"I was never trained to do any of that"–personalisation and the impact of the "customer" on employment relations in voluntary sector social care.

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Abstract:

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the extent and impact of customer-oriented norms on employment relations in voluntary sector social care, within the context of personalisation. Self-Directed Support (SDS) is premised on the notion that customer-led care enhances autonomy among service users and therefore improves quality of life, and additionally, gives employees more discretion in their work. However, by attempting to improve quality of service without additional funding – and in many instances, with funding cuts – it can be argued that SDS is in practice effectively attempts to achieve "more-for-less." This paper examines the effect of this dynamic on employment relations, using the organisation as the unit of analysis.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper examines the existing literature on personalisation and SDS, and positions it alongside the sociology of service work. Particular focus is given to Korczynski's notion of Customer-Oriented Bureaucracies (COB). Data collection took place in four comprehensive case studies, comprised of fifty-five semi-structured interviews overall and a benchmarking survey of each.

Findings – Findings demonstrate that the influence of customer-oriented norms only affected certain features of the employment relationship, and tended to result from pressures other than service users, such as organisational strategy or funding constraints. In consequence, none of the individual case studies fit the description of COB in its absolute form. Instead, what can be observed is a strong pattern of influence across specific dimensions of the employment relationship. In relation to policies and procedures, the impact of customer-oriented norms was experienced in 70% of instances, 83.3% of incidences pertaining to terms and conditions, and 85.7% of incidences pertaining to work organisation.

Research limitations/implications – The data itself is limited to fifty-five interviews across four case studies, and so only gives a "snapshot" of employee relations within the sector. Further research would be advantageous to address these issues geographically and temporally.

Practical implications – Firstly, it contributes academically to existing bodies of literature on both voluntary sector social care and the sociology of service work. Secondly, it provides practitioners with analysis of the issues that accompany personalisation, and how adopting customer-oriented norms impacts the employment relationship. Thirdly, it demonstrates to legislators and commissioners that existing shortfalls in funding are compensated for by the above-and-beyond efforts of those who work in the sector, and that this is an increasingly untenable situation.

Social implications – This paper sheds much needed light onto employment relations in the doubly under-researched areas of voluntary sector social care in Scotland. It attempts to aid employee relations pertaining to the often low paid social care workforce, and the care of service users who include the most vulnerable in society. By identifying potential issues

pertaining to employee relations, it seeks to avoid future disruptions to service provision which could have adverse effects on organisations, employees, and service users.

Originality/value – This paper makes a theoretical and conceptual contribution by utilising the sociology of service work as a means of better understanding employment relations in voluntary sector social care. It compares the impact of customer-oriented norms across four distinctly different service provision types Furthermore, the segmenting of findings across three key areas of employment relations allows for a systematic analysis which pinpoints the presence and extent of customer-oriented norms and their influence on the employment relationship.

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1. Introduction

This paper sets out to examine the extent and impact of customer norms on employment relations in voluntary sector social care organisations in the context of personalisation. Personalisation, legislated in Scotland via the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act (2013), is premised on the notion that customer-led care enhances choice among service users and therefore improves quality of life (Glasby and Littlechild, 2009; Needham, 2011). Service users have been described as "experts on their own lives" (Poll, 2007, p.53), and are better positioned to ensure that their budgets are spent in a way which most benefits them (Duffy et al., 2010).

Simultaneously, personalisation is also purported to improve experiences of employment, by endowing workers with more discretion to use their skills, and a greater scope to experience the intrinsic ethics-based reward for which voluntary sector work is renowned (Baines et al., 2014). The Voluntary Sector Ethos (VSE) (Cunningham, 2010) which characterises this, is based on an understanding and demonstration of shared values (Alatrista and Arrowsmith, 2004), and the viewing of their labour as, in part, a donation to the cause (Becker et al., 2011). This is visible in the greater proclivity for non-monetary rewards (Benz, 2005; Borzaga and Tortia, 2006), and the premium ascribed to "self-sacrificing" behaviour (Baines and Cunningham, 2011). These behaviours manifest themselves in factors such as high volumes of unpaid overtime (Almond and Kendall, 2000), "self-selection" recruitment trends (Ridder and McCandless, 2010) and a tendency to "wait out" breaches in the psychological contract "if they believe the organization remains committed to the long-term objective," (Thompson and Bunderson, 2003, p.581).

However, by attempting to improve quality of service and experiences of employment without additional funding – and in many instances, cuts in funding – it can be argued that, in practice, SDS is effectively attempting to achieve 'more-for-less' (Shields, 2014). Additionally, the SDS legislation was introduced in Scotland four years later than in the rest of the United Kingdom, directly into the context of the Conservative government's program of austerity (Bach, 2012). In consequence of the financial constraints which voluntary organisations now face, terms and conditions of employment have suffered, and work has become increasingly intensified (Cunningham, 2016).

A crucial change in the voluntary sector employment relationship which has resulted from personalisation is that service users have been endowed with a significant level of control over their support or care, and therefore also over the workers who provide it. They have, in a sense, become 'customers', and in consequence, customer norms may become increasingly more prevalent in reshaping work. Thaler and Sunstein (2008) assert that more help is required to deliver increased service user choice, and yet there appears to be a distinct lack of accountability with regard to what form this should take, or where it should come from, in relation to personalisation (Ellis, 2007). The extent to which these new pressures influence experiences of employment is as yet relatively unknown.

In consequence, the research objectives of this paper are twofold: firstly, it sets out to ascertain the extent of customer norms in voluntary sector social care at an organisational level, and secondly, how this impacts employment relations and experiences of work, with a view to the organisation as the unit of analysis. A literature review will follow, contextualising personalisation and SDS in voluntary sector social care, and drawing attention to the relevance of the sociology of service work. Then, subsequent sections will explain the research's methodology and findings, before a section dedicated to discussion and ensuing conclusions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 – Personalisation and Self-Directed Support
Personalisation is premised on the assertion that people are "experts on their own lives," (Poll, 2007, p.53), are better able to assess their own needs, and have the most to gain by allocating the resources available to them in an effective and cost-efficient manner. This has culminated in a virtually sector-wide acceptance of the notion that, "there is now no serious alternative to the principle that services should be tailored to individual needs circumstances and wants," (Mansell and Beadle-Brown, 2005, p.21). Glasby and Littlechild (2009, p.111-6) draw attention to the wide range of studies which illustrate how direct payments and personal budgets have enhanced the level of choice and control that service users have over their own care package, as do others (e.g. Duffy et al., 2010; Needham, 2011). Ultimately, in the UK, SDS legislation has become the transmission mechanism for customer choice.

While personalisation is often championed as empowering and inclusive with regard to service users, it also impacts organisations in that they must now cater to increased demands for more specialised, bespoke and individualised models of care (Glasby and Littlechild, 2009; Pearson et al., 2014). By imbuing service users with purchasing power,

they are, in a sense, transformed into 'customers'. Furthermore, service users are not given more money than they would be entitled to out-with personalisation, therefore it can be concluded that they are expected to achieve an increased level of care without an increased cost. In other words, 'more-for-less' (Shields, 2014). This exacerbates the already heavily marketized climate which exists within the voluntary sector, and compounds the pressures exerted by New Public Management (NPM) and neo-liberal practices associated with commissioning and tendering processes. For front-line workers, the result is often intensification of work, and degradation of terms and conditions (Cunningham, 2016). This dynamic has been observed to result on an international stage, in contexts such as England and Wales (Atkinson and Lucas, 2013; Moffat et al., 2012), Ireland (Timonen and McMenamin, 2002; Flemming and Taylor, 2007) Canada, (Baines, 2006; Shields, 2014) and Australia (Charlesworth, 2010; Macdonald and Charlesworth, 2016).

In relation to the delivery of personalisation, Thaler and Sunstein (2008, p.158) assert that "the more choice you give people, the more help you need to provide." Needham (2011, p.61) refers to this as the "tensions between user empowerment and user responsibility," and draws attention to the fact that some service users want more control than they have been deemed capable of exercising. Ellis (2007, p.407) notes that there is a pronounced "ambiguity over accountability for managing [the] risk" associated with deferring care-related choice to service users. If service users do mismanage their budgets, and a shortfall in care results, it is employees who are left with the dilemma of abiding by the rules and leaving service users with inadequate care, or providing care without being paid. Without accurate and enforceable assessment of needs, it is here that personalisation presents a very real threat to the wellbeing of employees.

Whereas previously the dichotomy of insufficient resources was solely between the employer and the employee, personalisation has effectively triangulated this relationship with the addition of service users (Payne and Fisher, 2019). The result is "zero-sum game of inadequate resources [where] one groups' gain tends to encroach on another's entitlements" (Baines, Cunningham and Fraser, 2011, p.332). Furthermore, as noted by Taylor and Bain (2005, p.435) is that this "'triangle' is not equilateral." Whereas in a direct employee-employer relationship, employees may receive support from service users in their struggle against the degradation of terms and conditions, personalisation sees a situation where the needs of these parties are in opposition. Additionally, the Self-Directed Support Act (Scotland) (2013), which imbued service users with these new powers, took place nearly four years later in Scotland than in England, directly into the context of the Conservative government's programme of austerity. Therefore, not only has personalisation is Scotland had less time to become embedded, the financial climate into which it was introduced was considerably more constrained.

2.2 – The Sociology of Service Work: Towards a Customer-Oriented Bureaucracy?
Personalisation equips service users with increased control over both their finances and the nature of their support, which in a sense, transforms them into 'customers'. While notions of customer-centred care have existed in care to varying degrees for some time, this was premised largely upon organisations predicting customer need – not since the introduction of

SDS has the power to affect change lay in the hands of service users themselves. In consequence, a new approach is required to understand this dynamic. Korczynski's (2002) conceptualisation of a 'Customer-Oriented Bureaucracy' (COB) is particularly useful in this regard:

> The renaming of service recipients as 'customers' […] is partly informed by management using language to propound the enchanting myth of sovereignty in service interactions. Whereas the 'customer' is the sovereign a priori of mainstream economics, the 'passenger' exists only as a secondary actor in relation to the pre-existing railway. The language of the 'customer' therefore, is more likely to perpetuate the enchanting myth of sovereignty (Korczynski, 2002, p.63).

While traditional customer service relations are typically imagined in relation to a for-profit setting, this is not the only context in which they operate. Gay and Salaman (1992, p.620) note that increasing government legislation creates the myth of customer sovereignty, and through competitive tendering, formalises and emboldens the role of the customer in health and social care, which can, in turn, "cast a long alienating shadow over the experience of service work," (Korczynski, 2009, p.963).

The sociology of service work, and particularly the notion of COBs, is extremely useful in analysing the impact of personalisation on social care employment. The endowing of service users with purchasing power creates a need for customer satisfaction, and in turn, influences organisational decision making in a manner which has been termed "management by customer" (Spicker, 2013, p.1261). In this context the employment relationship is effectively restructured from bilateral to trilateral, and as such "the power dynamic of the workplace shifts from a tug-of-war between workers and management to a three-way contest for control between workers, management, and service recipients" (Leidner, 1999, p.91).

The COB construct has already been utilized to an extent in research on the voluntary sector. Cunningham (2016) has highlighted the value of the construct in helping to evaluate the tensions in social care organisation between cost control and quality services. This tension is particularly acute during current era of austerity. The aforementioned study also examined changes to HR policies and processes, such as recruitment, which was altered to encourage greater customer involvement in processes and selection decisions. Traditional forms of control were also seen to be altered by the influence of the customer; for example, sickness and absence procedures were seen to be tightened to ensure consistency of service to foster customer satisfaction. Changes to work organisation could also be observed via a move towards greater flexibility in order to accommodate unpredictable customer demands.

The aforementioned study was an early snapshot of the impact of personalisation, and raises questions regarding the possibility of variability and contingency among providers of services when exploring SDS's impact. In evaluating the possibility of variability among organisational responses to this dynamic, Korczynski (2013) notes that there exists three variations pertaining to the COB: firstly, an approach which sees worker–customer relations merely as an additional dimension, with little real impact on work; secondly, an approach which sees the customer's role as having implications for a limited number of dimensions of work organisation; and thirdly, an approach which sees implications of the customer across

the whole of work organisation. This approach has been utilized to great effect in relation to front-line service work (Taylor and Bain, 2005; Belanger and Edwards, 2013).

Leece (2010, p.191) analyses the difference in relationship between service users and employees in relation to conceptualisations of power, and asserts that those who participate in direct payment programmes have the power to "choose their worker and shape the relationship; determine the boundaries of the relationship; be more reciprocal and to set the agenda; set the terms and conditions of employment; make their interests take precedence." One of the most important things which can be gleaned from this discussion in terms of employee relations, is that employees are more culpable in terms of mediating the expectations and demands of service users. In traditional employer-employee relationships, employers serve to act as a buffer between intensification which arises directly from service users. Personalisation could be described as achieving greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness, whilst maintaining the approval of service users themselves, who are the most vulnerable and also the most vocal group in the equation, but where this leaves the employees who provide care is uncertain.

Elements of the COB resonate strongly with the emerging situation in the voluntary sector, yet certain features are not entirely fitting. In relation to one of the biggest issues of debate – the extent to which service users can accurately be described as sovereign customers – caution is advised. Out-with the social care context, where the role of the customer is emphasised, it has been observed that organisational priorities can shift in favour of "meeting the demands of the 'sovereign' consumer [which] becomes the new and overriding institutional imperative" (Keat and Abercrombie, 1991, p.3). It is prudent to be mindful of Korczynski et al.'s (2000, p.678) analysis of their own findings, where they note that "management attempted to make use of the customer as a legitimising figure in order to try to create surface symbiosis out of structural contradictions." In this sense, it could be argued that organisations' increasing customer focus instils within them the ability mobilise commitment and motivation amongst employees to intolerably intensified levels, which they may be compelled to do by the increasingly challenging nature of short term funding relationships and the necessity to appear cost effective. Indeed, as Dominelli and Hoogvelt, (1996, p.46) note, those who fund care play "a key role in determining what kinds of services are being made available […] and how these are delivered through contracts which specify in great detail the services which it is willing to purchase." In consequence, the research questions for this paper are:

1) What is the extent of the influence of customer norms on voluntary sector social care organisations in the context of personalisation?
2) Can voluntary sector social care organisations in Scotland be described as Customer-Oriented Bureaucracies?
3) How do customer norms impact employment relations and experiences of work in the voluntary sector?

3. Methodology

As Baines (2004, p.269) notes, a study which truly adds value to existing research should endeavour to "provide information and analysis for social service workers, rather than just about them." With this in mind, there have been calls for more qualitative research in relation to the voluntary sector employment relationship (Almond and Kendall, 2000; Nickson et al., 2008) which this paper sets out, in part, to address. As a result, the data collection for this research took place in four comprehensive case studies, comprised of fifty-five hour-long semi-structured interviews with front-line workers, front-line managers, and senior managers, and a benchmarking survey of each organisation, situated in the doubly under-researched context of voluntary sector social care in Scotland (Hall, 1997; Shields, 2014). This is of pressing importance, given that the UK voluntary sector has grown considerably in recent years (NCVO, 2017), and in light of a growing and aging UK population (ONS, 2017), looks set to continue to do so.

When endeavouring to elicit information of a more personal nature, personal contact is crucial (Saunders et al., 2009). Interviewing allows for a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of employees' opinions relating to the issue, and a recognition of non-verbal elements of communication, such as gestures and expressions. This also provides a better platform from which to gauge not just the direction of feeling, but also the intensity (Hume, 1995). Burgess (1982, p.107) asserts that interviewing provides "the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience." To this end, several interviews were conducted at each service location as a means of capturing the individual contexts, cultures and ways of doing things which exist at a macro level. Interviews were conducted with an interview guide, which included questions on how both personalisation and austerity had impacted work, their employer, their service users, and how they perceived this to impact their own futures and the future of the sector.

This paper is premised on a multiple case study approach, intended to create a rich and immersive data set (Miles and Huberman, 1994) in order to provide the best platform from which to address the research questions outlined above. Case studies offer a rigorous immersion in the context of the research, alongside a triangulation of source material, which results in a comprehensive, robust and unique data set (Yin, 2009). A multiple case study approach was utilised as a means of gathering data on sector-wide trends, and facilitates comparison between different types, locations and sizes of organisations (Bryman and Bell, 2004). This approach allows for replication and mediates thematic gaps which may exist in any individual case study (Yin, 2009), towards a more wide-ranging and legitimate narrative.

Case study organisations were selected due to their involvement in personalisation, and their size, geographical spread, and legitimacy within the sector. Four specific organisations were selected due to the service user group they cater to – a mental health service, a children's service, a physical disability service, and mixed-provision housing organisation.

Interviews were audio recorded with all participants expressing consent, and then transcribed in full, in order to become as immersed in the data as possible. Transcripts and field notes were then analysed thematically using a manual coding system (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Auerbach, 2003). As suggested by Tesch (1990) a list of all topics gleaned

from an initial sample of data, and prioritising the most pertinent, and an abbreviation was created for each. These were then arranged into "chunks" (Rallis and Rossman, 1998), exposing patterns within the data which were not immediately recognisable through reading alone (Auerbach, 2003), generating key themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). These themes were then used to structure a robust narrative, through which an interpretation of the data can be formulated (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) which corresponds to the original research questions (Cresswell, 2003). This was facilitated by the interview schedule, which was arranged in sections categorised by subject, which lent itself to initial codes, and subsequent sub-coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In order to methodically unpack the impact of the customer on the process of work, three overall categories were identified ("Policies and Procedures" ; "Terms and Conditions" ; "Work Organisation"), intended to reflect the possible totality of influence on HR and employment. This, along with the subsequent sub-themes, is detailed on Table 3. The influence of the customer was determined to be present when described by the majority of the participants in the case study, and is totalled on Table 3 in relation to overall categories, sub-categories, individual case studies, and for the research overall. Given that the contexts within each organisation are markedly different from one another, the unit of analysis is the case study (Yin, 2009; Grünbaum, 2007) as opposed individual worker or interviewee.

Limitations to this methodology and research exist. As has been stated, this research is contextualised specifically within Scottish organisations, and focuses on voluntary sector organisations exclusively (as opposed to independents or for-profits), in medium-to-large sized organisations, between 2015-16. As such, findings could be criticised on the grounds of having limited generalisability in relation to the social care sector at large. However, the purpose of the research is not to provide information that is generalizable to the sector overall, but rather to demonstrate how specific contextual factors impact employment relations pertinent to a particular, localised environment (Table I presents a breakdown of interviewee numbers across levels of promotion for each case study organisation.

Table 1: Interviewee breakdown.				
Case Study Organisation	Interviews Overall	Front-Line Interviews	Line Management Interviews	Senior Management Interviews
MHO1	13	7	3	3
CO1	15	11	1	3
PDO1	14	5	4	5
HO1	13	7	3	3
Total	55	30	11	14

4. Findings

4.1 – Case Study Organisation Breakdown
Case studies took place in a Mental Health Organisation (referred to from this point onwards as 'MHO1'), a Children's Services Organisation ('CSO1'), a Physical Disability Organisation ('PDO1'), and a Housing Organisation ('HO1'). With regard to the latter, there are two key points to be considered: firstly, when the case study was conducted, it had recently joined a much larger housing provision group ('HousingConglomerate'), and secondly, all interviews pertain to their care function, so as to maintain comparability with the other case studies in this research. Key information about each organisation is presented on the table below") be replaced with "Key information about each organisation is presented in Table II.

Table 2: Case study organisation breakdown.				
Case Study Abbreviation	Service Provision Type	Year Founded	Staff Headcount	2016 Income
MHO1	Mental Health Organisation	1985	Over 350	£9,750,000
CO1	Children's Organisation	1896	Over 900	£298,660,000
PDO1	Physical Disability Organisation	1944	Over 300	£4,553,000
HO1	Housing Organisation	1977	Over 300	£8,948,000

Data pertaining to income is taken from 2016, which is when the case studies took place.

4.2 – Personalisation and a Strategic Move towards Customer Norms
In order to secure funding, several organisations can be seen to have adopted a considerably more customer-oriented focus, albeit the 'customer' can be an individual service user, or a local authority funder. As has been illustrated, this has resulted from marketplace intensification caused by austerity, and also via public sector reform in the shape of personalisation. As both factors began to exert an influence during the same time period in Scotland, it can be difficult to separate the two, but what is evidenced is that a clear and targeted shift towards customer-oriented norm has taken place:

> When we started doing the work round about personalisation we did a lot of concentration particularly with the team here about customer focus, how to answer to queries, what was the script of a telephone conversation, where do you pass it over, when do you pass it over, all that kind of stuff. We participated in something that meant there were secret shoppers phoning up too [MHO1, Area Manager 1].

This clearly demonstrates a strategic organisational response to personalisation characterised by a distinct customer focus. The CEO went on to explain that:

> In the past we would have described ourselves as a wholesaler, where we were selling our services to the local authority, and the local authority were then giving us directed service users – we go from that to talking about being a retailer. So in that context we have started to use more of the terminology of the high street […] We've had a few training sessions with some staff about customer relations, and if we want to attract people with their own budgets then we've got to be customer friendly [MHO1, CEO].

The language used here ('wholesaler' ; 'retailer' ; 'high street' ; 'customer friendly') is striking, and again portrays the change as existing at a fundamental and strategic level. One service manager noted that the central office in their area was considering relocating to a "main street for a shopfront type premises, so that people know about us," [MHO1, Service Manager 3]. In this case study and others, there was a recurrence of analogies from non-care scenarios being used to exemplify the marketization aspects of funding relationships, which were utilized in attempts to rationalise decisions or practices which are not historically commonplace in the voluntary sector.

4.3 – The Impact of Customer Norms on Employment
Subsequent analysis demonstrates that, among these findings, there are no 'absolute' COBs. Rather, a variation of customer influence is found, with some organisations experiencing more pervasive impacts than others. The following table illustrates whether customer norms were present in specific features of the employment relationship for each case study. The headings in the left-hand column ("Policies and Procedures" ; "Terms and Conditions" ; "Work Organisation") were created to reflect the possible totality of influence on HR and employment in the context of COB.

Table 3: Impact of customer-norms on key areas of work.		MHO1	CO1	PDO1	HO1	Total
Policies and Procedures:	Recruitment and Selection	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	3
	Appraisal and Supervision	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
	Training	No	Yes	No	Yes	2
	Induction	No	No	No	Yes	1
	Redeployment and relocation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
	Total areas where customer-norms present within Policies and Procedures:	3 out of 5	3 out of 5	3 out of 5	5 out of 5	14 out of 20
Terms and Conditions:	Wages	Yes	No	No	Yes	2
	Sickness, Absence and Holiday Entitlement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
	Travel and Travelling Allowances	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
	Total areas where customer-norms present within Terms and Conditions:	3 out of 3	2 out of 3	2 out of 3	3 out of 3	10 out of 12
Work Organisation:	Working Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
	Relief Staff and Zero-Hour Contracts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
	Intensification	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
	Working Beyond Contract	No	Yes	No	No	1
	Self-Managed Teams	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	3
	Administrative Issues Concerning Personalisation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
	New Roles and Responsibilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
	Total areas where customer-norms present within Work Organisation:	6 out of 7	7 out of 7	6 out of 7	5 out of 7	24 out of 28
Total areas where customer-norms were present per case study:		12 out of 15	12 out of 15	11 out of 15	13 out of 15	48 out of 60

Within MHO1, the influence of customer norms only affected certain features of the employment relationship, and so it does not fit the description of COB in its absolute form. Instead, what can be observed is a strong pattern of influence across specific dimensions of the employment relationship. Notions of customer are particularly pronounced in work organisation, and are also increasingly present in policies and procedures, but have a limited impact on terms and conditions. Personalisation can be seen to intensify work and paperwork via accountability processes, yet customer feedback was not used in appraisal and

supervision. Training was not impacted by customer choice, but instead limited in scope and frequency due to the continual recruitment necessitated by near-continual turnover.

As can be seen, CO1 also does not fit the description of a COB. Cost cutting is evident, but the direct influence of the customer is only present in particular features of the employment relationship, and tends to be mild where it appears. For example, customer feedback was gathered for appraisal and supervision purposes, but was not used for target-setting. In other areas, such as working time and working beyond contract, the impact of the customer was limited, in that employees tendency to work additional hours long predating the introduction of personalisation.

The influence of the customer was in part mediated in CO1 because in this case study, 'customer' and 'service user' are not synonymous – the 'service user' is the child, and the 'customer' their parent or guardian. Possibly for this reason, the organisation does less to promote customer norms than other case studies. Additionally, hours of support must be tailored around school hours and holidays, which limits the scope for customer choice. While SDS uptake is limited, customer norms are still present, chiefly as a means of demonstrating productivity and satisfaction to local authority funders. This is particularly visible in work organisation, and features of terms and conditions such as sickness, absence and holiday entitlement, and a pronounced increase in bureaucracy and paperwork.

PDO1 is not an absolute COB, as the influence of the customer is only present in certain features of the employment relationship, and tended to be indirect via the organisation, as opposed to from service users directly. The influence of the customer still has a pronounced effect in a number of areas, particularly in relation to work organisation. This can in part be explained by variations in service user ability, which constrains the use of customer feedback in areas such as recruitment and selection, and appraisal and supervision. However, preparing for SDS has created a culture based on customer norms which has impacted a variety of areas of work. The need to tailor service to customer norms puts particular strain on working time, through features such as split-shifts and sleepovers, increased travel time and travelling costs.

HO1 felt particularly negative effects from austerity prior to joining HousingConglomerate in 2014, and while it was alleviated at this point, the belt-tightening practices developed during this time persisted. Furthermore, in order to fit with HousingConglomerate's existing approach, customer norms increased significantly. While customer norms can be observed in all but two of the above areas, they were not regarded as being as detrimental to HO1's operations as in other case studies, primarily because the security afforded by HousingConglomerate meant this did not determine organisational stability. Rather than customer influence stemming directly from service users, customer norms were adopted by the organisation as a means of demonstrating involvement with personalisation, and so HO1 cannot be described as a COB.

When looking at the areas in which customer norms can be experienced overall, as opposed to in relation to specific organisations, many interesting inferences can be made. Within the area of policies and procedures, for example, there exists the greatest variance – the impact of customer norms was only felt in 14 of 20 instances, comprising 70% overall. Issues pertaining to appraisal and supervision were experienced by all organisations, which were caused primarily by a squeeze on allocated time to complete the process, which speaks

to the overall intensification taking place. Similarly, redeployment and relocation was experienced in all organisations, which speaks to changes in customer preference. The impact of customer norms was only present in relation to training for two organisations, but as will be shown below, this only speaks to the presence of customer impact on training, and not the need for it. Issues relating to recruitment and selection were experienced in all case studies excluding CO1, which can be explained by differences in the conceptualising of the service user as customer. In this instance, it is the parents of the service user, as opposed to the children themselves, who have decision making power.

In relation to terms and conditions, the impact of customer norms was felt in 10 of 12 instances, comprising 83.3% overall. Sickness, absence and holiday entitlement were felt to be managed more closely in all four case studies. Travel and travel allowances experienced a significant impact from customer norms, in that service users were now more likely to spread their hours out across different days, or request split-shifts, which necessitated more travelling between locations for workers, and in some instances, travelling to and from a location several times in one day. Wages were only impacted in half of the case studies.

The area where the biggest impact was experienced was in relation to work organisation, in 24 of 28 instances, comprising 85.7% overall. The presence of customer norms in relation to working time and use of relief staff or ZHCs pertains to a greater need for reactiveness in the face of the possibility for short-notice changes to shifts. Intensification was experienced by all four case studies. With regard to working beyond contract, the increasing impact of customer norms only affected one of the four organisations. This can be explained by the notion that working beyond contract was a sector-wide expectation long before customer norms were emboldened by personalisation and self-directed support. Self-managing teams were present in three of four case studies, representing a need to be more reactive to customer preferences pertaining to both time and activities. Administrative issues concerning personalisation were experienced by all four case studies, typically relating to invoicing service users. This relates closely to new roles and responsibilities, which were present in all four case studies, and involved factors such as marketing to attract service users, managing individual budgets, and adjusting to the new and bespoke activities which service users wanted to take up.

When comparing the total number of areas of impact across organisations, the numbers range from customer norms being present in between 11 and 13 of the areas examined. This raises two interesting points. Firstly, while these numbers are relatively close, they are also relatively high – the organisation with the lowest incidences of customer norms was PDO1, who experienced 11 of 15, comprising 73.3% overall. Secondly, rather than which organisation was most likely to experience customer norms, the more significant variable is the areas of work in which they were experienced. In relation to policies and procedures, the impact of customer norms was experienced in 70% of instances, in comparison to 83.3% of incidences pertaining to terms and conditions, and 85.7% of incidences pertaining to work organisation – meaning the impact of customer norms was nearly a fifth more prevalent in relation to work organisation than policies and procedures.

4.4 – Customer Sovereignty and Accommodating the Greater Demands of Service Users
In order to cater to customer demands, working time had been reconfigured to maximise time spent with service users in all four case studies. The growing predominance of split-shifts meant increased travel time posed significant problems:

> I've not got a work life balance at that moment […] These are unsociable hours that you work. I do two services; one gets two hours in the morning, two hours in the evening, except for a Tuesday she has four hours in the morning, four hours in the evening. Friday she'll have four hours in the morning and then six hours at night. You leave the house at 8.30am, go back probably about 1.30pm, and then you've got to leave about 4.30pm to come back out and then you're not back in until 11.30pm. You've got no life. […] You're out for loads of time and you're only getting five hours' wage [PDO1, Front-Line Worker 2].

Split-shifts also resulted in long gaps which workers were often unable to utilise as "free time", and so would undertake non service user tasks such as completing paperwork, which itself had grown as a result of increased accountability measures necessitated by stricter funding contract parameters. The use of new technology, such as MHO1's piloting the use of i-Pads, was purported to ease this burden, but in reality served to informalise it. One worker stated:

> On a Tuesday, for example, I'm [on visits] all day, and I'm never going to make it back to the office, but there's a garden centre nearby with free wi-fi. At lunchtime I'll go there and put it on over a cup of coffee or lunch […] after I leave the garden centre, I'll sit in my car, in that area, with the free wi-fi on, to log on to our system [MHO1, Front-Line Worker 6].

A distinct pattern of informalisation and casualization took place in all case study organisations, particularly in relation to sickness absence and holiday entitlement. Two case studies went to the lengths of adopting self-managing teams (PDO1) and 'pods' (MHO1) to further embed notions of communality and cooperation, and to legitimise the notion that arranging time off for sickness and holidays was not management's responsibility.

4.5 – For-profit Practices in a Non-profit Context
As can be seen, the biggest area of impact from customer norms was felt in relation to work organisation. Two issues which were present in relation to all four case studies were administrative issues concerning personalisation, and the addition of new roles and responsibilities. The idea that business-like practices were being imported wholesale into the voluntary sector without any consideration for the impact on organisations' or individuals' values caused a great deal of confusion, and was difficult for interviewees to reconcile with ideological elements of voluntary sector commitment and motivation.

A number of workers made reference to having to "sell ourselves" as an organisation, and notions of competition made workers concerned for their job security: "We're obviously

going to be in competition with other services, and if they're seen as presenting a better service, our job at risk," [CO1, Front-Line Worker 10]. Team Leaders also experienced this, noting that sales competencies were expected: "That SDS event I was at a few weeks ago, there was a list of prices and services, saying "this is what you get if you pay this" – that couldn't be more like a shop if you tried," [CO1, Team Leader 2]. Furthermore, this was felt to be at odds with voluntary sector ways of working: "You're almost becoming a salesman, trying to sell or maintain a level of product, and that's not really what I see as my role here, and it shouldn't be my role," [CO1, Team Leader 1]. Another interviewee noted:

> We talk now about 'unit costs' and 'economy of scale' – I was never trained to do any of that […] we're being asked to think in a very different way. I don't feel at the moment that CO1 are able to give me the support I need to be able to do that. I put myself on a "set-up-your-own-business" course a year and a half ago. It's evening classes, and it talked about income generation and marketing and all the things I need to be doing, to try and help me with that. I do think there's a gap in CO1 in relation to that [CO1, Service Manager 2].

In other words, not only did staff feel a level of discomfort at the notion of for-profit practices in a non-profit context, but they were also given little support or training to deliver them by organisations themselves.

By positioning the service user as "customer", interviewees perceived an implication that they are being "sold to" which poses a challenge to ideological or altruistic components of voluntary sector commitment. One interviewee noted: "if you're dealing with a customer you're basically selling them something, aren't you? So it makes it sound more as if you're trying to get something from them [HO1, Front-Line Worker 3]. The idea that workers are perceived as "trying to get something" from service users has strong implications on ideological elements of voluntary sector commitment, in that by "selling them something", the worker achieves a clear material gain which undermines the notion that their motivation is in any way altruistic.

While in discussions about how to "sell" the service at a team meeting, one participant commented "I remember thinking, 'what have I got into here […] you need to *sell*?' and I was like 'Is this sales or is it care? What are we doing?'" [MHO1, Assistant Service Manager]. This demonstrates a level of confusion and exasperation that was present in many responses. Often, the prospect of "selling" to service users was perceived as being self-serving, opportunistic, and directly at odds with the process of support, and the values which motivate voluntary sector workers.

As a means of rationalising the use of for-profit methods in a non-profit context, several interviewees gave analogies from a non-care setting:

> If you think of it like fairy cakes – you can go in the shop and buy those, but if you want a bespoke cake, and individualised wedding cake, that costs a lot, it takes time, and it takes expertise. I know that sounds bad, but it's my 'cake shop' analogy [laughs]. It helps me grasp some of the things that are happening [CO1, Service Manager 2].

This demonstrates the pressure associated with a need to communicate complicated information to service users, which workers may be more comfortable doing in relation to hypothetical, non-care examples, and additionally, to rationalise and justify the realities of customer-oriented service delivery to themselves.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

In accordance with the public policy shift towards customer-led care, the voluntary sector has experienced an increasing prevalence of customer norms, and correspondingly, significant changes to the employment relationship have taken place. The findings of this research demonstrate the greatest influence of customer norms in relation to work organisation – in 24 of 28 instances, comprising 85.7% overall – with all organisations experiencing change in relation to working time, ZHCs, intensification, administrative issues concerning personalisation, and new roles and responsibilities. This has resulted directly from service users themselves, but also from a compulsion on the part of organisations to demonstrate engagement with personalisation to funders, as a means of securing contracts (Dominelli and Hoogvelt, 1996) and due to widespread resource dependency (Cunningham, 2011), their very existence. At this juncture it is worth reiterating that, in Scotland, personalisation was implemented nearly four years later than in England, directly into the context of austerity. Austerity's impact on social care funding (or, in market-based terms, its limiting of customer spending power, and the extent of support they receive) cannot help but detrimentally impact the delivery of customer-led care.

Service users who control their own budget were reported as being more demanding and frugal (Glasby and Littlechild, 2009; Pearson et al., 2014). While the number of service users in this position was relatively low in all case studies, customer norms were present in a variety of features of the employment relationship, such as recruitment and selection (3 of 4 organisations), appraisal and supervision (4 of 4 organisations), and redeployment and relocation (4 of 4 organisations). Workers at all levels of promotion reported that catering to customer needs as a result of personalisation created new and complex tasks, which is reflected in the finding that 4 of 4 organisations reported customer influence over new roles and responsibilities, and found the notion of the customer a difficult prospect to adapt to.

Particularly problematic were certain issues concerning the delivery of personalisation, such as the "tension between user empowerment and user responsibility" (Needham, 2011, p.61) and the "ambiguity over accountability" (Ellis, 2007, p.407). This resulted in considerable administrative issues concerning personalisation which organisations had to bear, and were unprepared for. Thaler and Sunstein (2008, p.158) assert that "the more choice you give people, the more help you need to provide," and, as this is not provided by local authorities, the responsibility falls to those who deliver the service – front-line managers and workers. Critically, little guidance or training on how to manage these situations left workers feeling ill-equipped and unprepared, and yet ultimately still accountable. This lack of awareness went largely unaddressed by organisations, and little investment in advocacy or support was present.

As personalisation is intended to increase the quality of care without an increase in funding, it can be argued that this represents an attempt to achieve 'more-for-less'. Indeed, many local authorities have seen a significant reduction in funding spanning the period before, during and after the introduction of personalisation, meaning this dynamic is of significant note. In order to accommodate this financial strain, many organisations have experienced a degradation of the terms and conditions of employment, particularly in relation to wages, sickness payment and travel allowances.

Degradation of terms and conditions of employment was experienced by the vast majority of interviewees in all case studies, with the influence of the customer in these areas at 83.3%. However, objection to reductions in salary were largely muted. This dynamic can be explained in part by low trade union membership in the sector (Simms, 2007; Hemmings, 2011), and also an acceptance of a sector-wide standard. This could suggest an over-reliance on voluntary sector workers tendency towards "donative labour" (Becker et al., 2011) via unpaid overtime (Almond and Kendall, 2000) and "self-sacrificing" behaviours (Baines and Cunningham, 2011), which as discussed, is not infinite. This, in turn, may serve to undermine a common understanding of shared values on which voluntary sector commitment is based (Alatrista and Arrowsmith, 2004; Ridder and McCandless, 2010). Crucially, where voluntary sector workers have previously been more likey to "wait out" a breach (Thompson and Bunderson, 2003), less adequate financial remuneration means workers now have less scope to do this.

The organisation with the most pervasive experience of customer norms was HO1. Overall, they experienced the influence of the customer in 13 of the 15 areas examined, amounting to 86.7% comparison to the average of 80% overall. Due to their joining HousingConglomorate, significant change was reported in relation to both policies and procedures (100%, in comparison to the average of 70%) and terms and conditions (100%, in comparison to the average of 83.34), yet they experienced the least amount of change in relation to work organisation (71.4%, in comparison to the average of 85.7%). It could be the case that greater change in relation to policies and procedures and terms and conditions have safeguarded employees from the more negative effects of work organisation. While they are arguably in a more stable position than the other case study organisations, they have had to compromise more in order to secure economy of scale which has afforded this, which may have implications regarding mission drift (Cunningham, 2008).

At an empirical level, this research contributes analysis of four comprehensive case studies, comprised of fifty-five interviews overall and a benchmarking survey of each, situated in the under-researched context of voluntary sector social care in Scotland. It also makes a unique conceptual contribution by addressing personalisation, self-directed support and the notion that service users are correspondingly endowed with customer control via the sociology of service work and COB in the Scottish voluntary sector context. This paper also contributes on an international level, by providing a thorough and bespoke account of the Scottish context for international comparison to countries governed by similar legislation. Ultimately, the case studies in this research cannot be described as COBs in the absolute form, because the influence of the customer only appears in relation to certain features of the employment relationship, and tends to be mild where present. It is important to acknowledge, however, that customer-led care is premised on the notion of giving customers more *choice*;

whether or not that leads to *change* is often limited due to the limited customer sovereignty of service users, and due to constraints on choice via factors such as recruitment difficulties stemming from poor remuneration packages or unappealing working hours such as evenings, weekends and a growing predominance of split-shifts. What can be clearly observed, however, is that work organisation has been significantly restructured with a view to catering to the potential for customer needs, and the reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, in order to demonstrate engagement with current public policy, organisations are compelled to display a personalisation-friendly approach; secondly, in order to demonstrate cost-effectiveness, organisations are coerced into utilising customer norms as a means of appearing attractive to funders. The result is a offloading of both the financial burden, and the risk for delivery of personalisation, onto organisations, and unless specified otherwise, this inevitably falls to the front-line workers who deal with service users directly. In order to understand this dynamic more fully, further research is required, specifically in relation to whether these changes to employee relations result from service user choice, or an overriding cost-cutting imperative at the level of funding and commissioning.

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