representation for moral problems (Walker 1998, p. 110). Within this, integrity can be regarded as a kind of reliable accountability that we construct in the stories we tell about our relationships, identities and values. Stories are reworked and revised and help us to see 'sense-making connections [that] serve to bundle up varied or repeating actions into legible configurations, such as neglecting a friendship or trying to disown a past' (Walker 1998, p.110). Integrity is, I think, for Walker, a kind of moral competence. She argues that the point of integrity is 'to maintain – or re-establish – our reliability in matters involving important commitments and goods' (Walker, 1998, p. 106). It is based on the assumption that human lives are changing and are deeply entangled with others. We are often seeking, therefore, a local dependability (rather than global wholeness) and a responsiveness to the moral costs of error and change rather than consistency.

More could be said about integrity as it has featured in the literature of moral philosophy. However, the purpose of this brief overview is to provide a backdrop for the discussion of the relevance of the concept (in its various interpretations) to contemporary professional life, and in particular, professional social work.

Professional integrity

Our discussion so far has focused on the generic concept of personal integrity. How does this relate to professional integrity? If personal integrity involves acting in accordance with one's own values, commitments and principles, then it would seem logical for professional integrity to entail acting in accordance with the values, goals and principles of the profession to which one belongs. This assumes that there are discrete professions with commonly accepted sets of values and goals. This is a debate in itself, with which I have engaged elsewhere (see Banks, 2004). However, it is not necessary to mount a defence of professions (their existence, validity or usefulness) for us to explore what accounts can be given of the nature of professional integrity. Even if professions are questionable entities or at least in a state of flux, this does not prohibit the use of a concept of professional integrity (although it may make it difficult to implement). I will now outline four possible accounts of professional integrity.

1. Unity of personal and professional life

(1.a) Strong version
Vocation: Unity of personal goals and principles with those of the profession and the specific work role one is performing. This seems to be what is often meant by 'vocation' or calling. The person is able to live out their personal moral values in and through their work (see Bellah, Masden, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton, 1988, p. 66; Blum, 1994, p.104). An ideal version of this would be that there are no contradictions and conflicts (perhaps a Buddhist monk may come close to this). A more realistic version would be that the aim is to reconcile personal and professional values and roles as far as possible, which may involve recognition of the need for compromise and readjustment of both personal and professional values. Regarding social work as a vocation in an ideal sense may be relatively rare these days due to the organisational constraints in both voluntary and statutory sector work. There is no doubt, however, that many practitioners still hope for some congruence between the values of ordinary life and work.

(1.b) Weak version
Everyday integrity: Acting with personal integrity in one's work role. This is merely an extension of personal integrity into the work context. It does not rely on an assumption that there are discrete professions with distinctive principles and goals. It would entail acting consistently in terms of the ordinarily accepted values (honesty, fairness and so on). It is congruent with the view that there is no distinctive set of professional ethics – that is, the ethics of professional life are the same as those of ordinary life (Goldman,

1980; Veatch, 1981) – and so 'professional integrity' would simply be 'everyday integrity' manifested in the work role.

2. Holding to the principles of the profession

(2.a) Strong version

Ideal professional integrity: Holding true to the goals or service ideals of the profession. This assumes discrete professions with identifiable service ideals, such as health for medicine, or welfare for social work (Airaksinen, 1994; Koehn, 1994; Oakley & Cocking, 2001). The notion of 'service ideal' encompasses both the idea of giving for the public good ('service') and a semi-transcendent value or aspiration ('ideal') (see Banks 2004, pp.53-58 for a fuller discussion of service ideals). This goes beyond what the professional codes and guidance currently promote, and is what I think Cox *et al.* (2002, p. 103) mean when they refer to the pursuit of a 'semi-independent ideal of what the profession should be at its best'. This might lead one to stand firm against one's employer or indeed the professional association's current principles because they conflict with what is judged to be the broad goal of the profession. This is the account of professional integrity perhaps most commonly encountered in the literature of professional ethics (for example, Oakley and Cocking, 2001, pp. 82-3). However, it may be less easy to achieve in practice if the notion of discrete professions with commonly recognised service ideals is disintegrating.

(2.b) Weak version

Professionalism: Steadfastly adhering to the currently accepted general principles of the profession and the specific codes/guidance produced by professional bodies in carrying out one's work role. Cox *et al.* (2002, p. 103) have characterised this as 'professionalism' rather than 'professional integrity' in so far as it amounts to 'pursuing the extant demands of the profession', rather than the semi-transcendent ideals or goals mentioned in version (2.a). This might involve sticking with the commonly accepted standards of confidentiality in the profession in a context where the employing agency demands a different standard.

Practitioner perspectives: The possibility of professional integrity

The next part of the paper draws on a series of interviews I undertook with senior social welfare professionals (people working in social, community and youth work) about changes in their work and ethical difficulties they faced (further details of the three group and 32 individual semi-structured interviews are given in Banks, 2004, pp. 128-9). The interviewees were asked about the

impact of new accountability requirements (working to procedures, targets, outcomes) and inter-professional working. I did not specifically ask about professional integrity itself (indeed the term was rarely, if ever, used by either interviewer or interviewees) or about what might be thought of as components of professional integrity (such as impact on the sense of self or professional identity). Generally the interviewees recounted their views and opinions and gave practical and ethical reasons or justifications as to why they thought some of the changes in the work were beneficial or otherwise (see Banks, 2004, Chapters 5 and 6). They discussed their roles and featured themselves as moral actors in some of the stories they told, but generally they did not offer (and were not asked for) accounts that focused on their motivations, feelings, emotions or challenges to their sense of self or personal or professional identity. However, when analysing the interview transcripts, I was struck by a small cluster of comments by some of the interviewees that did speak in these terms, and that could be interpreted as being about professional integrity. In the section that follows I will offer extracts from the interviews to illustrate how the practitioners constructed accounts of aspects of themselves and their work in relation to the four senses of professional integrity outlined above.

Vocation

There were few clear accounts given in terms of strong professional integrity (unity of personal and professional values). However, while 'vocation' as a strong ideal is relatively rare in state-regulated social work, it may nevertheless be used as a yardstick against which to measure 'how bad things have got' and to use in deciding when to change jobs or 'blow the whistle'. This can be illustrated by the comments of the manager of a child protection team (italics mine):

> *It's not why I came into social work, I can't believe I'm doing it.* And you know, these changes are so insidious really, that you suddenly think, 'what am I doing, talking about a child's welfare in terms of how much it's costing?'

This particular practitioner reported that she had already changed jobs (from mental health) as she had felt 'disillusioned' when the community care legislation came in.

Everyday integrity

Unexceptional integrity in the sense of following the ordinarily accepted

standards of honesty would be expected in professional life, and so was not generally noted by the senior practitioners interviewed, except in cases where the demands of the job were preventing this. For example, a statutory social worker working as part of an assessment and information team (dealing with new referrals) reported changes in the system for costing the services she was recommending to older people. She would make an assessment, recommend a service and have to ask people to sign a contract before they knew the costs of the service (assessed afterwards by a finance officer, often several months after the social worker's visit). She commented:

> They're not going to agree to something they don't know what they're paying for, because I wouldn't. I wouldn't dream of it, so why should I expect somebody to do that? But that's what I'm expected to do …

This worker was applying the standards of ordinary life (using the example of what she herself would find acceptable) as a test for how social work service users should be treated.

Ideal professional integrity

Several interviewees gave accounts of themselves and their work that could be interpreted as expressing ideal professional integrity (that is, holding onto the ideals of the profession). One interviewee reported quitting his job as Manager of a Youth Offending team. His account seemed to relate to strong professional integrity in the second sense (holding true to the goals or service ideals of the profession, 2.a). This practitioner was a qualified youth worker and seemed to hold a view of the goal of the social professions as being about giving care and promoting welfare (in this case, young people's welfare) and doing this is a way that respected young people. Whilst he realised that there would always be imperfections and compromises, his experience in the youth offending team, particularly the inability to provide adequate accommodation for young people, who were then left waiting for hours in limbo, was more than he could take.

> My central point is that, that young person is very often in crisis or in difficulty at least, and what we're doing is we're adding to that. We're not dealing with it effectively. We're not sort of metaphorically putting our arm round that young person and saying 'we need to get you on an even keel here'.

This worker clearly had a view of what 'we', as social professionals, should be doing with young people in difficulty – which could be described as a kind of 'care'. He continued:

> And the number of times I went home, having gone through that, and having that experience with young people, and it's no secret round the whole youth offending service that there's disgust with it. And I just sort of said, I mean, I said to [line manager] very early on, that it wasn't for me, because I couldn't be part of that, you know.

The way he told his story, it seems like he found the work to be threat to his integrity both as a 'good' professional and as a person.

> But in the end it was … it was getting to me so much, you know, that I had to kind of move for my own … for myself. Because it's …I think anybody who cares about people and who sees that, and who comes up against the brick walls, you know, on a daily basis, you can only take so much really, as one person.

He ended his account by saying that if he had not quit the job, 'I think it would have a lasting effect on my own self really'. In this account the practitioner seems to be justifying leaving the job as a way of preserving his personal and professional integrity.

This practitioner's account echoes the comments made by an emergency duty social worker who said: 'I'm trying to fight hard against being cynical'; 'It's not worthwhile any more'. This could be categorised as 'burn out' due to the focus on crisis in emergency social work. As he said, quite often 'I'm just there by myself and it's not very pleasant'. But he also commented in relation to knocking on people's doors in the night to check out reported suspicions in relation to child protection : 'It's not the right way to be doing it. There's other ways'. He continued:

> We're told repeatedly from the Director [of Social Services] down, if in any doubt remove the child. It's easier to defend ourselves by over-reacting than under-reacting.

He felt this way of doing things was 'unhealthy for the profession of social work', which should pay more attention to 'how you regard people; how you treat people', and he indicated that he was looking to leave the job.

Several other senior practitioners working in statutory social services reported feeling 'disillusioned', 'quite upset' and finding aspects of the job 'quite disturbing'. However, in contrast to the two practitioners quoted above, they seemed to find the jobs overall worthwhile, maintaining their vision of what 'good social work' is and doing 'the right thing' even though the job may not require it. These seem to be examples of maintaining professional integrity in an organisational climate where some of the professional values had been lost. For example, a child protection and review manager commented (my italics):

Once you stop putting down what you think is right for the child because you can't get that resource, I think we're in a very, very serious situation. Because once you stop recommending it, nobody's ever going to know. *So I will always say, this is what should happen.*

Similarly a child care team manager commented:

It's about being very conscious of the individual needs of the people we're trying to serve. *I would never override the individual needs of a young person or family* just because our procedure said that at that point that X, Y or Z needed to happen.

These last two practitioners gave accounts of themselves as holding unconditional commitments, based on what they perceived to be the goals of the professional work, regardless of what may be required by the employing agency.

In the first two examples the practitioners gave accounts of how they left or desired to leave their jobs to preserve their professional integrity. In the last two examples, the practitioners gave accounts suggesting they were able to maintain their professional integrity while continuing to work in a difficult climate.[1]

Professionalism

A social worker, working in a different youth offending team from that mentioned earlier, gave an account of an ethical difficulty he experienced when asked to provide a job reference for a young man he had supervised through his term in prison for assault. He felt he should call in the young person and discuss what it would mean for him to have a reference written by a youth offending worker. He commented that he felt it was 'fair' to explain to him, and he also 'felt a bit sorry for him'. But his line manager did not understand why the worker thought this and did not think it necessary.

I felt a bit uneasy about it … that's an example where your ethics, your social work [ethics is] sometimes beating against the system we're in now, and I can't really see any way round it.

This seems to be a case that raised issues for the practitioner in relation to the weak version of holding to the principles of the profession (2.b). This practitioner felt there was an issue at stake in compromising what he felt were the currently accepted standards of social work, but in this case could

not 'see any way round it' and was prepared to live with the outcome, having at least made the case for why he thought his proposed course of action to be important. He commented that when his line manager asked him 'what's the meaning?', he said 'ethics and confidentiality and all that'. We noted that this weak version of holding to current principles and standards might more appropriately be characterised as professionalism rather than professional integrity. And this example seems to fit that description as a challenge to the worker's professionalism as a social worker.

Another account was given by a qualified nurse working in the same youth offending team, who was struggling to insist on adhering to his interpretation of the professional standards current in nursing in relation to confidentiality of patient records and correspondence. The requirements of inter-agency and inter-professional working are bringing such conflicts increasingly to the fore (see Banks, 2004, Chapter 5).

Concluding comments: Professional integrity and the ethics of resistance

The social welfare practitioners I have quoted above were giving accounts of aspects of their professional lives that were in effect accounts of them working at their professional integrity. Yet in the course of everyday practice, integrity *per se* does not seem to be identified or discussed, and it is not a term commonly found in the professional literature. The new codes of practice produced by the general councils in the UK (for example, General Social Care Council, 2002) do not mention professional integrity, although they do include a section on the qualities of social care workers (honest, trustworthy, reliable, dependable). The 'archaic' connotations of the term 'integrity' may not be helpful, nor its association with formal consistency or grand life plans and quests.

However, it is interesting to note that the revised version of the code of ethics of the British Association of Social Workers (2001) includes 'integrity' as one of the five key values, following the example of several other codes (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2000; National Association of Social Workers, 1996). Furthermore, when there are major cases of fraud, dishonesty and public scandals, then integrity is sometimes called for and valued. For example, the Nolan principles of conduct in public life (stimulated by a series of scandals, particularly over the private financial interests of Members of Parliament) include 'integrity' as one of the seven principles (Nolan Committee, 1996).

As a term that describes the way in which people make sense of the

values, relationships and commitments that are parts of their lives and work, 'professional integrity' does have some relevance in contemporary professional life. It is particularly noteworthy that some of the social workers quoted were offering what might be called 'stories of resistance'. These are different from what Taylor and White (2000, pp 98-9, 136-7), following Dingwall (1977), call 'atrocity stories' about how the tellers are badly treated by the system (many of the extracts quoted by Jones [2001] are of this type). The accounts that embody stories of resistance are about how the practitioners involved held out against the system in a difficult job. These practitioners gave accounts of how they attempted to hold onto a particular vision of a society and of a profession, a set of values and principles judged to be important and a view of themselves as a 'good practitioner' in circumstances that might be at best indifferent, and were often hostile to their visions and values.

These extracts demonstrate a need and a capacity on the part of the practitioners to make sense of how they act in a work role in the context of a broader narrative of ideals, values, character and consistency. Having a capacity and the moral competence to do this is important, not so much in order that social work as a distinct profession can survive (this may or may not be desirable), but so that practitioners working with vulnerable people can play a role in challenging systems of which the procedures and outcomes often perpetuate and encourage injustice, disrespectful treatment and a lack of genuine care and sensitivity. 'Professional integrity', as this process of reflexive sense-making, is part of what contributes to people's capacity to 'blow the whistle' on bad practice, to protest against injustice, to challenge demeaning behaviour and to build an alternative to the 'ethics of distrust'. It is part of contributing to the development of better practice and a constant process of revision of accepted professional values and commitments in the light of new challenges and demands. If social workers are to be able to remain in their jobs and maintain professional integrity, rather than quit jobs in order to preserve their professional integrity, then they require not just a commitment to a set of professional values (as articulated in professional codes) but courage and a sense of solidarity. It may be concluded that the concept of professional integrity does have some value in current social welfare practice, particularly if it can be used as part of an active ethics of resistance, which not only maintains commitment to a set of professional values and ideals, but also serves to promote their critical re-examination and recreation.

This article has offered a preliminary exploration of the concept and practice of professional integrity. Far from dismissing professional integrity as an archaic concept, this examination suggests it would be fruitful to conduct further empirical and theoretical studies that study how social workers perform 'professional integrity' during their working lives. In particular it will be important to explore how concepts and expressions of professional

integrity may relate to notions of reflexive resistance in hostile organisational climates.

Acknowledgements

Note

1. Whilst some readers might argue that quitting the job because the practitioner felt compromised is not an example of maintaining professional integrity, I would argue that the accounts given by the first two practitioners quoted above can be read in this way. If the practitioner went on to take another job in the same profession where conditions were more conducive (which the YOT team manager did), then arguably this was one way of maintaining professional integrity. The further question as to whether it may be a more robust moral position to stay in a difficult job in certain circumstances is not my concern in this section of paper, which is essentially an exploration of the accounts given by practitioners themselves, rather than an argument for a particular moral position.

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