

PROFESSIONAL  
PRIDE

A POWERFUL FORCE



THIJS JANSEN, GABRIËL VAN DEN BRINK & JOS KOLE [EDS.]

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## **Professional Pride**





THIJS JANSEN, GABRIËL VAN DEN BRINK EN JOS KOLE (EDS.)

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## **A Powerful Force**

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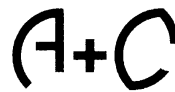
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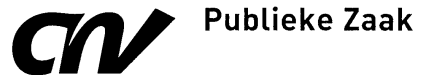
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Dolores Dante graphically describes the trials of a waitress in a fashionable restaurant. They are compounded by her refusal to be demeaned. Yet pride in her skills helps her make it through the night. "When I put the plate down, you don't hear a sound. When I pick up a glass, I want it to be just right. When someone says, 'How come you're just a waitress?' I say 'Don't you think you deserve being served by me?'"

From: Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*. The New Press 1974.

Life demands dignity, and meaningful work is essential for dignity. (...) In the workplace dignity is realized through countless small acts of resistance against abuse, and an equally strong drive to take pride in one's daily work. Even where abuse is commonplace and chaos and mismanagement make pride in accomplishment difficult, workers still find ways to create meaning in work and to work with dignity.

Working with dignity requires purposive, considered, and creative efforts on the part of workers as they confront workplaces that deny their dignity and infringe on their well-being. Concepts appropriate to studying such creative efforts are less developed in the social sciences than are concepts for studying large-scale, impersonal structures. Yet people are highly active and creative, and the drive to realize human dignity and agency is a powerful force in every aspect of social life'.

From: Randy Hodson, *Dignity at Work* Cambridge UP 2001.





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In 2009 the original Dutch version of this book was published. It was the sequel to the very successful book *Professional Pain*, published in 2005. One year later we can proudly present the English version, which has been slightly adapted for an international public. The introduction has been rewritten and some of the articles from the Dutch version have not been integrated because they were too “Dutch.”

We are grateful to the A+O fonds Rijk, which made the translation and publication of this book financially possible. We would like to thank *The National Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the Netherlands (CNV)*, and especially Erick de Macker, Alfred Lohman and Daniëlle van Eerden for the determined and enthusiastic manner in which they have adopted the idea of creating an English version and distributing it among European sister-organizations.

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Thijs Jansen, Gabriël van den Brink, Jos Kole

TRANSLATED BY SARAH HAMMOND

# **Professional pride. A powerful force**

## **Introduction**

*Thijs Jansen, Jos Kole, Gabriël van den Brink,*

He who has professional pride is justifiably satisfied with work, because it is important and meaningful, because it has quality, because it is done professionally and “in good faith.” Work based on professional pride means that *you yourself* value the dedication and the content of your own professional practice, and you display this openly and self-confidently. Moreover, *others* see the value of your work. Others respond – with recognition, space and trust – to the good feeling you get from your work. This positive response is enormously motivating.

This book is about that professional pride in the public and semi-public sectors and how that pride must be handled, worked with, managed and organized by professionals themselves, administrators/managers, citizens and the government to nourish it, and to guarantee the quality of professional work. In this collection of essays, we ask ourselves if a consistent and practical mode of thinking can be developed which will stimulate and support professional pride, making use of its “powerful force” and steering it in a constructive direction. This book endeavors to supply building blocks for such an “administrative philosophy” with the aid of stories based on practical experiences by professionals on the workforce, but also based on theoretical insights that have been developed by scientists.

What does this introductory chapter look like? First, we delve deeply into what pride actually is and what it is an antidote for. As long as professional pride is steered in the right direction, it can be a drug against what has come to be known in the Netherlands as “professional pain”, named after the main title of a volume that two of the three editors of the present volume published in 2005.<sup>1</sup> The object of this sequel, on professional pride, is to reach beyond the misjudgments and to search for paths towards a solution. The phenomenon of “professional pain” is, internationally, better known as deprofessionalization, bureaucratization and proletarianization of professionals<sup>2</sup> – professionals’ frustration over excessive bureaucratization, negative forces of the free-market system, faulty management philosophies, the undermining of craftsmanship and failure to appreciate intrinsic motivation. Such factors hinder professionals in healthcare, education, safety and social welfare, from doing – or continuing to do – their work in good faith and with pleasure and contentment. After we have described the political and

social necessity and potency of professional pride, we will conclude by discussing the arrangement of this book in more detail.

### **The pride and honor register**

Pride is closely connected to the concept of “honor.” Both concepts describe the delicate relationship between emotions of self-esteem, self-appreciation or self-respect, and social recognition and social respect. Pride and honor influence how identity is experienced, how self-confidence and trust are experienced, and how strongly our identity and feelings of self-respect are connected to its recognition by others.

What is pride? Pride is self-assuredness and openly claiming an achievement or characteristic – of your own, or of someone you consider to be “one of yours”<sup>3</sup> – because you feel the value deserves wider recognition. In doing this, you want others to, at the very least, respect – or, even better, share – the positive recognition. The counterpart of pride is the humiliating feeling that you should be ashamed of the achievement or characteristic.

What is honor? While “pride” is very much based on an individual who – self-confidently and in a reasonably relaxed manner – aims for recognition, “honor” is a more intense ambition. The individual who demands of himself that he amount to something in his own eyes and in the eyes of others wants honor. Here, too, there is a close relationship between self-respect and respect by others. This is often about satisfying high norms that you and the group you belong to have declared the standard. The counterpart of honor is disgrace, a form of *shame* that emerges from the fact that you have not been able to satisfy the group’s standards and, in the eyes of others, have lost face.

What are the similarities between pride and honor? The concepts border on each other. It is especially striking that, for both concepts, their opposite is the shame of “humiliation.” Long-term offenses to self-esteem and lack of appreciation can be an important breeding ground for an increasingly stronger desire for honor.

The striving to not be “humiliated” offers a bridge to the second similarity. Pride and honor set in motion, and maintain, intrinsic motivation, inner passion. You feel that it is up to you to make sure that you are, and will remain, worthy in your eyes and in the eyes of others. You feel that what you strive for and what you do are part of your identity. You devote yourself to this. It is part of who you are. You chose it. Your obligations are to yourself first not others. Think, for example, of the expression “I have my pride!” or of people who are too “proud” to accept help from others. Thus, you feel that you are the prime mover of your own actions. You are literally autonomous (you set the rules yourself.) You are self-regulating. This leads to – and is connected with – self-respect and self-esteem. And these are forceful motivating emotions.

Because of the similarities, honor and pride are sometimes used as synonyms. It is, however, important to keep sight of their differences. A fundamental, characteristically

ideal difference in meaning is: You can *have* pride (not honor), you can *get* honor (not pride.) Pride is more strongly *focused on the person in question*, on self-respect and autonomy. Honor is more strongly *focused on the other person*, on the respect and recognition of others.

Pride is a skill all its own. For Aristotle, one of the patriarchs of philosophy, pride was a pre-eminent *virtue*, a superb characteristic that graced a person. He who is proud does “great” things, has important accomplishments and deserves to be properly appreciated for what he does, by himself and by others.<sup>4</sup> Aristotle realized all too well, however, that someone who decides to be (or not be) proud of something, can err in two ways. He who produces an excellent achievement, but does not broadcast it and does not ask recognition for it from others, is, according to Aristotle, (too) *humble*. But he who unjustly takes credit for great achievements is *arrogant*. Therefore, Aristotle describes pride as the “golden mean” between misplaced humility and inappropriate arrogance. He who is justifiably proud displays character. Pride is a virtue, if it is “appropriate satisfaction for one’s own achievements.”

### **Professional pain – lack of recognition**

Professional pain represents professionals’ failure to be appreciated and lack of recognition for the efforts, motivation, inspiration, quality and achievements they display every day on the work floor. This failure to understand the importance of professional pride and professional pain is linked to the following developments.

First, *more and more must be done with less and less* on the workforce over the past decades. Since the 1980s, many European governments have focused on stringent budget policies. Constant cutbacks meant workers had to do more and more with less and less. Cost increases had to be kept firmly in check. For a long time, governments were hardly willing to invest at all. Cutbacks – under the label of “efficiency” – were the order of the day. Within that framework, mergers were also enacted in such sectors as health-care and education.

A second development was that the status of various professions *decreased* enormously. We no longer live in the age in which the notary, teacher or doctor have high social status and natural authority.

Third, during the past decades the *protection of interests was narrow and weak*. The professional organizations which should have defended the quality of professional practice were, in many cases, not equipped to do so; they had either disbanded completely or were too weak, because they had a narrow support group – or none at all. The weak position of the professional organizations is closely connected to the *money-driven* struggle of the past decades. The content of the social task that professionals have committed themselves to is, however, generally a good deal richer. Fighting for the “quality of your work” has become the poor relation in this cycle of interest-group protection. In most

sectors, the professional organizations took no position – or an even weaker stance – in the battle of interests.

Fourth, *increasingly higher quality standards* were set by society and the central government. This fits within the trend that “many norms have been raised over the past thirty years such that new forms of uneasiness have developed.<sup>5</sup>” Citizens’ tolerance for poor or average service has decreased sharply. The political system is expected to do something about improving quality, resulting in efforts to continually improve quality control. Politicians more and more see employees in the public and semi-public service sectors as the key figures who must solve citizens’ social problems. The greater diversity of society and problems arising from differences demand solutions. Crime, integration, healthcare waiting lists, quality of education and juvenile delinquency – politicians promise improvement but depend on various professional groups for implementation. This increases the political pressure on the professionals and their organizations.

Nowadays, any incident can lead to new rules, sanctions and loss of face. People are working in glass houses. The most is made of every scandal. Within the public and semi-public sectors, there is an increasing tendency among many professionals, managers and administrators to avoid risk.

Fifth, the *operational space* of professionals has become increasingly smaller through increases in supervision and control. In the past decades, management in the public and semi-public sectors was inspired by the so-called New Public Management. In this management philosophy, the game is divided. Various parties with disparate interests are admitted to the professional field to prevent a concentration of power – other suppliers, insurance providers, clients and patient organizations. “The free-market” is a favored instrument for this. The objective is to lower prices (costs), raise production and improve quality. In this philosophy, it is the responsibility of managers to stimulate and protect efficiency and quality in the workplace. The exercise of power takes place from the top down. The higher you are in the organizational pyramid, the more power you have. The lower you are, the less power and less status. In order to achieve such objectives as cheaper labor, efficiency and effectiveness, the operational space for the employees on the work floor is restricted by protocols and guidelines or output control. The lower implementing levels play no role at all anymore in the debate on the objectives and priorities.

This has been a brief summary of five points on the lack of recognition of professional pride and professional honor.

### **The time is ripe for professional pride**

It is not sufficient to establish and identify the affliction and, certainly, none of us can permit ourselves to make do with simply complaining about it – not the people on the

workfloor; not the clients, patients or citizens; and certainly not employers, administrators and government. It is time to actively capitalize on professional pride. There are certainly sufficient points of contact for doing this.

First of all, there is a cautious, increasingly powerful movement in this direction.

As the former Chairman of the Netherlands Social and Economic Council Herman Wijffels<sup>6</sup> said, we are on the path towards a new social order in which motivated professionals will be the pillars. "In the old order, everything was regulated from the top. Politics is a reflection of this. The system has a tremendous upward suctioning effect. Politics feels ultimately responsible for everything. That does not fit anymore. Politics is not becoming unnecessary, it should develop systems within which professionals can assume responsibility." "There is a great deal of anxiety connected to the functioning of politics...a lot of fear, the system itself is an accumulation of anxieties: ministers and politicians who wonder what the media is writing about them, civil servants who see it as their highest calling to keep the heat off of their ministers, and so on. It is all about finding the power within – not outside – yourself."<sup>7</sup> For that development, the recognition and nourishment of the professional pride movement is of great importance.

Second, an increasing amount of literature is being published on professional pride as a driving force and on "the economics of honor." There are proposals on how the public and semi-public sectors could be organized more on the principle of intrinsic motivation, honor and merit. An interesting and relevant book is *The Economy of Esteem* by Geoffrey Brennan and Philip Pettit.<sup>8</sup> Here, the authors differentiate among three control mechanisms in society – the invisible hand of the market, the iron hand of the government and the intangible hand of recognition and appreciation. In the past few years, interesting research has been done internationally which has proven that civil servants are people with a specific kind of intrinsic motivation.<sup>9</sup> They have convictions, values and attitudes that are strongly focused on the general interest, and, to a certain degree, they have an inclination for sacrifice. In international studies, this is called Public Service Motivation.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, he who becomes a teacher, policeman, judge or physician does so, in part, from a sense of idealism for public affairs. The inclination for sacrifice is most clearly expressed among firemen, policemen and soldiers. They are prepared to take risks that could cause them to lose their lives in the discharge of their duties. In other professions, willingness to sacrifice is manifested as being prepared to carry out work in difficult circumstances for a lower salary than in other sectors, or to do more work than is required by the small print in a contract.

It is intriguing that the international scientific literature which demonstrates the importance of professional pride and professional honor in the quality of the service comes from many disciplines – political philosophy, behavioral economics, sociology, psychology, public administration and other sciences.

It is time to bring the incipient social movement and fragmented scientific knowledge together and to give them direction. The point now is to become better acquainted with



the force of professional pride and to utilize it better. We must roll up our sleeves and match the action to the word. But how do we move forward? In what direction must we search for solutions?

One thing is clear. There is no simple answer, and there are many activities which will not help the situation, such as simple contrasts between good professionals on one hand and evil managers on the other, or between market and government; clichéd slogans, such as “more space for professionals.” Nor does it help to find the answer by searching in a single discipline, such as standard economic theory or public administration. The challenge is whether an administrative philosophy can be developed which finds interdisciplinary nourishment and is attuned to increasing professional pride by strengthening and channeling it in good, constructive directions.

That is what this book is attempting to do – supply building blocks for an alternative vision on how professionals can regain their professional pride. At the end of this book, we sketch an “alternative administrative philosophy” which endeavors to provide a cohesive answer to these questions at the various levels where the recovery of professional pride must be directed. That is ambitious, but without ambition, there is no progress and no improvement! Moreover, with this administrative philosophy, the wheel is not being reinvented. It builds on previously acquired insights and on what you, the reader, are offered here – a multicolored palette of articles, long and short interviews and round-table discussions that, together, offer material to inspire a new administrative philosophy for the recovery of professional pride in the public and semi-public sectors. The contributions offer support and dissent, elicit approval or summon criticism. Good philosophy, after all, thrives on dissent and debate, and that is true of good administrative philosophers, too.

### **Overview of the book – building blocks for an alternative administrative philosophy**

This book has a number of sections, each of which is dedicated to a study of various conditions necessary for providing professionals in the public and semi-public sectors with professional pride and professional honor. The book is tentatively and organically organized using the factors that can contribute to the fostering of professional pride for maintaining and promoting the quality of public service.

The section “Persistent commitment” deals with perseverance and long-term involvement, characteristics of people who work with professional pride. They involve time and duration, conditions that are often scarce on the work floor, but are essential for the development of full-fledged professionalism, leading to useful and efficient work.

The section “Operational space” combines contributions that are concerned with the space which professionals in the public and semi-public sectors need to function effectively. There is a huge debate going on at the moment on whether professionals in the

public and semi-public sectors actually get to their real work at all because of the rules, regulations, forms and the administrative burden. What limits this space? What causes it? Can anything be done about it?

Together, the first two sections offer the dimensions of “time” and “space.” These are fundamental categories of thinking, according to the great philosopher of the Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant. They also form, however, the basic categories for an alternative administrative philosophy and draw attention to the conditions that make it possible for professionals to do good work they can be proud of.

The section “Courage and voice” deals with making a stand for the quality of your work. He who strives for professional pride, makes no attempt, after all, to hide his or her opinion about good work.

The section “Value-driven leadership” contains contributions that deal with how administrators and managers in organizations can better acknowledge, respect and cultivate professional pride and professional honor among their workers.

The section “In search of new pathways” deals with the willingness of professionals to see continued innovation and the search for new pathways as part of their work. The greatest challenge for the public and semi-public sectors today is that productivity is hardly growing, yet costs are getting out of hand. This is often the most important reason for reining in professionals. Professionals should, however, see this as partly their responsibility and find clever solutions for it. That does happen sometimes. It has been proven that it is certainly possible to be both useful and efficient in one’s work.

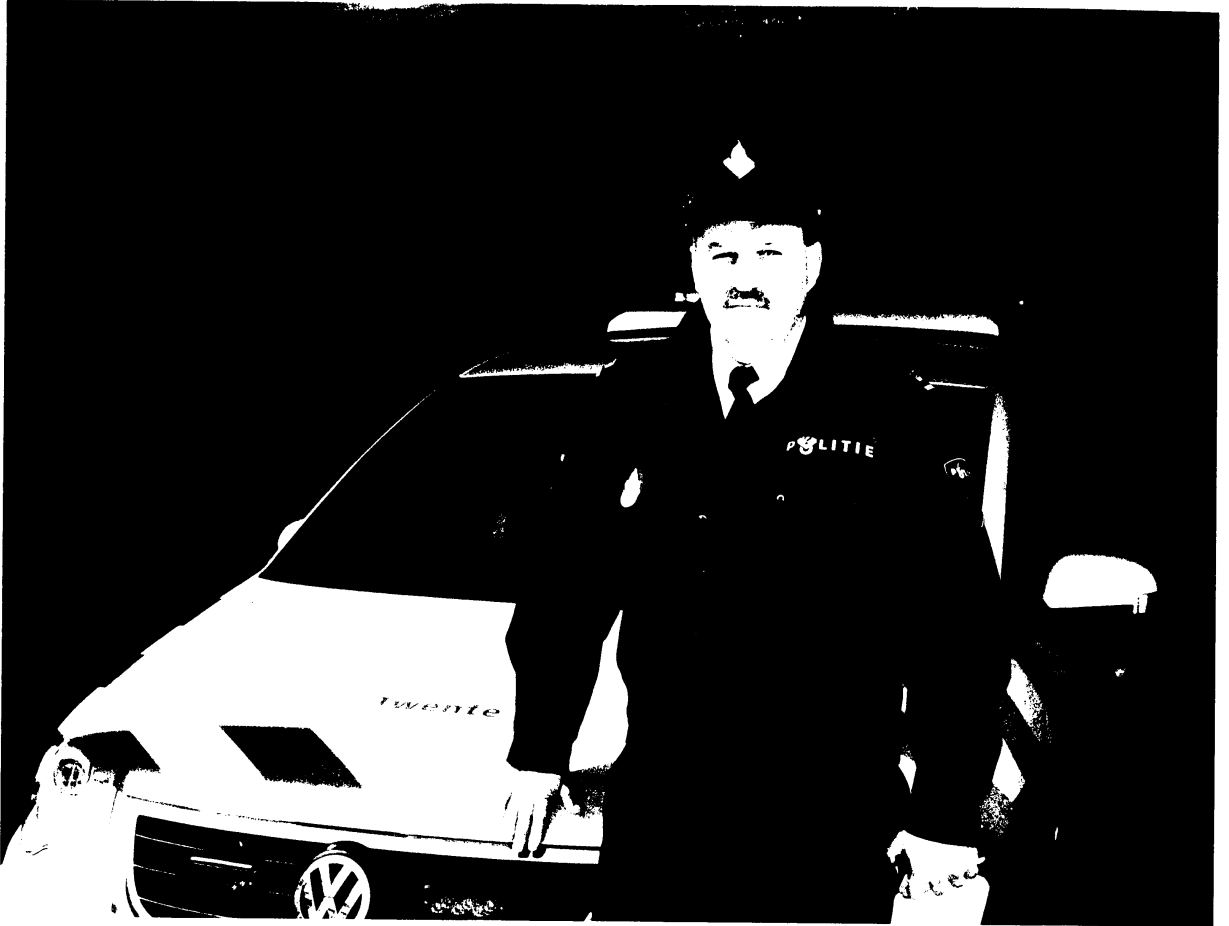
### **Professional pride as a project – onward to a different administrative philosophy**

In the closing section, we provide a sketch of an administrative philosophy that dovetails with the professional pride movement and is based on insights collected from the preceding contributions. Good work, professional pride, trust, self-regulation, autonomy, intrinsic motivation, dialogue and effective values are the core words in such an approach.

The time is ripe, as is clear from this introduction, to seek an effective and persuasive approach together, creating work that professionals in healthcare, education, safety and social welfare can be proud of.



## **Persistent Commitment**



---

Bennie Beuvink was born in 1957 in Oldenzaal and grew up on a farm. After he completed secondary school and police training school in Lochem, he joined the police force in the city of Enschede. He was neighborhood police officer in east Enschede from 1977 to 1997 and in the Veluwe-Lindenhof neighborhood of Enschede from 1997 to 2007. Since January 2009 he has been active as a mentor for neighborhood police officers in Twente.

In Veluwe-Lindenhof, Beuvink tackled problems together with the residents and local organizations and implemented plans to improve the quality of living in the neighborhood. In doing this, his own direct way of interacting with people appeared to be highly effective. His experience is that a balance exists in the cooperation between police, citizens and organizations where law and order enforcement is accepted. Bennie Beuvink is married and has one child. (Photo: Alexandra Gabrielli)

## The professional pride of Bennie Beuvink, mentor to local policemen

Alexandra Gabrielli

On December 17, 2007, there was a farewell party for local policeman Bennie Beuvink. The newspaper *De Twentsche Courant Tubantia* reported “Bennie Beuvink (51) still clearly remembers his first encounter with Velve-Lindenhof as a local policeman, twelve years ago. The people of the neighborhood looked at him doubtfully in his uniform and matching cap. It was shortly after the Miro riots which had a large impact on the area. Many people did not approve of the way the police tackled the riots, and the situation was highly volatile in this working-class neighborhood. There was considerable unrest and lack of confidence in the local government and the police. When Beuvink arrived, within a couple of minutes everyone knew he was there. Everyone was informed – via c b radio, telephones or in other ways. Doors closed. The residents were silent.

“Now when local policeman Bennie Beuvink comes to Velve-Lindenhof, the news still spreads like wildfire, but people greet him. It is obvious that he is welcome. The residents tell him what has been going on and which areas he should check. Criticism of Beuvink is not accepted. ‘You had better leave him alone, he is one of us’.”

Earlier in 2008, on January 15, an article appeared in the same newspaper entitled “Fine Neighborhoods?! An ode to the local policeman” (*Prachtwijken?! Een ode aan de wijkagent*), following a visit by Professor Gabriël van den Brink to the Velve-Lindenhof neighborhood in Enschede. Van den Brink is lecturer in Authority and Ethics at the Dutch Police Academy and full professor in Social Administration at the University of Tilburg. During his visit Bennie Beuvink and the chairman of the neighborhood council, Gerrit Ansink, showed Van den Brink around the abandoned streets of the neighborhood with rows of houses on both sides destined for demolition. Van den Brink wrote his book *Fine Neighborhoods?! (Prachtwijken?!)* – which appeared in October 2008 – about problem neighborhoods in the Netherlands. His book highlights the possibilities for these neighborhoods and their limitations, in addition to giving a series of recommendations.

“It should be like this in other areas,” says Van den Brink in the newspaper article. “Bennie Beuvink does not keep himself occupied just by meeting targets. He maintains a presence in the neighborhood. He is honest and open and has developed his own method which works.”



Bennie Beuvink (1957) was a local policeman for more than thirty years and, since January 2009, has been advising the Twente police force on its work in neighborhoods. This is a new position, one he devised himself. Beuvink: “A mentor makes people better, not in the way that a doctor does, but by showing people there are more options. I am doing pioneering work, and we shall see in ten years or so whether it has worked. Maybe other regions will follow and also appoint a mentor.”

What is his exact method? Beuvink: “This is a recent example. In the Velve-Lindenhof neighborhood there was a story that the public elementary school was going to close, as the number of pupils kept declining. One day the school council and the local government announced that they wanted to meet with the parents. At the meeting an announcement would be made that the school was to close. Often police are also invited to such events, because sometimes the situation can get out of control. That had happened once before, and the teaching staff was threatened. Emotions can run high. By this time I was no longer the local policeman, so my successor was to go to the meeting. I went along anyway, because I knew most of the parents and the school council. We informed the school that we would attend the meeting in uniform. They did not really want us to do this, but we told them that if they wanted us to keep order, we would have to wear uniform.

“So we went to the meeting that evening. Everyone greeted me enthusiastically – ‘Hey, you’re back!’ – as I had been away for a couple of months. I said that my successor had asked me to accompany her for support. There was considerable tension that evening. We were not sure what was going to happen. People started to explain the situation – classrooms that were too expensive, national closure requirements. Finally, we got to the crux of the matter. The school was being closed down.

“Then various emotions surfaced, especially dismay. The elementary school, the first place you meet people and make friends, was going. People did not understand why this was happening. Surprisingly this news did not make people angry. They did not behave as you might expect. They became introverted and sad.

“One woman said that she needed to get away and went to sit on her own. I went with her. She turned out to be one of the mothers who helped at lunchtime, even though her own children had already left the school. She spoke to me in the local Twents dialect and asked what she should do about this and what could still be done. At this point something other than simply keeping order was required of me, I needed to give her advice and help her decide what she could do. What advice could I give her? What could she do as a citizen? What were my options? I said to her that I would visit her to discuss a few issues.

“The next morning, I went to her house, having discussed the situation with my successor. I said to the woman that the decision to close down the school had been made at management level, but that the local council had the final say in whether the school was to close or remain open, and that the local government had not yet agreed with the decision to close the school. I told her that if she wanted to, she could go to the neighborhood council and see if she could form a group of parents from that school and from other schools, to oppose the closure. I told her that she needed to formulate her argu-

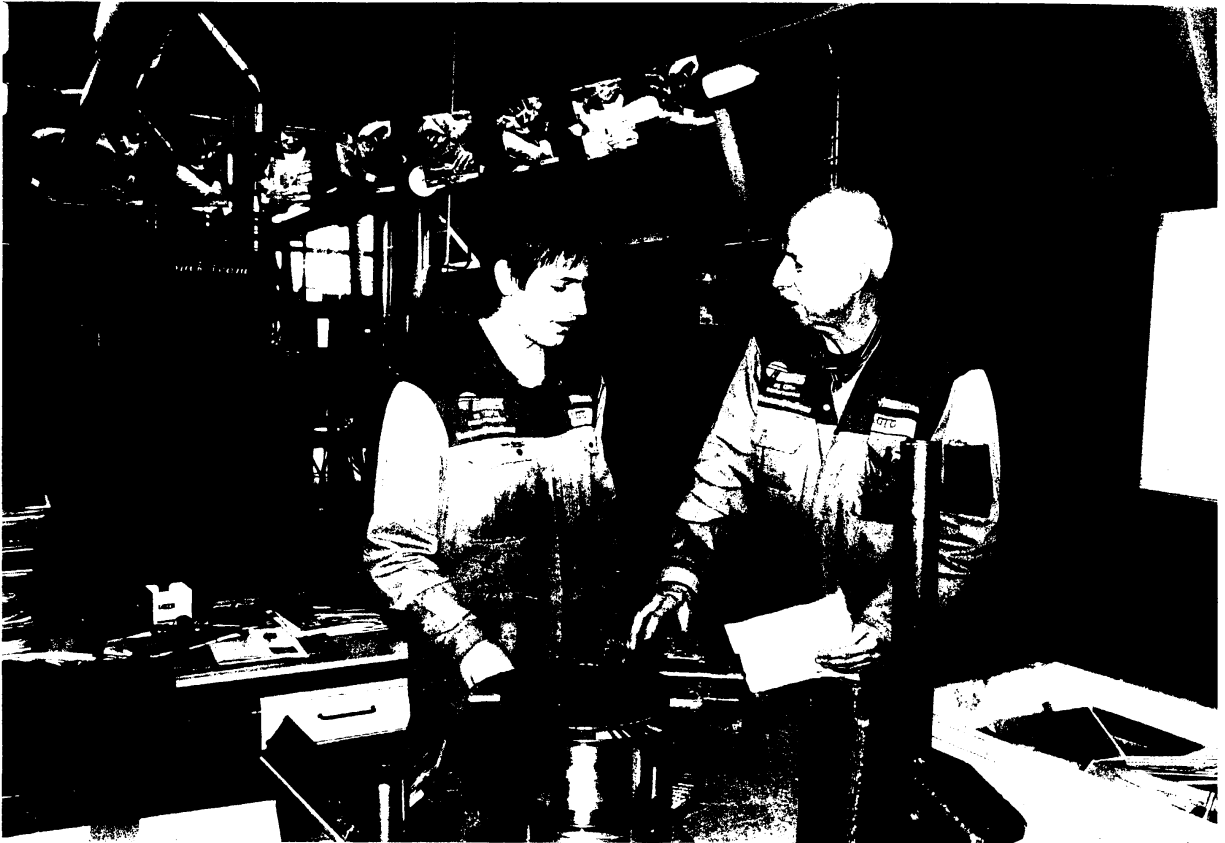
ments. The school is in a recognized problem neighborhood where there are children with special learning requirements and where small classes are actually necessary. I asked her if this had helped her, and she said that it had and that she felt better.

“This woman then attended a district town-council meeting and told a room full of people what closing the school would mean and that small classes should not be the reason for doing this. Together with a group of parents she has managed to ensure that the school remains open until a new school is built in the neighborhood. This was also a victory for the teaching staff. If this had not happened, the school would have been closed without a second thought and the children split up and sent off to other schools.”

Beuvink thinks that dissatisfaction at work appears most quickly in people who are closely involved in what they do. Those people who are involved in their profession and who set themselves serious tasks are the first to develop such feelings. Beuvink says “If you don’t do your best and put your heart and soul into something, things won’t change (‘no pain, no gain’). Some people, however, put so much energy into achieving things that it scars them if they do not succeed. It troubles and hurts them. You can only make progress if you can see where the opportunities exist to do this. If I had not been focused on the situation during that meeting, I would not have said that I would visit the woman the next morning. By doing so, I demonstrated that the police are willing to help and that by talking, through discussion and legislation, you can change things. I am proud of the fact that a woman in this position, had the courage to make a statement. The person who came to tell everybody why classes had to be closed could explain everything beautifully using statistics but had a limited view of the reality of the situation.”

Practical as Beuvink is, he also likes to philosophize. He asked me if I would give him a definition of authority. I mumbled something about it being the ability to exert a trustworthy influence. According to Beuvink, however, authority is “Power plus love. What does that mean exactly? It means that if Mandela says something, he does so with authority that he has acquired or received. People sometimes say that the police have lost their authority, but that is not possible. You can lose your wallet, but you cannot lose authority. What people mean is that they have lost their trust in the police. This has gone. If you want to recover that trust, you could use your power – take your gun and demand that they give you your power back – but that doesn’t work. If, however, you ensure that neighborhoods are safe and pleasant to live in and show people what society can offer and what their responsibilities are, you cultivate trust.”

Listening to people is also a part of this. “If you listen carefully, you absorb a great deal. If a person comes to the police station, the first person he speaks to should listen carefully to exactly what he wants, otherwise things go wrong. This can be compared to a situation where an old woman is standing on the curb and you are feeling helpful, so you help her cross the road, only to find, after you are on the other side, that she did not actually want to cross the road at all.”



Wim van de Merwe (right) with his pupil Erwin Paalman, Dutch welding champion at the 2009 Junior Craftsmen Competition. (Photo: Alexandra Gabrielli)

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Wim van de Merwe (1951), born in Hellendoorn, is married and has three children. Together with his twin brother, Bertus, he completed a three-year metalwork vocational training course in Rijssen, followed by an extra year to gain his instrument-makers diploma. He then completed his secondary school course for applied technical education (MTS) and started working for a company in 1971. Van de Merwe gained a range of educational qualifications at night school and became a metalwork teacher at the Reggesteyn Christian high school in Rijssen in 1983. Two days per week, Van de Merwe works at the Office to Promote Technical Organizations (Bureau TOP). In addition to organizing the Junior Craftsman Competitions, Van de Merwe gives welding lessons to working people at night school. The newspaper headline “Wim van de Merwe keeps shaking the tree,” which appeared in the daily newspaper Tubantia in December 2007, perhaps best typifies Van de Merwe’s role in society as the tenacious advocate of good technical education in the Netherlands.

## **The professional pride of Wim van de Merwe, secondary school metalwork teacher**

*Alexandra Gabrielli*

“Are we going to give some young people a technical start, or would we rather let them stock shelves at the local supermarket?” asks Wim van de Merwe (1951). This question makes it immediately clear what concerns him. Van de Merwe is a metalwork teacher at the Reggesteyn College in Rijssen, a Christian high school for practical education, VMBO, HAVO and VWO (levels of secondary education in the Netherlands.) He has been an enthusiastic advocate of technical education for years and is constantly thinking up new plans to promote this, even at government level, which he has done with some success. Van de Merwe regularly receives high-profile visitors at school, such as Secretary of State for Education Marja van Bijsterveldt and, in November 2006, Minister President Balkenende. In January 2009 he was visited by Jan Kamminga, Chairman of the FME-CWM Association (a trade organization for the mechanical and electrical engineering industries). Twenty civil servants visited the school in 2005 after Van de Merwe approached the ministry with the comment “You have problems in the education system, including stimulating young people’s interest in science. I have the solution.” One solution was the cooperation between education and the corporate world. A number of companies helped outfit a modern, well-equipped workshop with boring machines, lathes and welding equipment in exchange for the school placing motivated pupils in the companies as trainees. In order to keep abreast of developments in these companies, Van de Merwe visits them regularly. In 2007 he initiated a job pool for his third-year students, enabling them to work for local companies on their free afternoons or holidays.

In a national plan to interest more young people in science, 2007 was named the Year of Science, an initiative set up by 31 organizations from both the educational and corporate sectors to address a forecast shortage of up to 70,000 scientists. Van de Merwe’s contribution to the Year of Science was “metal-discovery days” for children in their last year of elementary school in Rijssen. The children visited companies in the region to see for themselves what science is all about and to discover that it is not “dirty work.”

The Junior Craftsman Competition for students of metalwork and electrotechnology forms a high point of Van de Merwe’s efforts. His pupils have been champions in their

competitive fields on a number of occasions. In March 2009 Edwin Paalman became Dutch welding champion and Reggesteyn won first prize for the third time in a row. In November 2007 one of Van de Merwe's ex-pupils, Arjan Smit from Rijssen, took part in the world championship for young craftsmen, the WorldSkills in Japan, in the boring category. Although he did not win gold, silver or bronze, he did receive a medal for excellent craftsmanship.

When asked what he is most proud of, Van de Merwe answers, "That every year I manage to get something out of a pupil whom other people think will not make it. I always try to communicate with a pupil in such a way that he convinces himself that he is capable of more than he thinks. If I manage to draw this out of someone, I am satisfied. One of the best ways to achieve this is to take part in the Junior Craftsman Competition. This really demonstrates what the pupils can achieve. In the competition phase, they spend an unbelievable amount of their free time on the assignment. I can remember when my pupil Matthijs Bikker became Junior Craftsman champion in welding in 2005. I was sitting in the hall at the prize-giving ceremony and can definitely say that I felt very proud. When, sometime prior to this, I suggested that he be selected for this competition, some of the other teachers were not so enthusiastic at first. The best thing was when someone called me on a Sunday morning saying 'Wim, look at the front page of *De Telegraaf*.' There stood the words 'Bikker, the welding champion.' That day I was also called by RTV East with the request to film with Bikker in the school's workshop."

Van de Merwe often tells the story of his own youth – not to promote himself, but to serve as an example, or to warn against making preconceived or incorrect assessments. At elementary school he and his twin brother were told that they were not going to the secondary school for applied education (MULO), because they would not be able to handle the work. They would have to follow a vocational training program. At that school they were told that they could not go into the secondary school class for applied technical education (MTS) because they could not cope with all the subsidiary subjects. In the end, Wim van de Merwe did follow the secondary school course for applied technical training and also obtained various educational qualifications through taking evening classes for many years. He tells his pupils that sometimes you have to take a detour, but if you persevere, you will get where you want to go.

Van de Merwe does everything in his power to boost the image of practical technical education. He organizes "work evenings" for parents, where they put on overalls and work with welding tools, lathes and borers. "I want to demonstrate to parents what can be achieved with a practically oriented metalwork education and that you can earn a good wage doing this."

Van de Merwe would like to see the abolition of the Cito tests (tests taken at the end of elementary school). According to him, many pupils who currently follow basic secondary education (MAVO) would prefer to work with their heads and their hands following the more practical secondary preparatory applied education (VMBO). The launch of the technical college in September 2008 showed that the profile of VMBO is beginning

to be seen in a positive light in the educational arena. This is a better pre-vocational secondary education with more hours of technical lessons. Moreover, those companies that are struggling with a shortage of well-schooled personnel are now involved in the technical colleges, which has led to the establishment of the foundation Friends of the Technical College.

In 2008 and 2009 Van de Merwe also met with a member of the Lower House, Staf Depla of the Dutch Labor Party (PvdA), who presented proposals to improve the VMBO which he tested with teachers, pupils, school authorities and other involved parties. A resulting book, *VMBO: Plenty of opportunity for talent!* (*VMBO: Ruim baan voor talent!*), came out in April 2009. There are, however, still more important items on Van de Merwe's wish list. One of these is to revise the training for becoming a technical teacher. Two of his former pupils started a teacher training course at the Technical Teacher Training College but stopped because there were too few practical lessons.

"You have to be able to teach the technical aspects to the pupils, otherwise you do not obtain sufficient knowledge of your subject. They do not learn these aspects at a college of higher education." Van de Merwe's voice takes on an alarming tone. "Without practical experience and expertise, we'll never make it. A trainee metalwork teacher with a class of 12- and 13-year-olds came to me because he did not know how to turn on a lathe!" The Ancient Greek word *epistèmè* means ability and expertise. The word derives from the verb *ep-istèmi* which literally means 'to stand next to'. The only way to learn a craft is by standing next to someone and watching."

Finally, Van de Merwe gives his advice on how to improve communication in schools:

"In the old days, you had a director and two deputy heads plus the teachers and 1,100 pupils. Now you have a central board, a location director, unit leaders, team leaders and finally the teachers. The middle layer has become too big, and it all costs extra money. The teachers at high schools are too compartmentalized. At my school, 40% of the teachers of the two levels of higher general secondary education (HAVO and VWO) have never visited my workshop. Luckily, however, it is beginning to dawn on society that there is nothing wrong with working with your head and your hands. A good example of this is the "Technasium," which was set up in 2004 and in which Reggesteyn also takes part. This is a form of education where HAVO and VWO pupils come to our department with a technical design on paper so that we can produce it for them."



*Richard Sennett (Photo: Thomas Struth)*



# **“A job done well is a source of pride for most working people”**

## **Interview with sociologist Richard Sennett**

Thijs Jansen

*“We need to be fully aware of the fact that self-respect is an acquired quality. Whether and how it is learned depends on how education and work are organized.” In the West, education and work are often not organized to create self-respect through work. In that sense, we can learn a lot from Asian countries like Japan and China. This is the view of Richard Sennett, the famous American sociologist and professor at the London School of Economics and New York University. His research and publications on cultural sociology and cultural philosophy cover a wide range of themes, from capitalism and labor relations, cities and civic space, to respect and craftsmanship. In 2008 he published the book *The Craftsman*.*

### **Work and self-respect**

*Why did you write the book about the craftsman?*

Learning skills is the key to craftsmanship. In the social sciences we use the term “skill” in several ways but we actually still hardly know what it means to be skillful. Most of us think it’s just technique or knowledge. The real process of acquiring a skill and valuing it, the self-discipline that’s required, the way teaching it is organized, the social relationships that flow from possessing a skill: it seemed to me that all these things were ignored by social scientists. This is strange because we’re continually creating new skills or “crafts”, not just in the high quality technical sector or the computer business but also in various service sectors. The notion of craftsmanship, of wanting to do your work well as an aim in itself, is something that never dates. A job done well is a source of pride for most working people. In my book I wanted to learn what it actually means to be skilled at something. To find out, I didn’t choose an economic approach but a sociological and cultural approach: what does being skilled mean now, and what did it mean in the past?

*In your book, you state that everyone has the potential to master a skill. You write: “We share in common and in roughly equal measure the raw abilities that allow us to become good craftsmen (...)” (p. 241). You have an optimistic view of human beings.*

Yes, that is an optimistic view of humans. There are certainly differences in the capacities that people are born with, but, as I’ve tried to show in my book, we magnify those differences in a way that can’t be justified even statistically. Most of the activities that people undertake are within the spiritual and mental reach of the majority of the population. This goes against a widespread prejudice of modern culture, namely, that the cause of the scarcity of good work is related to qualities that are innate in human nature and that it has nothing to do with social organization. This has very practical consequences. I don’t know what it’s like in the Netherlands, but in England the emphasis is on spotting that one person in twenty who appears to be exceptionally talented. All resources are then directed at that person, and the remaining nineteen are simply left to their lot. It’s a fact that this is the best way to produce mediocrity, and it’s also a perfect example of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The mediocrity is the result of not investing in the majority of your working population. That also causes a social problem because the so-called hierarchy of talent leads to inequalities in income.

I’m against that short-term selection process, that failure to invest and that inequality. Far more energy should be put into training nursing and paramedical staff in the medical sector, for example. The gap between doctors and support staff can and should be made smaller. That’s one of the important themes in different books I’ve written. Good education and good organization can make an enormous difference in improving the quality of work. That seems so blindingly obvious but if you look at how our institutions and organizations are run, it seems that no one believes this and exactly the opposite is done.

In this regard, we can learn a lot from what has happened in China in the last twenty years. The Chinese emphatically did not proceed from the assumption that talent is largely innate. They’ve managed to build an enormous army of educated workers by assuming that most workers can become literate and numerate and are able to execute complex tasks. That army of well-educated workers was built up from scratch after the Cultural Revolution. Of course, the Cultural Revolution denied that anyone whatsoever had talent. In the 1980s, Deng suddenly decided he could create a Chinese middle class of well-educated workers and that’s exactly what he did! In ten years the number of literate Chinese shot up by 40% – an unbelievable increase. The number of numerate Chinese is also enormous. The same thing happened in South Korea. It can’t be that human nature in those two countries has suddenly changed! What has made the difference is the optimistic belief in what people can do and the enabling power of social organization. I’ve often thought that what passes for realism in Western Europe is really just indifference to the possibilities of developing human capital.

## Motivation

You find motivation even more important than talent. In your book you write “that motivation is a more important issue than talent in consummating craftsmanship” (p. 285). How do we approach this in the West?

In the recent history of capitalism we’ve seen the prejudice that most working people are lazy, unmotivated and only make an effort for money. This covers up a sort of elitist way of thinking; it presumes that only a select few are really involved in the work they do. I wanted to start from the simple premise that it is inherent in being human to want to have self-respect and to feel that you’re useful.

For most adults, the path to self-respect is through work. Whether this is true for every person in the whole world...of course, we all know lazy people. However, I think you can more easily understand how work should be organized if you start from the premise that people have a double interest in work: they don’t just want to survive financially, they also want to feel that, having worked for forty years, all their efforts have been worthwhile. And at the moment, most work organizations are not organized in a way that links up with this two-fold motivation. Over the last few decades of capitalism, the assumption has been that people won’t work hard without punishment, unequal rewards and the elite belittling the masses. In contrast, I argue that this assumption is factually incorrect, that it’s a prejudice and an unrealistic assumption! It doesn’t square with what we know about people. My conviction about this has been reinforced by behavioral economists, colleagues here at the London School, who have shown scientifically that people’s career choices don’t simply depend on money. My sociological bias therefore appears to be an economic reality.

We’ve wrongly seen *homo economicus* as the most widespread figure. In relation to this, it’s interesting if you look at long-running measurements like the Duncan Prestige Scale, developed by an American sociologist in the 1960s. This Scale has been used for fifty years to determine the sorts of work people respect. And...dangling way down at the bottom of the list are the bankers, stockbrokers and other people who work in the financial sector. They might be rich, but it hasn’t earned them much respect! The Duncan Scale is an enormous undertaking that provides a small indication that *homo economicus* isn’t that highly valued in everyday life. The real issue is that during the latest generation of capitalism we’ve had a liberal system that preached the virtues of *homo economicus* – and *nota bene*, as virtues! Now, with the economic crisis, we’re seeing that these so-called virtues have turned out to be social sins. It proved to be a very weak system for which we’re now paying a high price.

In the public sector, professional ethics and self-respect have come under pressure from bureaucrats who have used a particular version of the story peddled by *homo economicus*: the story about the productivity of the public sector. My position is that the virtues in that story are just as illusory as the virtues preached by the bankers. By the way,

they're sometimes the same virtues – things like immediately quantifiable output, immediate profit and quick returns.

*You've described how even managers have become demotivated in the new capitalism.*

In my book *The Corrosion of Character* I described the conflict that exists in the new capitalism between managers and owners. Owners in the new capitalism are completely focused on increasing company value in terms of rising share prices. They want to cash in on that value as quickly as possible, but they can only cash in by making the company profitable. What happens then? Just look at the internet bubble at the end of last century. It was possible to earn a lot of money by dealing in companies that actually didn't have revenue. It wasn't even that their profits were low; no, they didn't even make profits! But the short-term focus on the share price and the neglect of long-term profits often turned out to be extremely painful for the managers of those companies. The managers I interviewed, mostly in the high-tech sector, were people who wanted to put their efforts into lasting companies that would make long-term profits. This meant they often came into conflict with the owners, who had given short shrift to one of the tenets of capitalism, namely, that capitalism focuses on profit. This hasn't been true over the last few decades, which has left many managers very frustrated. It was possible to make a company profitable for investors by buying it and then selling the most profitable divisions to other companies. Investors were completely indifferent to the fact that a debt-ridden company was being bought. However, the last thing the managers felt was indifference, because there were high debts and profits went up in smoke. The first dramatic example of this was a company called Nabisco. The real work in the different divisions of this company was completely wrecked in this way. So, it's much too simple to say that managers have lost their feel for management. That's only part of the truth. The other part is that the conflict between management and owners in modern capitalism has also led to a devaluation of the management itself.

### **How to deal more effectively with motivation and self-respect**

*How can we deal more effectively with motivation and self-respect?*

We must realize that self-respect is an acquired quality. Whether and how it's learned depends on how education and work are organized. It's therefore a sociological rather than a psychological fact. Unmotivated workers – construction workers in the old Soviet Union, for example, or dejected employees like British doctors and caregivers – don't suffer so much from their work but from the way it's organized.

One of the things that struck me when I investigated the goldsmiths' guilds was how ritualized the medieval guilds were in how they built up self-respect. If an apprentice

didn't succeed in demonstrating his skills during an exam, for instance, he wasn't just thrown out of the guild. The apprentices were given plenty of opportunities to keep trying until they succeeded. They were motivated by rewards, not by punishment.

The quality of work from that time often astonishes us now, but it isn't really that surprising. Quality was expected, and if the quality wasn't high enough, there were all sorts of rituals to encourage an apprentice to improve it, like guidance by mentors and intensive interaction with other apprentices. Everything was directed at encouraging apprentices to keep trying until they succeeded. In modern organizations, we don't do that. We give people one chance and if they fail to achieve, we drop them. We miss the sorts of rituals that create the confidence of, "Yes, you can do it! You'll manage!" Those sorts of confidence-building measures were built into the structure of the guilds.

Of course we mustn't idealize the past. If an apprentice still hadn't mastered the craft at the end of his seven-year apprenticeship, he left the guild. However, the number of guild workers who did meet the strict requirements was impressive. And in the modern work environment we can learn a lot from this.

*In The Craftsman you describe the profound influence of organization advisor William Edwards Deming on the Japanese economy after the Second World War. He did know how to organize self-respect in Japanese industry. Was that a sort of renaissance of the guild idea?*

Yes, in the twentieth century the guild idea experienced a remarkable renaissance as a result of Deming's work. He had a far-reaching influence on the Japanese automotive industry. Before he arrived in Japan, the Japanese made really rickety products. He taught them how they could improve the quality of their products and create a market for low-priced, high-quality products. This required more co-operation within a company, a less hierarchical organization and – talking about respect – he taught them that if there were problems relating to quality, the managers mustn't blame the production workers; instead, these problems had to be solved by adjusting the organizational structure. Deming's most radical intervention in Japanese culture – a very hierarchical culture – was to introduce the idea that workers were allowed to contradict the boss. I've visited Honda and Toyota's car plants. These companies have learned a lot from Deming, and it's unbelievable. If a worker thinks the boss has it wrong, he isn't the least bit subservient. Workers speak out because they want to solve the problem. Worker morale at those factories is tremendous! The difference with the American automotive industry is huge. There, the rules are that hierarchy is determined by your distance from the shop floor, and workers are to be subservient to the manager. The result is that problems aren't solved, there's hardly any mutual communication in the company, and low quality is accepted. American workers in the automotive industry are incredibly alienated workers. The contrast between Japan and America is enormous!

Deming didn't only give the guild idea a new lease of life in Japan but also elsewhere in the world. He's been forgotten in the West, but that's certainly not the case in Japan

or India, where he's a real guru. There are other interesting thinkers who meet the same fate as Deming. A good example is Simon Head, a researcher at the Rothermere American Institute at Oxford. His book *The New Ruthless Economy. Work and Power in the Digital Age* appeared in 2007. He analyzes institutional systems, and he, too, is famous in Asia and ridiculed in England!

### **Government control of professionals in England**

*Deming's work was very much concerned with recovering quality and a sense of pride in their work among low-educated workers in the private sector. However, in the last few decades it seems as if a new development has rapidly been taking shape. In many European countries, the self-respect and motivation of highly educated employees like doctors or academic staff at universities are hardly taken into account any more. This even seems to be a problem at famous universities like Oxford and Cambridge.*

It's an enormous problem. We also have that problem here at the London School of Economics. We do have academic staff who put up some resistance. However, it's no small matter. It's about government pressure to quantify the quality of our research. The government measures the quality of research institutes using the so-called Research Assessment Exercise. Bureaucrats invented it, and it's a travesty! It takes a huge amount of time and it takes a lot of energy to complete all the forms. This bureaucracy is a structural problem, and it's a problem right across Europe and also, to a certain extent, in North America. It's a sort of Weberian idea of rational bureaucracy gone mad.

*In England there seems to be little resistance among these highly educated professionals.*

One of the reasons for this is that professionals have collaborated with the regime. When Thatcher began to "reform" the universities in the mid-1980s, many of my colleagues thought they could outwit the bureaucrats. They didn't put up a fight, because they thought they would be able to manipulate the system. However, they underestimated the enormous power of the bureaucracy, and in the end, the system has proven to be stronger.

And now we have a generation that's used to this bureaucratic phenomenon. It seems so obvious now that a bureaucrat from the Treasury – because that's where the control emanates – should act as the authority that assesses professional quality. This doesn't only apply to universities but also to the healthcare sector. It has become a fact that people have learned to live with.

It's worth noting that the difference between education, especially the university system, and the healthcare sector is that the damaging effects of over-regulation are so obvious in the provision of healthcare services. It's hardly possible to mask the fact that control doesn't lead to improved healthcare. When the managers conquered healthcare

in England, they tried to standardize the diagnostic procedures used by doctors in such a way that they could compare how quickly, down to the minute, different doctors in different environments made a diagnosis and then determined the treatment. The result was that complexity was excluded during exploratory examinations of patients. Doctors were thus put under pressure to come up with a diagnosis within the fifteen to twenty minutes they were permitted. It was said that this improved the quality of healthcare but the opposite was true: the quality of diagnoses deteriorated because there was no longer time for or consideration of complex connections. Not all disorders lend themselves to a simple label that can just be stuck on. The doctors began to treat clearly defined disorders instead of looking at the patient as a whole. The managers couldn't understand all this, because they didn't understand the way professionals make such diagnoses.

The situation at the universities is a bit different from the healthcare sector, where the deterioration in quality is so obvious. It's definitely true that the work produced at universities isn't as good as before the Thatcher era, but the consequences have remained less obvious. This can be explained as follows. Many researchers who see the situation for what it is simply decide not to work at British universities. And those who do stay know precisely what they're getting into – after all, they don't come in thinking, "I'll just put up a fight." So, on the one hand you keep a selection of people who are prepared to accept that it's all part of the deal, and on the other hand, you have the people who can't accept it and therefore go and do something else.

The drain of the best autochthonous – British-born – researchers out of the country isn't that big, seen quantitatively, by the way. The government is very clever at pointing out that it concerns only a few people, but that hides the fact that it's the leading researchers who leave. For example, Tim Berners-Lee, who developed most of the architecture for the internet, fled to MIT in the United States when the Thatcher reforms were implemented. Similar examples can also be found in the medical and social sciences.

By the way, there's also a lot of verbal resistance. It's sometimes loud but not very effective. As far as I personally am concerned, if I had been working at any other university, I would never have remained in England. My colleagues at the London School are very aware of the problem and they've held some effective protest actions to resist. Let me give a personal example. The government wanted, among other things, bureaucrats to come and assess how well we taught. This astonished me when I arrived here – a government organization with inspectors... I asked my colleagues what I could do about it. I had never had someone attend my lectures in order to "inspect" them. They gave me the following advice: demand the inspector to read the books you're going to discuss with your students. I tried that. The inspector arrived for the pre-inspection talk with a checklist of points he was going to assess me on. It included points like the number of times there was eye contact between professor and student and the relation between the number of lecture minutes and the number of discussion minutes. I then told him I was looking forward to his attendance at my lecture but that, in order to understand what we were doing, he would have to read the works by the famous German sociologist Max

Weber on religion and charisma because they were part of the program for the next lecture. He looked at me blankly and never turned up again. That wasn't on his checklist...

Of course, this is only a form of "low-key" subversive behavior. My colleagues have, however, always remained very alert and this has meant that we've finally been liberated from all those inspectors. And we've also had the good fortune to be relatively independent of the government because we only get about 23% of our income from the Treasury, whereas other universities often depend on the Treasury for more than half of their income. We carry out a lot of contract research and we do advisory work. You can buy freedom this way, but the flipside is that you sell your freedom to a company or subsidizing institute. I've been awarded lots of scholarships from private foundations and they're generally more focused on the result, so you don't have to deal with all that frenzied bureaucratic control.

### **The financial and economic crisis**

*What is the relevance of your optimistic, alternative ideas about work, motivation, talent and self-respect as we try to find a way out of the current economic crisis that is, after all, partly the result of the prejudices towards work you're fighting against?*

Optimism is important here as well. Pessimism is cheap and it's also shortsighted, because we have a reasonably good picture of how the situation we're in now will develop in the course of time. One of my colleagues has studied fifteen recessions and researched the sorts of time patterns that can be discerned. The financial part will last two years, the collapse of house prices will last four to five years and the depression will leave its mark on unemployment and income developments for about six years. It's therefore abundantly clear what we have to do, and that is what the Americans are doing. Don't say the situation is hopeless, that it's the worst crisis since the 1930s, and then start tearing your hair out! What we have to do is prepare for the upward curve in the cycle. I'm saying this partly in my political role by the way, because I'm involved in the current Obama administration in America. Obama's supporters were so angry because the previous Bush administration invested so little money in restoring trust in the banks and creating new jobs. Nothing was done in the long term for people who were victims of the crisis, neither in the public nor in the private sectors. That has changed since Obama was elected, and the emphasis is now on retraining people. The American economy, just like the British economy, has lost many high-quality, innovative manufacturing industries and the focus will be on the effects of this in the coming years. The underlying idea is that in six years, when the economy recovers, people will have to do different jobs; they won't be able to return to their old jobs. That's the plan. No one knows whether it will work, but it's what we're trying to do.



*You're working on this with the Obama administration in your capacity as chairperson of the American Council of Work?*

Yes, we had halted the Council during the Bush years because we had no contact with the government. We're now restarting the Council. It will have a somewhat more international character. You find three sorts of people on the Council: entrepreneurs, union leaders and university researchers. Because the United States has absolutely no tradition of or experience with "polderen" [consensus decision-making], the Council aims to bring together business and trade unions representatives for informal talks, with the researchers acting as a sort of buffer. They prepare studies and discussion papers and ask the union leaders and business representatives to discuss them together. This is all going on behind the scenes. When the Council first began, I was very surprised to discover that there were no informal contacts whatsoever between businesses and unions. They only met in the public sphere, where there was always conflict. They learned nothing from each other and hardly cooperated. This is a serious problem in the American business world. We hope the Council can be the beginning of a Rhineland Model in the United States.

### **Craftsmanship and citizenship**

*In The Craftsman you introduced an interesting theme, that it's possible to see a link between the citizen and the craftsman. The craftsman should "automatically" be a good citizen.*

The link between craftsmanship and citizenship isn't something I invented. It's actually an Enlightenment ideal from the eighteenth century. It can be found in the works of Diderot, Adam Smith and Thomas Jefferson, the American author of the Declaration of Independence. It's a very simple idea: when people become good at their jobs, they also gain an understanding of complexity. They understand that simple solutions might not be real solutions. They become curious and want to find out more.

The underlying idea is that people gain experience with and an understanding of complexity in the process of developing skills during their work. All those eighteenth-century philosophers feared the fact that politicians focus as much as possible on simplification. They go for simple solutions like belief, authority, etc., and evade complexity. Diderot's idea was that if working people knew more than politicians, this would be the basis for their standards of judging policy. The idea was, simply, that a good citizen relied on his work experience in order to judge political proposals and politicians. What the French philosophers feared most was what we now call propaganda, simple solutions put forward by charismatic politicians. The idea was that because people gained experience with complexity through their work, they were probably more critical with regard to politicians and wouldn't just take their word for things.

That's my thinking, too, and I differ here from Hannah Arendt. In her work on political judgment she was unclear about precisely this point. She couldn't explain the source from which people derive the norms for their judgments. That's because she separated work and politics, and she ended up with procedural norms like those found in Habermas's work. By way of contrast, I propose that there really are sources to judge the quality of politics and that these come from another domain. Diderot thought that when a politician says, "Trust me, I know what I'm doing," he should be kicked out of office because this is an appeal to the irrational, an attempt to use charisma.

*Turning that around, should the craftsman place his work at the service of the public interest?*

No! That's going too far! Craftsmanship is a limited virtue. No one makes a beautiful piece of silver or performs a string quartet because he wants to serve the general public interest. These are two different things. If you say, "I want to become as good a researcher as possible, I want to find the structure of certain genes, I want to do DNA research, find the double helix," if you want to do that, then you're not driven by the desire to set up a profitable industry. What the government directives are aimed at is ascertaining beforehand whether subsidizing your DNA research will or will not yield results. That's not possible! The same is true of healthcare. If you state that the general public interest is best served by a standard limit on a doctor's contact with every patient to fifteen minutes, then you presume that a utilitarian norm can be applied beforehand to a work situation. That is a mistake!

One of the lessons from John Dewey's pragmatic philosophy is to never use work as a means to achieve ends that are not contained in the work itself. That is a very realistic starting point. The only reason you would want to know the usefulness of an act before performing it is to control the person acting. It isn't realistic to think an accountant can determine beforehand if DNA research will be profitable. And, moreover, people are motivated to do specific and not general things. Craftsmanship is not a means to an end. However, the proposition in my book is that, by respecting this very focused involvement, society will "profit" more than under the current system, where we get work of an inferior quality because of the utilitarian pretense that it's possible to determine the value of something before it has even been done. In a philosophical journal, a reviewer characterized my book so aptly that I wish I'd come up with it myself. He said it was a passionate plea for pragmatism and against utilitarianism. That's a perfect description, isn't it?

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Books by Richard Sennett:

*The Craftsman* (New Haven, Yale University Press 2008); *Practicing Cultures* (with Craig Calhoun), (Oxford, Routledge 2007); *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (New Haven, Yale University Press 2005); *Respect, In an Age of Inequality* (New York, Norton 2003); *The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York, Norton 1998).

TRANSLATED BY VIVIEN REID

# **The GoodWork Project: A few results after 15 years' research**

Howard Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, William Damon

*For nearly 15 years – since 1995 – an American research project has been looking at the characteristics of and conditions for good work. This GoodWork Project is being led by the famous American psychologists Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon. In this article, they provide an overview of the results of this research to date. Good work is carried out in a competent, honest and involved way. Four criteria must be met to make good work possible: clearly formulated criteria for standards of behavior, assented to by the professional group, internalized in its members' self-image, not thwarted by powerful external forces like market forces, politics or social forces. If these four criteria are met, "good work" is possible, and even probable. If they are not met, good work will become difficult, or even impossible, and will turn into its antithesis – "compromised work."*

In 1995, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, William Damon, and Howard Gardner, the three principal investigators, embarked on an ambitious study of "good work" in American professional life.<sup>1</sup> The question we posed was the following: How do individuals who desire to do "good work" – work that is at once excellent in quality and socially responsible – succeed or fail at a time when unmodulated market forces are extremely powerful, and the search for ever greater profits pervades the society; there are few, if any, comparable controlling forces or counterforces; and our whole sense of time and space is being altered in our technologically oriented global society? Our chosen method has been to conduct extensive in-depth interviews with leading professionals across a range of sectors. In these interviews, we probe for the individual's personal goals, the mission of the profession, the strategies being used to achieve goals and mission, the obstacles that are encountered and how they dealt with them and the individual's sense of the major trends in the chosen profession. We also probe a number of ancillary areas, which include formative influences (such as mentors and anti-mentors), the role of religion or spiritual orientation, attitudes towards technology, and the entities to which the individual feels most responsible. In many cases we also use more targeted methods, such as an inventory of values and responses to ethical dilemmas.

As of the end of 2007, we have completed studies of journalism, genetics, theater, business, higher education, and philanthropy; and we also carried out small scale

studies of medicine, law, and pre-collegiate education. We hope ultimately to look at less prestigious professions and at work that falls outside the usual definition of a profession (e.g. blue-collar workers). So far, the study has taken place primarily in the United States, but our colleague Hans Henrik Knoop has underway a parallel study in Scandinavia, and we hope to investigate “good work” in other parts of the world as well.

Complementing our study of leading professionals, we have undertaken a second line of study that involves budding young professionals (Fischman, Solomon, Greenspan, Gardner, 2004). We have interviewed secondary school students, college students, those enrolled in professional schools, and individuals at their first job in a number of areas, including theater, biology, journalism and social entrepreneurship (Barendsen & Gardner, 2004). We have also spoken to some individuals who are at the close of their careers. We consider the most illustrious of the individuals to be “trustees” – individuals who are concerned with the overall health of their domain and its role in society (Gardner and Benjamin, 2005). We dedicated our first collaborative book, *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet* (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, Damon, 2001), to John Gardner, the American public servant who exemplified both the role of the good worker and that of a domain and a societal trustee. This initial book explored the work of professionals in the domains of journalism and biogenetic science.

As often happens in the case of ambitious investigations, we have spawned several associated projects. These include the following:

1. A study of the ways in which key beliefs and practices are transmitted across generations. In this study, we have examined a number of contrasting lineages in journalism, genetics and dance (Nakamura et. al., 2009).
2. A study of contemplative practices in the professions. We have examined both individuals who are dedicated meditators (Vipassana and various forms of Jewish meditation, for example), and a larger sample of professionals who engage in deep reflection (albeit irregularly and idiosyncratically) (Solomon, 2007).
3. A study of a group of dedicated health workers who have been given an Albert Schweitzer Fellowship to support work with disadvantaged populations.
4. The GoodPlay Project – A study of ethical issues in the new digital media.

By the end of 2006, we had interviewed over twelve hundred Americans of different ages, engaged in different professions and located across the country. All of these interviews have been transcribed and reviewed and most have been coded according to procedures developed by the team. The coded transcripts are available for easy reference by our team in a software program called NUD\*IST. (Eventually, we hope to make these data – properly de-identified – available to qualified researchers.) Through this procedure, it is possible to carry out both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Results from the various portions of the study have been or will be reported both in the academic literature and in more popular venues. In what follows, we focus for the

most part on findings that cut across the various individual projects and on the “headlines” from the individual projects. More detailed discussions of specific findings can be found in the various papers that are listed at the conclusion of this essay and the several dozen research reports posted on the project website.

### **Good work: excellent, engaged, ethical**

In every society there are jobs to do. Many of these are jobs that “need doing,” in the sense that the society’s members depend upon them. One main reason that a society – any society, from an ant colony to the British Empire – comes together in the first place is to get the jobs done that are needed to nurture, regulate, stimulate and otherwise occupy its members.

Getting jobs done requires work, and work touches all of our lives in a multitude of important ways. Many of us are workers, assigned to jobs that at least someone wants done enough to pay us for our work. Those of us who do not work rely on the work of others for survival, edification and entertainment. Whichever role we take – worker, consumer, or most likely both – we live or die, rise or fall, gain or lose hope, are led or misled, become discouraged or inspired – by the quality of the work that we and others around us do.

If we are workers, we usually have a number of objectives for our daily toil. The first thing on our minds may be earning a living. In fact, this may be the only thing that we are consciously aware of when we make the effort to show up at our workplaces each day.

But most people have other aspirations for their work as well. In particular, most people want to accomplish something significant in their work, and they take pride in doing their jobs well. People who achieve financial success without satisfying these other aspirations may end up feeling barren and dispirited. When people feel that their current work situations do not allow them to accomplish the job that they believe needs to be done, they often quit; or, worse, they subsist in a demoralized, half-hearted mode, aimed at little more than keeping a paycheck coming in. They feel that they have drifted away from their moorings, that their careers are ending up far from where they had initially hoped they would be. What they lack is a sense that they are accomplishing something that really matters, that something of consequence happens when they go to work each day. They are not especially proud of the work that they are doing or of the kinds of workers they have become.

People who work are not always aware of the forces that ultimately matter to them. While focusing on the “how” questions – how to get a job, how to keep the job, how to get ahead – many forget the “why” questions that they began with: Why take this path? Why aim to achieve this objective? Why behave in this way? It is the “why” questions that remind us of our truer aspirations and ambitions. Because everyone, everywhere, wants to live an admirable life, a life of consequence, because we all would like to pass “the

tombstone test,” the “why” questions cannot be ignored for long without peril to one’s personal stability and enduring success. It is like ignoring the rudder on a ship – no matter how much you look after all the other moving parts, you may end up lost at sea.

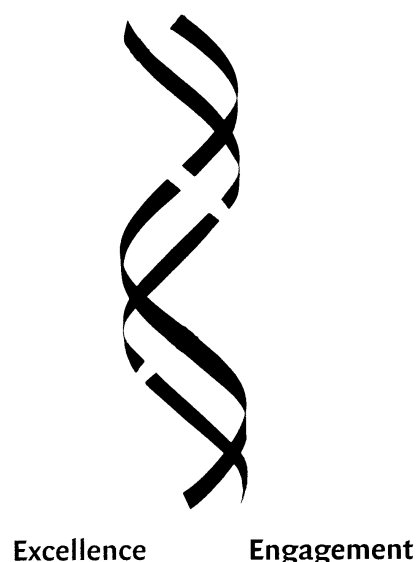
In our GoodWork Project, we have learned that most workers aspire to do “good work”<sup>2</sup> – they take pride in doing something that matters, that serves society. “Good work” is formally defined by the three principal investigators of the GoodWork Project as work that is of high quality, socially responsible, meaningful to the worker, an enhancement to the lives of others and conducted in an ethical manner. What matters to all of us – workers and nonworkers alike – is that the jobs we rely on get done well, with competence and integrity. We all have a stake in “good work” for the simple reason that we need the goods and services that work bestows upon us, and when those goods are shoddy or the services corrupt, we suffer tangibly.

As we have come to construe it, “good work” involves three considerations:

- 1) It is technically Excellent;
- 2) It is personally meaningful or Engaging;
- 3) It is carried out in an Ethical way.

Work can exhibit 0, 1, 2 or all three Es. Workers should aspire to achieve all three of the Es. As a suggestive visual representation, we think of “good work” as three intertwined strands of “E” – a triple helix.

Figure 1: The triple helix of GoodWork: Excellence, Ethics, and Engagement



Fortunately, as consumers or clients or citizens, our need to have “good work” done on our behalf is reciprocated by our motivation as workers to try our best to accomplish “good work.” Unfortunately this reciprocal bond is delicate, with many weak links in the motivational chain. To make matters worse, there are powerful forces – some time-

less, others unique to our contemporary fix – that can break this bond at a moment’s notice, sometimes before workers even know that the quality of their work is in danger and before consumers know that their needs are being poorly served.

While “good work” is typically the goal of most workers, formidable obstacles to its realization exist. Despite our best efforts, internal and external conditions can make “good work” difficult to do. Pressure to keep costs low and profits high, to do more in less time, and to fulfill numerous life roles, including those of parent, spouse, friend, and worker, can all make cutting corners tempting. Furthermore, in countries with high levels of corruption or illegitimate governmental interference, “good work” may be doubly challenging. Doing “good work” is certainly easier for professionals living in a democratic society that affords opportunity and encourages constructive social efforts. Yet even in such a happy circumstance, “good work” is neither effortless nor assured. It is always a challenge, requiring ethical commitment and skill on the part of each individual worker.

Why is it that when two individuals work the same job, one will do “good work” and the other won’t? And more generally, why is it that during one era an entire profession may be sailing along in smooth waters, earning the respect and perhaps even the gratitude of society at large, while a few decades later the same profession will be seen as a shelter for crooks and clowns? (Observers have noted this trend with reference to the auditing profession in the United States.) We all have strong intuitive beliefs about why certain people fail at their task, or why certain professions fall into disrepute at times. Unfortunately, our institutions alone are often too fragile, failing to provide the kind of support that would allow us to turn “compromised work”<sup>3</sup> into “good work.”

For instance, suppose a surgeon drifts off into aimless thought during an operation, carelessly neglecting to use proper medical procedures on a gravely ill patient. Some may assume that the fault lies in the character of the physician and advocate stricter disciplinary measures to prevent such behavior from surfacing again. Others might blame the physician’s state of mind – perhaps he was distracted by personal problems – divorce, money. In this case, stress reduction and therapy might help keep such events from recurring. Still other onlookers might blame systemic conditions that force physicians to work long hours in crowded hospitals. If this circumstance is the source of the problem, institutional changes will be necessary. And there are many other explanations that could readily be advanced: The doctor had been badly trained and thus had failed to internalize the special duties that bind physicians to patients; or perhaps he had become too greedy; or the medical profession as a whole had become too arrogant to feel any empathy for patients.

If we move from considering the failure to produce “good work” at the level of individuals to the level of entire occupations, again a rather broad range of causes may be reasonably invoked. For instance, in some cities throughout the world, police corruption is a major problem. So what is wrong with these corrupt cops, you may ask. Is it that



the occupation of policing attracts a certain category of men at risk of being corrupted? Is it that the corrupt ones are ill-trained, unable to respond to the diversity of the citizens they are supposed to protect and to their concerns? Or is the problem to be found outside the police station – among the politicians who control police boards, or in the powerful temptations that drugs and vice present to basically honest policemen, or – perish the thought – in the broader communities that the police serve? And more generally, is “compromised work” the result of unchecked greed run rampant because the core values of our society have become too weak to counteract selfish forces?

As it happens, all of these explanations – and more – are usually involved in allowing “compromised work” to happen. But are these seemingly very different reasons actually unrelated to each other? And if they are not, what is the specific contribution of each of these causes in a given instance? These are the questions that we consider in greater detail in the sections that follow. First, however, it is useful to consider examples of “good work,” as well as examples where “good work” is nowhere in sight.

### **Examples of good and compromised work in different professional domains**

Looking across four familiar professions, we can readily locate examples of individuals who approach their work in ways that earn the gratitude of the broader society, as well as less happy examples of individuals whose work undermines the healthy functioning of the society.

#### *Journalism*

Consider first, the contrasting cases of two journalists. Carol Marin is an award-winning television journalist whose many journalism prizes include 14 Emmy awards and an induction into the Chicago Journalism Hall of Fame in 1992. With little experience, Marin entered journalism as a morning talk show host for a small station in Knoxville, Tennessee. From the start of her journalism career, Marin’s talent was evident. While in Knoxville, she was promoted several times, eventually to assistant news director, and after five years left for a job as a news reporter with a larger station in Nashville. This position brought her wide acclaim and led to her position as weekend news anchor at WMAQ-TV, an NBC owned affiliate in Chicago. Marin remained at WMAQ for 19 years where she took on the esteemed job of co-anchor of the daily 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. newscasts.

In 1997, Marin’s supervisors at WMAQ informed her that henceforth she would have a new co-anchor. The person selected was Jerry Springer, a talk show host who is known for especially salacious guests and for interviews that sometimes culminate with televised mayhem. Marin was appalled by this selection, which in her view signaled to the audience that news and entertainment were indistinguishable. On the air, she de-

nounced this selection and resigned. The entire newsroom rose in appreciation and applauded her announcement. The Chicago public also expressed its support for Marin and its displeasure with Channel 5's decision to hire Springer by turning away from the station. Shortly thereafter the television station announced that Springer had withdrawn as news anchor. Since leaving WMAQ, Marin has been an investigative reporter for a CBS affiliate in Chicago and a contributor to *Sixty Minutes II*, the national weekly television news magazine. Marin also hosted a PBS special called "Endgame: Ethics and Values in America."

Patricia Smith is a talented writer and poet. In the 1980s, she worked as an entertainment writer and news journalist for *The Chicago Tribune*. In 1990, she relocated to Boston to work for *The Boston Globe*. She was the first black woman in the history of *The Boston Globe* to write a weekly metro column. During her years at *The Globe*, Smith became an extremely popular columnist. In 1998, she was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Shortly thereafter, rumors began to circulate that Smith's column was a mixture of fact and fantasy. For example, she portrayed poignant characters like a brain tumor victim. Upon investigation, it was discovered that sometimes these persons did not actually exist. At first, management defended Smith, but as the rumors evolved into an uproar, Smith was pressured into resigning her position. She explained that she had been encouraged by her superiors to develop a new style of writing, without being warned that this style undermined a fundamental principle of journalism – do not invent. Since her resignation, Smith has continued to write poetry but the world of journalism has lost her unique talents.

#### *Law*

Morey Myers is dedicated to the elimination of inequality; this attitude is reflected in his activities as a lawyer and a community leader. After teaching courses at Yale, Haverford, Rutgers and other prestigious east coast institutions, Myers realized that he could be doing the same for his local community, and he began sharing his time and expertise with the University of Scranton. He initiated a local housing development plan that called upon the support and cooperation of various religious organizations, and after a few years, a ghetto of decaying homes was replaced with new housing and new hope. Myers not only recognizes, but acts upon, the duty he has to combat disparities in his community and to bring about positive changes that will benefit all of society.

Hill and Barlow described itself as a "professional corporation" that dates back to 1899, when Arthur D. Hill envisioned a firm in which the practice of law would be founded on "a commitment to clients, attention to detail, a willingness to challenge conventional wisdom and service to the community." Among the firms' many services to the community, was a high proportion of pro-bono work for those who could not otherwise afford

legal services. The values on which the firm was founded were embraced by the firm's 140 lawyers up until December 2002, when this venerable firm announced that it was dissolving its partnership and would close immediately. The meltdown was precipitated by the real estate division announcing that it was leaving the firm "for greener pastures." Since the real estate division represented one-third of the lawyers in the firm and, in recent years, a large percentage of the firm's yearly revenues, the real estate division decided it would be financially advantageous for them to "take their practice elsewhere." The remaining 100 lawyers in the firm felt that the firm could not survive without its broad range of specialties; hourly salaries would have to be cut and the client base would have to shift for this mid-size law firm to survive. Within a matter of hours, interns and associates who had been promised employment with the firm saw their offers revoked. It is doubtful whether the many community services for which the original firm was known can be reconstituted in the new structures that arise from the firm's dissolution.

#### Science

Peter<sup>4</sup> is an advanced doctoral student in genetics. One day he noted some strange data that appeared on a public website. He analyzed the data, discovered the nature of the flaws, assembled his own correct data and sent them on to the head of a major national reporting center. Peter was delighted to see his new data posted; but he was extremely distressed to observe that the head of the center had posted the data on his own, without either thanking Peter or acknowledging the source of the data. When Peter reported this deception to his own doctoral advisors, they all advised him not to complain, but rather to swallow hard, and hope that the head of the center would one day give him a positive recommendation. Peter felt very disappointed; but he has decided that if he wants to remain in science, he has to keep his own discoveries quiet until he is ready to publish them himself.

Kate is a talented high school biology student. Since an early age, she has loved biology and longed to participate in a prestigious national science competition. Finally her opportunity came. She wanted very much to study learning in mice. But she had heard that the scientific judges did not award prizes for work with live animals. Intent on winning the prize, Kate made a deliberate decision to hide her methods and to report findings as if they had been based on reanalysis of archival data. She did not tell her advisor what she had done. To her great delight, Kate won one of the awards. Rather than regretting her misrepresentation, Kate defends what she did. In her view, the judging standards are at fault. Her goal is to be a successful biologist, come what may, and she is prepared to cut corners if necessary.

### *Health care*

Paul Farmer is a physician with a special expertise in infectious diseases. He is also a trained anthropologist. From the beginning of his medical career, Farmer's focus has been on diseases afflicting underserved and destitute communities worldwide, some in the most disadvantaged areas in the world. Farmer strongly believes that regardless of lifestyle or activities, everyone deserves medical care and assistance. As a medical student, Farmer co-founded and remains director of Partners In Health, a non-profit organization that delivers healthcare services to poor and sick populations. After receiving his degrees, Farmer and his colleagues set up a clinic in central Haiti and have for over twenty years provided free medical services to poor and diseased families in the community. With colleagues, he has set up similar clinics in sub-Saharan Africa, Peru and the former Soviet Union. As a Professor of Medical Anthropology, co-director of the Program in Infectious Disease and Social Change at Harvard Medical School and an attending physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Farmer divides his time between Boston and Haiti where he serves as medical co-director of Clinique Bon Saveur – a charity hospital. Farmer and colleagues accept subsistence wages and split their time (80-hour weeks) between serving the poor and raising funds to maintain their clinics. In 1993, Farmer received a MacArthur Prize Fellowship. With the award money, Farmer established the Institute for Health and Social Justice, an organization which researches the connections between social and economic inequalities and health outcomes. Farmer has been much praised and rewarded for this charitable work, but because he feels a responsibility to be where the burden of disease is the greatest, he leads a life that is filled with pressures and dangers to himself, his associates, and his family.

Jesse Gelsinger suffered from a rare liver disorder called OTC deficiency. In September 1999, Jesse volunteered for a gene therapy experiment at the University of Pennsylvania. After a heavy dosage of medication, he died. After his death, it was discovered that rather than receiving the gene therapy intravenously, Jesse had received the therapy directly to the liver. One of the scientists responsible for Jesse Gelsinger's well-being, Dr. James Wilson, admitted to giving the gene therapy directly to the liver, calling it an "oversight." However, Dr. Wilson was also in a compromised position: he had a share in the company that helped fund the gene therapy product that the lab he ran was testing. An investigation uncovered numerous breaches of federal research rules. For instance, Dr. Wilson withheld key safety data from regulators about the deaths of two monkeys dosed a year earlier with the same adenovirus later used on Jesse Gelsinger. The Food and Drug Administration immediately suspended all gene therapy trials at the Institute for Human Gene Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania. Because there was a conflict of interest for Dr. Wilson, who stood to profit from the experiment through a biotechnology company he had founded, U.S. regulators closed his gene therapy laboratory.

Four different professions, each with a contrasting set of examples. In the first instance, one sees exemplary members of the profession, confirming the central values of the profession in the face of challenging conditions and doing so in a way that brings credit to themselves, their chosen profession, and the wider society in which they live. In the complementary, less happy instance, one sees members of the profession behaving in ways that do not do credit to any of these interests. Few individuals would like to live in a society where they could not depend on the quality of the news, the dedication of their legal representation, the reports of scientists, and the judgments of their physicians. And yet, it is clear that in too many cases, leading professionals are behaving in ways that lead to “compromised work.”

*Good and compromised work not restricted to professions*

The study of good and compromised work is not restricted to the professions. Business also offers examples of “good work.” A good worker is Aaron Feuerstein, the owner of Malden Mills Industries in Massachusetts, which manufactures climate control fabrics. In 1995, Feuerstein watched a fire destroy three of his factories. At the time Feuerstein publicly vowed not only to rebuild the plants, but also to continue to pay his workers and honor their benefits while reconstruction was occurring. Feuerstein valued his company, which was started by his grandfather in 1906, and remained loyal to the employees that help keep him in business. While he could have reneged on his promise and retired on the insurance money, he stood behind his pledge. Not just smart maneuvering, Feuerstein’s proclamation reflected his deeply held principles and ethical codes.

Anita Roddick, the founder of the cosmetic concern The Body Shop, continually aspired to do “good work” in business. (Roddick died in 2007 at the age of 64.) Since Roddick opened the first Body Shop in 1976, her primary goal was to create a sense of humanity in the business world. Roddick undertook humanitarian work all over the world from living with poor families in Appalachia, West Virginia, USA, to working in refugee camps in Albania. While The Body Shop became a public company consisting of a worldwide network of franchised shops, Roddick continued to play a leading role in the organization until her death. With her as an inspiration, the Body Shop remains focused on social and environmental change. The Body Shop campaigned against human rights abuses and launched The Body Shop Human Rights Award in 2000. The firm also created The Body Shop Foundation, which offers financial support to pioneering organizations in the areas of human and civil rights and environmental and animal protection.

The range of stances towards work is also manifest in spheres of society which, while important, are less prestigious and decidedly less glamorous. Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz (1997) distinguished among three types of hospital orderlies. The ordinary orderly just does his job sweeping the floor. The career-oriented orderly sees

his lowly job chiefly as a stepping stone on a career ladder that will culminate in a supervisory position. In contrast, the orderly who sees his job as a calling not only carries out cleaning of excellent quality but also makes an effort to cheer up the patients, for example, bringing flowers to those on the cancer ward. We all have experience with the craftsman who takes the time necessary to do a good job and who uses only materials of the highest quality, as well as the craftsman who cuts corners with shoddy materials and inadequate attention. There are teachers, nurses and salespeople who make it clear that they are just punching the clock; we would much rather be taught by the teachers, treated by the nurses, or served by the salespeople who care about doing the very best job that they can.

A society that expects “good work” must recognize it and reward it appropriately, where it occurs. John Gardner, perhaps the leading American public citizen of the 20th century, memorably declared, “An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher. The society that scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water.” (J. Gardner, 1995).

### **The conditions for “Good Work”**

So how do we go about understanding why some people do “good work” while others cut corners and fall short? It is probably best to start with an assumption that seems obvious, but bears repeating: “Good work” is more difficult to achieve than merely adequate or “compromised work.” Things that are more difficult to achieve will be, by definition, less frequent, because they require more time and more energy. It is generally easier to get by than to excel; it is easier to stop as soon as possible than to go that extra mile. By nature we are programmed to conserve energy – our genes were selected through evolution in part so as to save unnecessary exertion, so as to be ready to confront unexpected tasks. (Some of us, no doubt, were selected to expend energy for tasks that readily yield enjoyment.) Consequently the “default option” of much of our natural inheritance is not doing “good work,” but rather being efficient, saving time and effort, even if our work suffers as a result.

Given that our genetic instructions are heavy loaded for “taking it easy,” humans have had to develop a variety of control mechanisms to make sure that needed tasks were done as well as possible. To understand what makes “good work” possible, we need now to turn our attention to what these controls are, and how they interact to produce the kind of complex behaviors that we need in order to survive as human beings embedded in a highly abstract technological civilization. Why do pilots usually fly their planes with competence and precision, why do baggage handlers usually find the right

plane to put our suitcases in, why is the story of a surgeon who ignores his patient so scandalously offensive? To these questions we now turn.

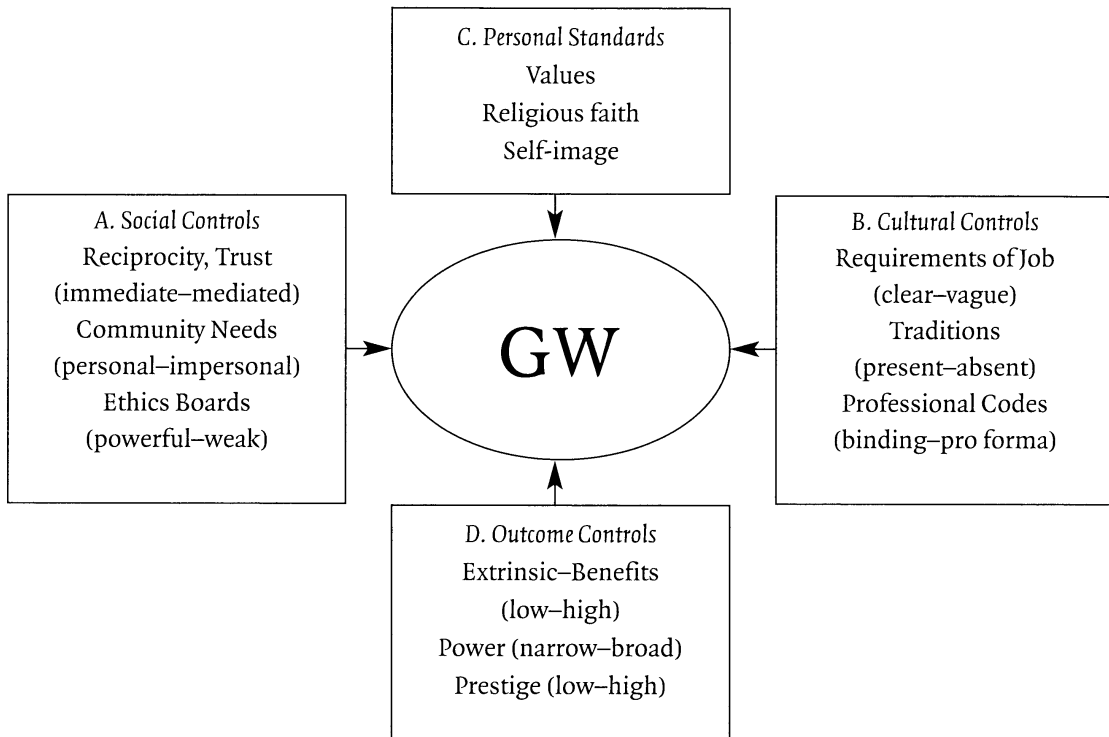
The answer is not simple. Human behavior is shaped by many conditions which often contradict each other. It is severely constrained by genes – what we can see, feel, desire and understand is written into the chemistry of the brain and the body. Even these genetic instructions are often at odds with one another, because they evolved at different times, to take care of heterogeneous survival requirements. For instance, testosterone helps males fight and compete in situations where resources are scarce. But too much of it, unleavened by other hormones that facilitate cooperation and nurturance, results in brutish behavior that diminishes the odds of survival and reproduction. And genetic instructions inevitably conflict with standards that human communities have learned to impose on genetic instructions. The norms of society often thwart our natural desires, but just as often bring order to conflicting genetic impulses, and make it possible for people to live together in at least a semblance of harmony. So whether a person does good, compromised, or frankly poor work is the result of at least four major forces:

- (1) What the person brings to the table – genetic traits, early experiences, values learned in the family or the community.
- (2) What the job itself requires – for the physician it is to care for the patient’s health, for the policeman to “serve and protect” the community.
- (3) The institutional and interpersonal relationships that bind a person to his or her job. The physician’s behavior will be affected, in part, by the policies of Boards of Health, by the expectation of hospitals and by the example of colleagues.
- (4) Finally, job performance will also be influenced by the rewards, respect, and opportunities provided to the professional by society at large. For example, doctors might become demoralized and less caring if too much of their autonomy is taken away by HMOs or other agencies that put values foreign to the medical profession – such as producing an even greater profit for stockholders – ahead of the central value of healing.

The way these four controls on behavior impact “good work” is summarized in Figure 2. The *cultural controls* derive from what we have called the “Domain” elsewhere, that is, the implicit rules and practices of a profession. The requirements for good surgery are very clear – you amputate the limb or reset the bone without producing excessive trauma or bleeding. Other fields of medicine, such as gastroenterology or psychiatry, may have much less clear outcomes. And other professions will have still vaguer ways of assessing whether work was done well or not. In most business ventures, the most frequently cited measure of “good work” is profit. The manager’s work is judged by the “bottom line” – regardless of whether the firm is making landmines, cigarettes, pharmaceuticals, or textbooks. But in most endeavors, “good work” involves more than making a profit. The carpenter is expected to make a table that does not collapse, the pilot should be polite

and cheerful as well as sober and resourceful. When the requirements of a job get to be quite complex, traditions serve to remind practitioners of their duties, and often these are formally set down into professional codes, such as the physician's Hippocratic Oath.

Figure 2 – A graphic rendition of the principal elements of GoodWork.



Source: GoodWork Project Team, 2004

The *social controls* are the ones that emanate from the “Field,” that is, from the group of people working in the same domain. The behavior of doctors is regulated by medical associations, deans and faculties of medical schools and by influential elders who serve as gatekeepers to the profession in their roles as journal editors, grant officers, heads of research laboratories and research foundations. If everything goes well, the requirements issuing from field and domain will reinforce each other. But sometimes, cultural controls and social controls are not well aligned; what the young physician has read in books about what a doctor should do is not what his elder colleagues actually practice. Often the incentives that the field offers – high pay, prestige, secure employment – are not awarded for the most sincere efforts to do “good work,” but rather are doled out to those who find ways to impress, or simply get along with, those who hold positions of authority in the field. Misalignment between cultural and social controls, between what the domain and the field prescribe, frequently makes “compromised work” tempting and “good work” more elusive.

The third component of the “Good Work Model” – *personal standards* – is influenced



by both social and cultural controls. In other words, a professional usually internalizes the requirements of the field and the domain into his or her self-image. A young doctor will come to think of herself as a caring person, one who follows the best practices of medical science to alleviate the suffering of patients. But self-image is based on other behavioral inclinations as well. These include the values one has learned at home, in school, at the church or temple; self-image will also be influenced by temperament and early experience.

The fourth set of forces is what we call *outcome controls*. These refer to the effects of external forces on one's work. For example, in times of war what it means to do "good work" may be different than during a period of peace. Or when a profession suddenly becomes very well rewarded by society, it may attract people who are only or primarily interested in money rather than in doing "good work," thus bringing about a subtle corruption of the profession. The same policeman will have to make more effort to stay honest if hiding the confiscated drugs can net him a million dollars than if the most he can abscond with are parking-meter coins. Also, at times a certain type of outcome control can pervade an entire society by accident or by a centrally dictated design.

"Good work" is most likely to occur when these four forces all point in the same direction. When professional standards, peer behavior, internal values and social values all tell us to do the same thing, there is no problem. But when conflicts arise between these different instructions, one can get easily confused.

For instance, in the earlier journalism example, it is clear that Patricia Smith was a very good writer who turned out attractive human-interest stories. But by the standards of the domain she worked in, her writing was not acceptable. In journalism, adherence to the facts trumps vivid writing. Shakespeare would not be counted as a good journalist if he tried to fob off *A Midsummer's Night Dream* as news reporting. In Smith's case, it seems that the professional failure was not entirely of her own making. During Smith's career, editors and publishers encouraged her imaginative reporting without being sufficiently concerned about the factual basis of her stories. In this way, the field failed to transmit the essential value of the domain of journalism, which is allegiance to truth. Outcome controls may also be implicated in this case. The need for ever greater profits, and for building up an audience of new readers, may have induced the editors to avoid giving Smith timely and needed guidance and feedback.

In conclusion, "good work" is likely to occur when there are clear and strong standards for what constitutes desirable performance: standards that are enforced by a concerned professional community; standards that are internalized in the self-image of practitioners; standards that are not contradicted by strong external pressure from market, political or social forces. If all these four types of controls are aligned, "good work" is possible, even probable. If the four controls pull in different directions, or one or more are absent, it is likely that the kind of work produced will be shoddy at best, and at worst, it will be detrimental to the well-being of the community.

The worst-case scenario would involve either a breakdown of one of these sources of control, or a fundamental misalignment between them. For example, it is not a coincidence that some recent failures of “good work” in business affected mainly firms that were involved in new products or services – such as Enron’s fabled “virtual organization” – which had no time and no motivation to develop either cultural or social controls. What compounded the vulnerability of such firms to bad practices was the fact that they made it possible for some individuals to make large profits quickly. This option removed some of the outcome controls that would have encouraged persons – even those with shaky internal standards – to withstand the temptations that all persons in business confront. Similar forces are at play in every profession and occupation, making it difficult to accomplish work that lives up to the best practices of the tradition, work that is socially valuable, and personally rewarding.

### **Representative findings**

We summarize some representative findings of our research:

#### *Alignment*

Among the individuals who have agreed to be interviewed for our study, there is clearly a desire to carry out “good work.” Most individuals have a clear sense of what it means to be excellent in technical matters, as well as what it means to carry out work that is important in the society. Their own stated values are remarkably similar across domains: what is valued are honesty, fairness, truthfulness, ethical relations with other individuals and high degrees of competence.

Where this consensus breaks down, however, is in the ease or even the possibility of doing “good work.” Professions (or, as we call them “domains”) differ enormously in the ease with which it is possible to carry out “good work” in the present climate. We propose that a major factor in facilitating “good work” is the extent to which a profession is well aligned. In alignment, all of the various interest groups basically call for the same kinds of performances; in contrast, when a profession is misaligned, the various interest groups emerge as being at cross-purposes with one another.

In our first pair of studies, genetics and journalism emerged as sharply contrasted on the dimension of alignment. At the end of the 20th century, genetics was well aligned. The individual practitioners, the values of the scientific calling, the current institutions (research labs, government funding), the shareholders of publicly traded companies, and the general public all wanted essentially the same thing – research that leads to longer and healthier lives. Such alignment by no means ensures “good work,” but the absence of stresses and conflicting demands makes it easier for individuals to carry out

“good work.” As more than one geneticist told us, “the only obstacles I have to face are my own personal limitations.”

At the time of our study in the middle and late 1990s, journalism emerged as a poorly aligned, or prototypically misaligned profession. Most young persons enter journalism with the hope of investigating important stories thoroughly, treating subjects fairly, and reporting the stories accurately. But most working journalists feel thwarted at nearly every turn. As they perceive it, the owners of news organizations (large corporations and their shareholders) are interested primarily in greater shareholder profits. Anything that advances the profit is good; the quality of journalism per se is seen as irrelevant. Added to this state of affairs, the general public is seen as craving stories that are dramatic, scandalous, sensational and superficial, while abjuring news coverage of issues that are more difficult to understand, or that involve topics or sites that are apparently remote from everyday experience. The internet has rewritten the rules of reporting and due diligence regarding sources. As a result of this massive misalignment, most journalists are frustrated, and many claim that they would like to leave the profession.

What keeps this finding from being simply a “good news/bad news” saga? In our view, all alignments and misalignments are temporary. Journalism may be poorly aligned in America in 2000; but it was much better aligned in 1950 and became somewhat more aligned after the events of September 11, 2001, when many citizens sought accurate, detailed coverage in both the United States and abroad. Genetics may be well aligned in America early in the 21st century; but the decline of available venture capital, controversies over stem cell and cloning research, and the press for research that bears directly on bio-terrorism may be catalyzing a less well aligned profession.

Another complexifying point is worth nothing. While, on the average, “good work” is easier to carry out when the sector is well aligned, some individuals are actually motivated by misalignment. These persons spring into action when the various interest groups appear at cross-purposes; such innovators seek to create (or recreate) institutions that honor the core values of the domain. By the same token, apparent (or superficial) alignment may desensitize individuals to potential problems. In our study of genetics, we were surprised that the basic researchers had very little concern with what could go wrong in genetics research. Should there be a genetics-caused disaster like those that occurred at Chernobyl or Three Mile Island, an apparently idyllic alignment could rapidly disintegrate.

#### *“Good Work” among the young*

From one “good work” angle, the young persons whom we interviewed are very impressive. They are accomplished; they are informed; they are ambitious. And they have a clear sense of what it means to be a worker of integrity, fairness, and responsibility. What is troubling, however, is that a significant minority of these young people do not feel that they can afford to be good workers. They are engaged in a race to the top of their

respective professions and so they are willing to cut corners in order to preserve their lead. Young journalists will exaggerate the extent to which they have actually confirmed a tip; young scientists will rush into print in order to assure credit; young actors will accept stereotypical but lucrative roles that they would otherwise disdain. In each case, these young workers seem confident that once they have “made it,” they can then observe higher standards and raise the overall quality of the domain. They seem unconcerned that they have embarked on a slippery slope of misconduct which may be difficult to reverse (Fischman et al, 2004).

We were troubled to learn that even younger talented students feel very stressed by their pursuits and lament the degree of stress in the lives of their friends and family members. We suspect that it is very difficult to carry out “good work” unless one has the opportunity to reflect upon and, if necessary, to reverse course.

#### *The Widening Circle of Responsibility*

We asked each of our subjects to whom or what they felt principally responsible. The initial response to the question was in itself interesting. Many subjects, especially women, immediately responded by naming their family. Members of minorities, especially African Americans, frequently mentioned their ancestors, including slaves and those who were involved in civil rights movements (Horn, 2004). Caucasians almost never mentioned their forbears. Senior geneticists were more likely than other workers to express bewilderment at the question. As we came to understand it, these geneticists have felt so free to do what they want to do, in the way that they want to do it, that the notion of having responsibility to any external agency seemed remote.

At the same time, the veteran geneticists stood out in another way. Pushed to declare who was responsible for the uses of their work – including uses to which they might personally object – these scientists were loathe to think of themselves and other members of their guild. They are the pure researchers. And so we actually had to invent a new category – “imputed responsibility” – to take account of their assertions that it was up to “others” – the society, ordinary citizens, the legislators – to assume responsibility for the implications of findings about stem cells, cloning, and other controversial discoveries and techniques.

Among the other findings was the absence of significant differences across gender in the way in which responsibility was construed; the relatively low invocation of responsibility to God or to one’s religious background; and an intriguing distinction between professions like law and journalism, where workers indicate a responsibility to an abstract value (like truth, or justice) and professions like teaching and medicine, where responsibility to other human beings takes priority.

We found support for a hypothesized broadening of the circle of responsibility as subjects grow older. Adolescent subjects see themselves as responsible primarily to

themselves, and to those around them – parents, other family members, teachers, coaches, friends. Beginning professionals broadened their references to include supervisors, peers, and others from the world of work. Subjects in midlife expressed concern about the health of the domain and the training – or, as frequently, the lack of training – of younger workers. And, as noted, a few of our most senior professionals earned the sobriquet of “trustees” – these individuals worry not only about the health of the domain, but also about its place in the broader society, and the extent to which it contributes to the welfare of the world. (Gardner 2007)

### *The different flavors of different domains*

At one time, we happened to be working simultaneously in two domains. As we discussed this work with outsiders, we were amused to encounter the following characterizations. In the case of philanthropy, individuals asked, “When all that you do is give away money to deserving causes, what possible problems might there be in carrying out “good work?” In the case of theater, individuals asked: “Why would anyone go into a field where it is virtually guaranteed that one won’t be able to earn a living, let alone prosper?”

In fact, however, the outlook of individuals in these domains is far from predictable. Despite the difficulty of earning a living, the actors to whom we spoke stood out in terms of passion or commitment. Whether this result reflects a different kind of person who is attracted to the theater, or a certain degree of cognitive dissonance, is not certain. In contrast, despite the apparent plushness of their job, philanthropists are often discomforted in their positions. We hypothesize that this is because philanthropy is certainly a field – with the requisite organizations, publications, meetings and so on – but it is not yet a domain, with its agreed upon standards, values, mission. In the absence of such agreed-upon norms, it is very difficult for practitioners to gauge their own success or to get honest feedback from critics and the result and uncertainty may lead to feelings of anomie. (Horn and Gardner, 2006)

Speaking more generally, each of our chosen sectors has its own remarkable topography, which makes the investigation of each area *sui generis*. This document is not the place for a full-fledged summary of these different flavors. We note here a few of the intriguing distinctions.

The classical professions like law, medicine, architecture, and auditing have clearly set forth standards and thus violations of “good work” are readily identified. In contrast, two of the areas that we investigated – business and the arts – are not, strictly speaking, professions. As such, one encounters quite varied characterizations. Some (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Damon 2004) see business as a profession, with business people obligated to serve the community, customers and employees. Others see business just as an unmodified activity – the only obligations are to make money and not violate

the law (or even, not get caught.) By the same token, there are strident disputes within the arts. On the one hand there are advocates, like actress Anna Deavere Smith, who see the arts as entailing social responsibilities. At the least, works of art should (in Brechtian fashion) stimulate the audience to reflect on important social and moral issues. On the other side are many artists and critics, like director Robert Brustein, who feel that the arts cannot afford to have any agenda except artistic excellence, and who point to the dangers of social realism and varieties of “agitprop.”

Sometimes, important distinctions arise within a domain. Though law is technically a single profession, the varieties of law cut across almost the entire professional spectrum. Cyberlawyers are more like technological experts than corporate or criminal lawyers. They are as excited by their new toys as are the geneticists. Cyberlawyers expressed enthusiasm for the openness of the internet along with an imperative to maintain and defend individual First Amendment rights. The cyberlaw advocates whom we interviewed saw the internet as the last frontier and were as excited by the historic dimensions of their defense of these rights on the internet as the geneticists were in their quest to map the human genome. Many cyberlawyers stated that once the internet issues were resolved, they would likely move on.

Criminal lawyers often selected the specialty that matched their own personality: defense attorneys saw themselves as knight-errants fighting for the underdog; prosecutors saw themselves as defenders of the victims of crime. Some were able to shift from prosecution to defense, but the reverse was less common. Lawyers involved in mergers and acquisitions shared some similarities to the business entrepreneurs in that both entrepreneurs and M&A lawyers highlighted the importance of problem solving skills and the pleasure of discovering new ways to approach a problem. While most of the corporate lawyers spoke candidly about the demands placed on their time and the fast pace of a market-driven society, lawyers who remain in small towns, and who spend significant amounts of time serving their local community, seem the last holdouts of a bygone era of law – and to turn a phrase of the legal scholar Anthony Kronman (1993), lawyers who have not yet “lost their way” (Marshall and Gardner, 2005).

When we began to investigate higher education, our initial impulse was to interview individuals who had achieved prominence as university faculty or administrators. But we came to realize that in education, individuals come and go, but certain institutions continue to be held up as positive (or, less happily, as negative) examples. Accordingly, we altered our nominating technique to identify a dozen institutions of higher learning that stand out in terms of their judged excellence. What emerged initially are the sharply contrasting sets of values that govern campuses. At top-flight universities, the faculty and their intellectual work with students are the major story; and a belief in the importance of diversity for its own sake is emphasized. At community colleges, the assimilation of first-generation Americans or college students into mainstream American life dominates the agenda. At historically black colleges, subsequent service to members of the disadvantaged group stands out. All of these exemplary institutions exhibit distinc-

tive identities, which contribute to a strong sense of community. Different heroes, different events, different agendas characterized the interviews at various exemplary schools. The same term takes on different meanings as we move from one institution type to another. At exemplary community colleges, struggling for resources and faced with continuously expanding demands, creativity is constantly involved; but it is the creativity needed for the institution to survive and thrive, not the creativity of individual student or faculty that may be a consensually assumed value at selective liberal arts colleges and top flight universities. And, to top it off, the for-profit University of Phoenix, one of the fastest growing institutions of higher learning in history, raises issues such as how best to serve the adult learner, how frequently to assess students, the role of the liberal arts, and the uses and abuses of distance learning. Phoenix's example is likely to impact institutions of higher learning all over the world on these issues (Berg, 2005).

Comparisons of the pressures that individuals face due to market forces can be made across domains and within a single profession. Journalists and doctors discuss the impact of advertising, commodification of professional missions, inflationary costs, bureaucratization, profiteering, rationing of limited resources and the reorganization of ownership structures; but very few of them mention systemic market forces (e.g. globalization, shifts in legal regulation of ownership, demographic increase and decrease.) This absence suggests that it is difficult for some embedded professionals to recognize and address the encroachment of the market on their professional lives. Evidence suggests that professionals who have multiple roles over the course of their careers may achieve keener insights on the effects of a wider range of market forces (Rubin, 2004).

#### *Potential harms of philanthropy*

Philanthropy is a matter of giving money away, on its surface a wholly laudatory activity. There seems to be little reason to worry about the possibilities of harm. How could a dose of money possibly hurt someone? Yet philanthropy is an intervention, changing lives in ways that can be as unintended as they are powerful (Damon and Verducci, 2006). It is generally a well-intended intervention – although there can be exceptions, such as when people give money away for purposes of control, power, status and personal glory. Whatever the intentions, money-granting interventions can leave individuals and communities in worse shape than before the money was granted. Andrew Carnegie, the pioneer of organized philanthropy in the United States, once estimated that 95% of philanthropic dollars were “unwisely spent; so spent, indeed, as to produce the very evils which (the gift) proposes to mitigate or cure” (Carnegie, 1889).

Carnegie was referring to the harm of supporting bad habits that sustain poverty. By now, this particular harm is recognized by most of the people and organizations that give significantly to charity. But other harms can also emanate from philanthropy –

some of them, to use Carnegie's metric, at least as grave as the problem that the gift was meant to solve. For example, philanthropy can offer monetary resources to nonprofit organizations with expectations and agendas that divert nonprofits from their own proper mission; it can encourage dependency and create an underclass of nonprofits; and it can support research and development efforts with serious detrimental social consequences both here and abroad. Further, when foundation monies are used to change public policies, there is potential for society's democratic principles to be subverted. These are some among a number of potential harms. While awareness of residual harms may be familiar issues in other public-interest fields such as law and medicine, in our interviews with philanthropists and grantmakers, we noted that few people recognize these concerns as problematic. The understanding that was present was scattered among players and not as pervasive or vivid as is necessary to mitigate doing harm in a reliable manner.

Interestingly, in our other studies of "good work," we have found that one of the markers of a mature domain is a clear sense of the harms that can be done. Our research in philanthropy suggests another picture. Other than undermining the public trust through malfeasance, philanthropists more often than not assume that giving away money is an unproblematic proposition for doing good, and the only downside is related to waste – that is, not using available funds in an efficient way.

#### *Entrepreneurs and "Good Work"*

Our study of young business entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs, at the beginning of their careers, has yielded considerable insight into entrepreneurship and "good work" (Barendsen, 2004; Barendsen & Gardner, 2004). Since entrepreneurship is commonly associated with the business profession, the conception of the budding business entrepreneur is well defined. Less known, social entrepreneurship is a rising field in which individuals adopt an entrepreneurial approach to implement social reform and systematic societal change. Typically, the goals of social entrepreneurs are quite ambitious: to eradicate poverty, to create a new labor movement, to equalize education between the haves and have-nots. While many entrepreneurs do aspire to start profitable business ventures, this goal alone does not accurately represent the true nature of entrepreneurship. Because they are so intimately involved in the organizations they have established, the goals which entrepreneurs set for themselves are at once personal and professional. Both business and social entrepreneurs are attracted to entrepreneurship because it allows them the freedom to forge their professional visions. They understand themselves as fundamentally different from peers following more traditional paths (in law or medicine, for example.) They are passionate individuals seeking to start and grow new organizations. Since entrepreneurship favors innovation and encourages risk taking, it is not surprising that young entrepreneurs have tremendous confidence in their abilities to implement change and view risks as possible opportunities. In their opti-



mistic outlook and sheer determination, they are most similar to the young professional actors we interviewed.

Nested in the business profession, entrepreneurship possesses few formal rules and provides little instruction by way of regulations or limitations to help inform and advise the young professional in training. In addition, there is a powerful primary goal, which centers on profitability and mission fulfillment. Given the lack of professional standards and an emphasis on results, the tensions that business entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs confront are similar. The most notable tension centers on fundraising, which ultimately enables entrepreneurs to sustain their venture and fulfill the organization's mission. Despite this tension, the business entrepreneurs feel a responsibility to employees, to investors, and to family. Social entrepreneurs describe many of these same responsibilities, as well as the strong responsibilities they feel to social causes. In addition, although certainly aware of market pressures and challenged by financial restraints, young business and social entrepreneurs are determined to follow their goals in spite of these difficulties. In fact, many cannot imagine doing anything else.

#### *Kinds of lineages*

How does a commitment to doing “good work” get transmitted from one generation to the next, in a profession? We assumed that exemplary practitioners influence the approach to work adopted by the young people who apprentice with them. For several different domains, we thus undertook case studies of exemplary practitioners, their students, and their students' students, to understand how their influence was felt. (Nakamura, et al 2008)

We have been struck by the dual influence of many exemplary practitioners who head lineages. On one hand, they influence their apprentices directly, demonstrating through their own conduct that high professional achievement can coexist with dedication to larger ends. On the other hand, they influence apprentices indirectly, operating behind the scenes. By providing a collegial group of able peers and cultivating a particular moral climate, they create a training environment in which apprentices acquire technical skills and knowledge and also internalize professional norms of conduct such as integrity, cooperativeness, and honesty. Each tradition additionally bears the distinctive stamp of the lineage head's personality, professional style, and approach to training.

An unexpected distinction emerged in the domain of dance. Here one finds traditional lineages, with a strong paternal or maternal figure who trains and choreographs for the younger dancers. In contrast to these vertical lineages, however, one also encounters horizontal lineages. In the latter instance, young people work together, mentoring one another; and even older persons relate to their younger associates as peers, rather than as more powerful and knowledgeable elders (Keinanen, 2003).

We had not anticipated the power of anti-mentors, “tormentors,” or the lack of men-

tors. Many subjects mentioned how much they had been influenced by individuals whose models they disliked or disdained – “Whatever I become, I don’t want to be at all like X.” Negative models may be more powerful than is usually acknowledged, and perhaps especially likely to be cited by individuals who become innovators. When individuals work in new fields, or pioneer in new roles, they are not able to identify suitable mentors, even if they should want to. In such cases, they either select paragons (historical figures with whom they identify), make common cause with other pioneering peers, or even elect to go it alone. Across the various domains, many professionals, especially the younger ones, identified a lack of “deep mentoring” from individuals in authoritative positions who valued glibness, speed, and flash, rather than honesty, due diligence and fairness. Unlike the veteran professionals, who spoke of important mentors and paragons in their fields, many of the young professionals lamented the superficial relationship they maintained with their mentors.

#### *The contemplative mind*

We believe that in most cases, individuals are unlikely to carry out “good work” unless they feel comfortable with whom they are and have time and opportunity to reflect on their mission and to determine whether they are progressing towards its realization. There are many ways to achieve these states, of course. In one line of our research, we determined to look at the role in work of two types of contemplation: formal meditation practices and more general strategies of deep reflection (Solomon, 2007).

The first group of subjects we interviewed described a range of idiosyncratic routines for deeply reflecting on their work. Subjects reported using what are commonly considered mundane activities (gardening, walking, running, commuting, talking with friends, etc.) as opportunities to think through the meaning and purpose of their work, develop new work projects, or solve work problems.

We then interviewed a second group of subjects as a point of comparison – those we knew in advance to be involved in Vipassana or various forms of Jewish meditation. We found that this group of subjects used meditation as a psychologically adaptive bridge between prior episodes of great personal distress and new-found meaning and purpose in their professional and personal lives. That getting on the path to carrying out “good work” is not necessarily direct, but, rather, a series of trials and errors inextricably bound up with one’s personal life circumstances.

The word “contemplation” can refer to deep thought or reflection, on one hand, or meditation, on the other. Our research clearly has shown this to be the case: the first group reflected deeply on their professional lives, while the second group engaged in formal meditation practices. What is the lesson of our research so far? With respect to a society such as our own that often looks for quick fixes, our findings suggest that there might not be a substitute for the deliberate work of the mind – at its own pace – in ultimately achieving “good work.”

### About the authors

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pectations: *Overcoming the Culture of Indulgence in Our Homes and Schools: The Youth Charter: How communities can work together to raise standards for all our children.* The sixth, revised edition of the four-part *Handbook of Child Psychology* (co-edited with R. Lerner) was published in 2006.

Together with Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi, he wrote *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet*, which was published as part of the GoodWork Project. One of the results of this project was the book he co-authored with S. Verducci, *Taking Philanthropy Seriously: Beyond Noble Intentions to Responsible Giving*. Within the framework of the project, he has also developed a curriculum and courses together with the Committee of Concerned Journalists (CCJ) to support high-quality journalism. This has reached more than 6000 journalists in more than 200 different sorts of media organizations.

Professor Damon has been awarded a number of prizes and distinctions. His book *Greater Expectations: Overcoming the Culture of Indulgence in Our Homes and Schools* won the 1995 Parents' Choice® Award.

### Concluding note

This report summarizes the findings of The GoodWork Project through 2008. For an update on current activities, please see [www.goodworkproject.org](http://www.goodworkproject.org) and [goodworktoolkit.org](http://goodworktoolkit.org).

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# Honor, a topical concept

Dorien Pessers

*Honor can be socially and morally productive, if it is meaningfully embedded within dignified institutions and channeled forth constructively. Institutions that radiate few values beyond production, calculation, output and efficiency do not offer a rewarding context for individuals to find meaning in their work or professions. Such institutions foster unbridled ambition and scandal, and individuals who work for them do not automatically develop the virtues of honor such as courage, loyalty, firmness and self-sacrifice. To develop these virtues, people's imaginations will need to be fueled by stories, examples, ideal images and model practices.*

## Introduction

“Honor occupies about the same place in contemporary usage as chastity. An individual asserting it hardly invites admiration, and one who claims to have lost it is an object of amusement rather than sympathy,” as Peter Berger put it in his essay “On the Obsolescence of the Concept of Honor” (1973).<sup>1</sup>

At first glance, Berger seems to be right. Honor, as a remnant of the pre-modern era, has become a suspect notion indeed. We associate honor with feudal times, when it served as the exclusive and symbolic capital of the political, military, and clerical powers. Way into the eighteenth century this power was mainly in the hands of the aristocracy. In a strictly hierarchically organized system, ranks and classes were predetermined, whereby honor served as a major standard for social inclusion or exclusion. Within that system, codes of honor also functioned as codes of conduct. To whom should one pay honor and when? Who was allowed to speak first? To which courtesan should one give priority?

The code of honor also implied a moral code: *noblesse oblige*. Aristocrats were obliged to uphold the honor of their class, their country and their family. This particular standard compelled one to embrace a series of virtues, such as courage and self-sacrifice on the battlefield, faithfulness and loyalty to the king, courteousness towards women and paternal responsibility for serfs.

Honor might even coerce one to acts of heroism. A hero's magnificence was determined by the degree to which he managed to transcend himself, belie his agonies, over-

come setbacks or prove capable of superhuman trials of strength. The morality of the hero was mainly rooted in an imaginary order – one in which you could escape your limitations, be more than you really were, and participate in something larger than life. Christian culture, with its emphasis on transcendence, has influenced this longing for heroism. After all, Christianity is supposed to let us share in divine majesty.

The aristocratic code of honor, aside from being a behavioral code, was also a system of values to live by. If they proved hard to practice, one was motivated by the consequences of dishonorable conduct – loss of prestige and good standing.

In our modern-day, egalitarian, secular society, such aristocratic codes of honor have grown antiquated indeed. Honor even tends to be viewed as an unambiguously rightist, conservative notion. All the same, it does not yet mean, as Berger argues, that the longing for honor, moral grandeur, self-transcendence or even heroism is irrelevant. On the contrary, news items provide countless examples where honor is at stake. A recent, painful example is the 1995 tragedy of Srebrenica where the Dutch military failed to prevent a genocide, which has been interpreted as dishonorable conduct by the Dutch. A sense of national honor is also exhibited in efforts aimed at reviving Dutch nationalism and patriotism, in the cultural interest in establishing a historical canon and in contests, such as “Who is the greatest Dutch person of all time?” The debate on whether free speech comprises the right to offend others is also about violation of honor, reputation and good name. The codes of conduct recently imposed on the Dutch business world, in particular the so-called Tabaksblad Code, are meant to restore or secure the honor and good names of businesses. The banking crisis has dishonored bankers to an extent that many favor a special code of conduct for bankers. In dangerous occupations, honor is still a main factor. Miners, longshoremen, firemen, policemen, military and special forces – all have their own codes of honor that also serve as yardsticks for assessing the conduct of their peers. Although these examples may be disparate, they establish that, as a concept or practice, honor has hardly vanished from our culture. This is also reflected in our language. We still employ expressions such as paying honor to someone, on my honor, to sell one’s honor dearly, put someone on his honor, and so on.

Furthermore, we still seem to value the virtues of honor, such as courage, trust, loyalty, self-sacrifice and fair play. These virtues, in turn, presuppose specific psychological capacities, such as self-respect, fantasy, sublimation and the power to idealize or to project ideal images that subsequently guide our actions. Most people, moreover, definitely have an individual sense of honor, particularly at moments when this honor is violated, such as when falsely accused.

There is also the quest for honor as a longing for recognition, or for a sense of difference and distinction. Such quest is little valued in social interaction, where it is mainly seen as misguided ambition. Still, having a sense of honor is a common psychological phenomenon seen in most individuals on a regular basis.

Honor or particular codes of honor are so powerful, apparently, that even in criminal settings they play a large role. It is telling that the elements of honor among criminals

are no different than those among non-criminals: trust, loyalty, firmness, self-sacrifice, being unbending and not giving in to fear and related emotions.

In all cases where honor is determined by one's group, occupation or social class, the individual will feel obliged to behave honorably. One strives for recognition from the group, does not want to fail before the group and aspires to gain prestige or a positive reputation. The reverse of honor in this context is shame. One feels ashamed when one does not act in line with the group's codes of honor. To the extent honor is truly internalized, one feels ashamed for not living up to some ideal image of the self.

### **Honor as a charged notion**

If honor, having a sense of honor and codes of honor are still relevant in modern, egalitarian societies, why, then, does the concept of honor frequently have negative connotations? Has our culture become so feminized that speaking of honor – with all its masculine associations – is *not done*? Has the transition from an industrial economy that emphasized tough physical labor to a service economy that emphasizes *smiling professions* pushed traditional codes of honor to the background? Another factor, perhaps, is that our pluralist society has no dominant value system anymore. It has been argued that solidarity with victims is still the only source of a common morality.<sup>2</sup> Of course, a public morality of “victimism” leaves no room for public veneration of honor and heroism.<sup>3</sup> Or do we keep silent about the importance of honor in our own culture, because now we are exposed to cultures of honor among new migrant groups, whose honor practices we tend to dismiss as primitive or at least as pre-modern? Or do we genuinely feel that *we* live in a culture of guilt while *they* live in a culture of honor and shame? For a commonly held view today is that modern, individualized Western societies are marked by a culture of guilt, whereas pre-modern, oriental societies organized on the basis of collectivities, are characterized by a culture of honor and shame.

Although some of these explanations are certainly relevant, the concept of honor has most likely become tainted by German Nazi practices. As in so many contemporary debates, in this context, too, the Second World War serves as a moral benchmark. Following the war, internationally there has been a clear departure from the bloated culture of military honor among German officers of aristocratic and bourgeois elite backgrounds. These elites were shaped in part by nineteenth-century student fraternities, which, counter to nineteenth-century modernization, still used feudal rites, such as duels (or *Mensur*) where a sword gash across the cheek counted as an honorable scar. The slogan of these militant corpora was “Honor, Liberty, and Fatherland.” The fraternities were strictly hierarchically organized and anti-democratic to the core. One only entered into a duel with equals based on the principle – honorable, as such – of fair play. This implied that those with whom one would not engage in a duel were seen as unequal and, hence, inferior human beings.



After graduation, many students assumed the rank of reserve officer in the German army. This position provided social status, made it easier to enter a career in state government, and linked up these officers as citizens with strictly military codes of honor. Germany's militarization in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century radicalized into the culture of honor of the SS officers corps. After the Second World War, the *Mensur* was prohibited in Germany. A call to military honor was declared taboo for a long time because of the perverse effects such a cult of honor had brought about.

Interpretations of concepts of honor, however, depend on the social practices in which such concepts operate. In this respect, French postwar history shows quite a different picture from Germany. After the Second World War, French military honor and national honor were again promoted through the distinct personality of General De Gaulle. To De Gaulle, honor amounted to serving France, much as during the war he himself had tried to save the honor of France. In an interview, President Chirac once summed up the elements of Gaullist honor: loyalty to the principles of the French Republic, primacy of the common interest, refusal to let private interests prevail over common interests, confluence of private and public morality, independence and grandeur of France.<sup>4</sup> In short, General De Gaulle's authority derived, in part, precisely from his sense of honor as a citizen, a *citoyen*, and his being in public office. If Chirac is correct that after the Second World War honor was mainly tied to bourgeois and democratic virtues, this is not to deny De Gaulle's view of honor as militaristic to the core.

The French need for honor and grandeur comes across as exalted to we commonsensical Dutchmen. Being Calvinists, we are reticent to idealize, sublimate, or symbolize the Hero, the Nation, the Family, the Clan and such. In this Calvinist culture, honor no longer underpins a sense of collective conscience; instead it has been internalized as a sense of individual "honor and conscience," personal accountability towards God or oneself. Significantly, the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga, in his famous essay "Characteristic of the Dutch Mind" ('Nederlands geestesmerk'), sums up the bourgeois virtues of the Dutch, but he does not mention sense of honor.

This is partly why we do not easily articulate views or pleas in favor of honor and codes of honor in the Netherlands. They conflict not only with our historical background and aversion to theatricality, including our memory of the honor practices of Nazi Germany, but also with our view that in democratic states the modern concept of "human dignity" should serve as the guiding principle rather than the pre-modern concept of honor.

## Human dignity

The decline of honor as a concept and honor practices went hand in hand, according to Peter Berger, with the rise of the idea of human dignity.<sup>5</sup> If honor served as a basic principle to the aristocracy, in the eighteenth century human dignity evolved into a basic tenet of the emerging, humanist-minded bourgeoisie.

To be sure, the idea of human dignity is much older than that. In classical antiquity, philosophers postulated the *dignitas* of *humanitas* on the basis of the law of nature. Medieval Christian theology derived the concept of man's dignity from God's creation, intention and likeness. The Renaissance opened the road towards a humanist view of human dignity that would eventually find its revolutionary articulation in the eighteenth-century Rights of Man and of the Citizen.<sup>6</sup>

In essence, the Enlightenment notion of human dignity – and of the human rights based on it – is that of an intrinsic human quality that belongs to every human being, irrespective of birth, race, ethnic group, class or gender. This intrinsic dignity is not derived from nature or the essence of man, but rather from the fact that man is capable of conquering nature. Man is dignified because he has the power to control his fears, envies and aggressions, to use reason and be rational, and he desires the good, the true and the beautiful. This drives him to education and *Bildung*, as well as moral autonomy. By being rational and moral, man unfolds his grandeur. The person whose dignity is protected by human rights is an *homme rêvé*, the perfect human being, man as he could be and therefore should be.<sup>7</sup> Just like the aristocratic ideal of the self-transcending hero, the ideal self-image of the enlightened and dignified citizen is rooted in the imaginary.

This image of man reflected in human rights contrasts, as a critical category, with *homme situé*, man who, as experience tells us, lapses into barbarism and lets himself be guided by his dark and destructive instincts. This is why human dignity is also called a “beneficial fiction.” The political imperative that flows from this imaginary image has become the wholesome prerogative of our liberal, democratic order: treat *homme situé* as *homme rêvé*. Give him the right to education and civilization, promote his imagination, let his talents be unfolded, do not hurt or damage him and protect him against that which the dark, destructive sides of his nature might expose him to.

If human dignity, then, is located in the ideal capabilities of man, irrespective of social context, institutions and any tradition or history, then human dignity assumes a social infrastructure in which this dignity can take shape. This social infrastructure – from the angle of human dignity – is, therefore, a normative infrastructure, aimed at the unfolding of human capabilities. The proud, free, self-aware, mature citizen who in correspondence with the ideals of the Enlightenment “tells truth to power” and “stands up like a man,” will only come to the fore in a society whose social institutions are structured on the basis of these ideals. John Rawls's famous expression, “Justice is the first virtue of social institutions,” should be understood in this sense. Its task is to subject social institutions to the principles of justice.

And this brings us back to the concept of honor, because, unlike intrinsic, contextless human dignity, honor is directly tied to institutions and concrete practices. If institutions are to be organized in a just manner to allow for human dignity, the many manifestations of honor described above will need to be regulated within and by those institutions. If honor is no longer allowed to hypertrophy as megalomaniac aristocratic, military, criminal or masculine honor codes, but is instead embedded meaningfully within dignified institutions and channeled forth constructively, it can be socially and morally productive.

### **Honor and institutions**

Institutions are, to use Weber's word, *Sinngebilde* – shared systems of meaning that serve as references and orientations for acting, thinking and feeling. They provide elucidation, certainty, stability and identity. Without these systems of meaning, communication would be impossible, and the world would appear as utter chaos. Institutions, as systems of meaning, are not only functional and rational, but are also loaded with values. Thus, they indicate what is seen as important or unimportant in a culture, what is just or unjust and what is superior or inferior. Institutions, in other words, have both a *functional* rationality and a *substantive* rationality.

For instance, in our culture the institution of the family is geared not only to the functional insertion of children in a kinship system, but also to the unfolding of the human capacity for love, care, and responsibility. As an institution, science pursues the functional increase of knowledge, but also has its own codes of honor, such as the truth imperative, scientific freedom, fairness and impartiality. Similarly, the education system does not just train people to join the workforce in a functional sense, it also stimulates critical and imaginative thinking among children and adolescents. The political system regulates power relationships in a functional way, but it also leaves room for political talents, public debate and free speech. The institution of work does not just regulate a functional division of labor, it also enables the unfolding of talents. However, because of their substantive rationality, institutions may liberate individuals and allow them to live in accordance with their capacities. Without institutions we would not be able to develop references, identities, roles, talents or dignified lives.<sup>8</sup>

Substantive rationality serves as a point of connection for honor, a sense of honor and ambition. The value system of the institution determines the focus of honor, what is seen as honorable or dishonorable. In each culture, for example, family is an honor-related institution. In Islamic cultures this honor can be so strong that the practice of so-called "honor killing" may come into play, if a family's honor is violated. In our own culture, families may have a so-called "black sheep," a label used for members who somehow violate their family's honor. Even if they are not killed, they are commonly treated as outcasts. Within the institution of labor, quality of work is often a matter of

honor. Craftsmen ought to exercise their craft according to its proper rules, using the best material and tools. Occupations can be attractive due to the honor that can be derived from them, and this desirability is often passed on. Within a family, a craft or profession, including its code of honor, may be passed from one generation to the next. We see this in particular craft-based occupations, education and health care.

Of course, it is possible for institutions to pervert into “greedy,” totalitarian institutions. They are marked by loss of honor, because they demand total and uncritical subjection to their value systems. Such institutions humiliate and dis-honor. They provide no incentive for individuals to develop the virtues of honor. Serfdom, slavery and religious fundamentalism are such totalitarian institutions. Partly owing to the humanizing effect of human dignity and human rights, such institutions are no longer accepted in democratic systems. But this is not to say that there are no totalitarian institutions anymore. In new guises, they are still around. For institutions can also become perverted when their functional or instrumental rationality dominates their substantive rationality. This, too, becomes dis-honoring, because honor and ambition no longer find meaningful or valorizing points of connection.

The prevalence of instrumental rationality is a disease of our era, a disease with a long history diagnosed by major sociologists and philosophers, such as Max Weber, Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault, as the preeminent characteristic of ongoing modernization. Their diagnoses are still – perhaps more than ever – relevant. The current plea to restore professional honor among professionals in the public domain can also be regarded as a plea to restore the public domain’s substantive rationality. Regardless of whether this substantive rationality has ever fully dominated in practice, it is indisputable that the public domain’s traditional system of values, which feed and regulate professional honor, express the idea of human dignity and the legal principles derived from it.<sup>9</sup>

### **Professional honor in the public domain**

In a democratic state, the public domain’s substantive rationality is geared to the quality, integrity and continuity of public institutions. The public domain is sustained by professionals who work in these institutions. Politicians, civil servants, judges, public prosecutors, academics, teachers, physicians and care providers ought to be – according to the system of values of public service – incorruptible, expert, reliable, predictable, service-minded and responsible. Under specific circumstances, they are deemed to transcend themselves and their interests, and be capable of self-sacrifice and self-control. Their professional identity, in part, consists of the codes of honor of their professions. Whenever this identity is strong, identification with these codes will be strong, professional honor will be maintained forcefully, and the professional’s function within and to the benefit of the public domain will be prolific. Professional honor, then, is not only

tied closely to the self-image of professionals, but also to the substantive rationality of the public institutions in which these professionals work. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when semi-public professionals, such as notaries and lawyers, were put in private organizations, professional honor was emphasized strongly. The trust people have in government and its branches is dependent, after all, on how government's system of values is sustained.

It is all the more remarkable that the substantive rationality of the public domain, with its specific system of values, received so little attention when, from the 1980s onward, a major, neo-liberal reorganization of the public domain was launched. In this reorganization, normative administrative law lost its primacy vis-à-vis pragmatic public administration. The latter preached a business approach to public interests, that the open market was more functional, more efficient and less expensive than the bureaucratic model. Major administrative operations placed public interests in privatized or private organizations that operate on market principles. How the public domain's substantive rationality would survive the open market's functional and instrumental rationality was barely considered. Even less attention was given to the possible effects of the market's instrumental rationality on the professional honor of professionals. These professionals, after all, had to confront wholly new frames of reference. Public interests became private interests, citizens became consumers, services became products, relationships based on trust became relationships based on mistrust. In short, professionals in the public domain had to assume a new *frame of mind*, a new mentality, as well as a new identity. Moreover, this new professional's work was no longer checked by the profession based on its internal codes of honor, but by external control agencies and regulators, based on the terms of instrumental rationality – efficiency, output and profit. As a consequence, improper and external elements have crept into professional practice. They undermine the profession's own discourse and, subsequently, its values, frames of reference and practices.

Many professionals have experienced the substitution of the substantive value system of the public domain with the instrumental value system of the market as dishonoring and as a dispossession of their autonomy and identity. Being subject to the logic of the market has caused severe drops in job satisfaction, lack of motivation and cynicism among many. Dispossession of autonomy and being subjected to market values are experienced as alien and threaten to turn, for example, education and healthcare into totalizing institutions. If they have not become such institutions yet, some of them show signs of this tendency.<sup>10</sup>

There is little room for professional honor and its interrelated virtues within these institutions. The erosion of professional honor clearly shows in the many scandals which directly followed the reassignment of public interests' promotion to the open market. It is possible to see examples every day, and they are even described and denounced in the annual reports of the Vice-President of the Dutch Council of State. These are scams by construction companies and housing corporations, fraudulent acts in educational insti-

tutions, self-enrichment by managers, corruption among notaries, the oft-discussed damage inflicted by managers in the education system, failed care-providing in youth care and the increased garishness of public broadcasting. If a sense of honor is at stake at all, it applies to unbridled ambition and self-aggrandizement instead of self-transcendence.

### Conclusion

If institutions embrace hardly any values other than production, calculation, output and efficiency, they will fail to add value to the society in which they operate. They will no longer function as the social embedding within which individuals can lead dignified lives, derive sense and meaning from their professions and develop their talents and imagination.

The economic dirigisme that has come to characterize our society's operation denies the meaning of honor as the individual's desire to transcend the self. It also denies the virtues that may have developed from that desire and the function of resulting, dignified institutions. Individuals, after all, do not develop the virtues of honor – courage, loyalty, firmness and self-sacrifice – *ex nihilo*. For them to do so, their imagination needs to be first fueled by stories, examples, ideal images and model practices. For *homme rêvé* is also *homme rêvant*!

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TRANSLATED BY TON BROUWERS

# **“What has been lacking over the last few years is ownership”**

## **Interview with Johan Schaberg**

Thijs Jansen

*Johan Schaberg studied English Language and Literature and graduated with an MBA from Harvard Business School. He then took over ailing companies and made them profitable again. In 1980, Mr. Schaberg co-founded the Wolters Schaberg Groep, which, in the space of seven years, he developed into a group of approximately fifty companies with seven thousand employees. Next, he managed Blydenstein-Willink, a Dutch textile company that was experiencing difficulties. As a result of a capital injection and his great personal involvement, he was able to lead the company out of trouble. However, in 1995 he himself was in troubled waters following the attempted rescue of a packaging company that turned out to be too far gone. A long sabbatical led to a renewed appreciation of his personal life. He sailed a lot and took courses on mediation and coaching. Mr. Schaberg is currently a partner at Top Executive Care, a management consultancy that focuses on achieving enduring organizational changes by coaching and training top managers and professionals. He is also a columnist for the economy section of the Dutch NRC Handelsblad newspaper.*

When I think of a real professional, it's usually of someone in one of the traditional professions – a doctor, for instance, who takes the Hippocratic oath – or of the rituals observed by some monastic orders when you enter. You lie with your face flat on the floor in submission to a higher power and vow to be faithful. That's something you'll never forget. “Profession” also literally means that you bow before something you've bound yourself to or pledged allegiance to. For me, that's the measure of the true professional.

Professionals' complaints that they don't get enough respect don't fit this picture. A real professional doesn't wait until he gets respect – he provides it himself! If your boss wants you to do something that contradicts what you've pledged allegiance to, you can try to explain your objection, but if he insists it be done differently, you have to draw your own conclusions and leave. A professional possesses a certain resolve.

Of course, I'm sketching an idealistic picture. There are more than enough professionals in the traditional professions who, above all, are just in it for a second house and the money. But you can find out what characterizes a real professional by asking, “What

are you really loyal to? What's your highest aim in your work?" After all, it's unimaginable that people are prepared to lie flat on their faces and pledge allegiance to earning lots of money or enjoying their work.

There's a big difference between someone who just wants to be an employee and someone who is a professional. A professional has a sense of duty, and an employer knows he doesn't own a professional. A professional goes his way based on the requirements of an oath or a pledge. Professionals are difficult people, and they have to be. A firm of lawyers, a newspaper full of journalists – they're a bunch of know-it-alls who doggedly pursue their mission. The real professional is the salt of the earth, and not everyone should be the salt because the result would be inedible.

Dutch professionals need to be more resolute. In the Netherlands, professionals behave as if they're still adolescents, with the shrill, angry voices of repressed, rebellious teenagers. This petty-minded behaviour is possibly the most serious fungus attacking the walls and woodwork of many organizations. Whining leads to a sort of addictive, intoxicating malaise of "The bosses are no good, and we are, and we want to keep it that way." It's a fungus that feeds off an assumption of powerlessness. The difficulty is that this presupposition can only be removed by the very people who nurture it. The boss can't say, "For goodness' sake, be self-reliant," because anyone who obeys is, by definition, not self-reliant. The boss who says this feeds the very symptom he's trying to combat. You can only decide that you yourself are going to stand firm.

The first step out of powerless whining is to listen to the boss during work meetings and say, "We understand what you want to achieve. Is there anything else we need to consider? Leave it with us now. We'll sort it out, in our own way, with our skills. Trust us." If the boss doesn't want to trust you and asks you to do things that conflict with your duty as a professional, a real professional can be expected to draw the line and say, "No, I'm a committed professional, I'm not doing this, I'm leaving." Many people have forgotten how to explain why they take a particular stance, what it is they're committed to. They remain silent and fail in their duty as professionals.

At the other extreme, we have the whistleblower, who isn't necessarily the prototype of a professional that I have in mind. Whistleblowers often have a certain arrogance or presumptuousness that they're the only ones with a patent on righteousness, that they are the only guardians of the gold standard. And they're often prepared to sacrifice their whole organization and their colleagues to satisfy their own demands for justice. A whistleblower is often a grumbler or a telltale. His blazon of holiness often turns out to be a subterfuge for offended self-respect combined with a vindictive desire for power. If you don't agree with something and you can't change it, then use the influence you have. No less and no more. If you can't in all good conscience continue working at an organization, and you can't change anything, leave. Then go to the police, just like everyone else who possesses knowledge of illegal activities.

In the Netherlands we canonize people all too quickly, whereas it's sometimes diffi-



cult to determine whether someone is a real whistleblower or just a telltale. A real whistleblower exposes irregularities because he's following his conscience, like the doctor in Florence who continued to look after his patients during the plague, regardless of the risks to his own health. The telltale is out for a reward.

The excesses we're seeing in the public and private sectors are partly the result of a failure by professionals to put up resistance. In the public sector we've seen how mega mergers have been initiated in the healthcare sector. In the autumn of 2008, the controversial merger of the Philadelphia care foundation, the Eveen group and the Woonzorg Nederland housing corporation created an organization of 38,000 employees with revenues of 1.5 billion euros. This has emerged as the Espria organization. The Philadelphia part has recently found itself having financial problems. Large, complex conglomerates have come into existence and are able to survive in this branch because they've been blanketed in an artificial complexity. That complexity hasn't resulted from the nature of the work itself but purely and simply because of the requirements that others have managed to put in place about things like certification, process control and accountability. That has made life impossible for the small companies and given carte blanche to the big companies. It's a product of the large-scale mentality itself that has found a nesting place in ministries, health insurance companies, regulators and patient organizations.

In Philadelphia's case, this became clear in the damning report on the organization that was published by the authority charged with overseeing the financial restructuring of hospitals and care providers, the CSZ, at the beginning of 2009. The report said the executive board of Philadelphia was more focused on growth and real estate projects than on its core duties of providing care and shelter for the intellectually handicapped. The supervisory board had failed. In the space of one year, 24 million euros of equity had evaporated. The CSZ spoke of "managerial obesity" and made a plea for "special supervision."

At this time of crisis, there's been an outcry about the private sector but Philadelphia proves that similar excesses can be found in the public sector. For a long time, the public sector got away with donning a cloak of respectability while the private sector was accused of money grabbing. In autumn 2008, for example, the Minister of Health, Ab Klink, said of the payment of dividends to shareholders by hospitals, "As a matter of principle, no money must drain out of healthcare." This pronouncement was prompted by the takeover of the Slotervaart hospital in Amsterdam by a private company. However, it was a strange thing to say. The hospital was on the verge of bankruptcy, having had an annual deficit of a couple of million euros for six years, and its management was at loggerheads with various health insurance companies. It was rescued by an investment firm that Jan Schram, a millionaire from Beverwijk, and Aysel Erbudak have shares in. Thanks to that rescue operation, the "Slotervaart Hospital Limited" became the first commercial hospital in the Netherlands. And, thanks to Erbudak's close involvement in its management, the hospital seems to be recovering well. This isn't letting money drain away, it's exactly the opposite. It's plugging the drain!

The government's condescending attitude fails to take into consideration that private activities really can flow from a sense of involvement and genuine care. An antithesis between public and private doesn't result in the dividing line which concerns us here. That line results from the answer to this question – "What really matters to you as the CEO?" What really matter are real involvement, care and attention – the opposites of indifference. In the public sector, lapses are allowed to continue and indifference can last much longer, whereas in the private sector a company goes bankrupt at a certain point and it's finished. Companies aren't just propped up by the government. It's a very good thing that the threat of sanctions hangs over the heads of CEOs who don't function properly.

What has often been lacking in both sectors over the last few years are care and ownership – CEOs, supervisory boards and employees who say, "This is my company, and it will show." For years, we in the private sector have allowed ourselves to be misled by the fiction that ownership is the same as shareholding. But an anonymous shareholder in a limited liability company isn't an owner, nor is he meant to be. He has a purely financial claim on what remains of the cash flow and the equity after everyone else has had their share, plus a few means of enforcing sanctions if that fails. A shareholder exploits.

Many large companies have anonymous shareholders with whom a personal relationship doesn't exist or isn't even possible. The habit of calling such shareholders "owners" has blown across from the Anglo-Saxon countries, but that still doesn't mean they have ownership. Ownership can't be seen from a piece of paper, but from what a CEO does, how he connects with a company, if he is involved and looks after it in good times and bad. Shareholders don't do that. Moreover, there has been a mistaken idea that the CEO works for those anonymous shareholders. However, the truth is, they're about the only party that can't or isn't allowed to say, "This is my company." Someone who works as an exploiter's accomplice is working for the wrong boss. In this misguided culture, it follows that CEOs and supervisory board members are flown in from outside. They aren't insiders. And at companies that adhere to the Tabaksblat Code on corporate governance, which limits executive appointments to a term of four years, they can't become insiders either. It takes time to become an insider.

The same mistakes are copied in the public sector. Was it possible for Mr. Brinkman, the chairman of Espria's board of directors, to be involved in this healthcare organization in a meaningful way? It was his fortieth job on the side! Ownership means taking risks and showing your involvement. When do you have enough courage? When you're prepared to say, "Over my dead body!"

What has been lacking over the last few years and what needs to be restored to a place of honor is effective, "good house-fatherly" involvement between supervisory boards, CEOs and companies. *Goed huisvaderschap* is a Dutch legal term that literally means "good house-fatherhood," and it roughly translates as "due diligence." It is a legal concept but it has an almost moving appeal. It suggests the loving involvement that's part of fatherhood in its idealized form. But let's be very clear about this; it doesn't mean weak-

kneed indulgence. The child's school report is still scrutinized, and if it isn't good enough, steps must be taken to improve matters.

Royal Reesink, a tool firm, is a good example of ownership. The company's CEO, Mr. Ten Doeschate, has been there about 25 years, something that doesn't fit in at all with the Tabaksblat Code. In that time, he has administered the company, expanded it and defended it like a lion against attackers. The employees are prepared to walk through fire and water for him, and if you woke him in the middle of the night, he could probably tell you precisely what's written on page 63 of the tools catalogue and who the supplier is. At the same time, he's also a very difficult fellow. Once, he chased the supervisory board away when they wanted to get rid of him, growling all the while. That's what you get with ownership. He considers shareholders to be investors whom he keeps carefully at a distance. Shareholder value is substantial but not spectacular, and the company is flourishing. There's no substitute for involvement, attention and knowing what's in the catalogue.

You still find real ownership like this in family businesses. A good example is the Van Oord family business, whose dredging activities span the globe. Chief, Pieter van Oord, succeeded his cousin, Koos van Oord, in November 2008. The company's profits rose 16% in 2008 to 190 million euros.

Or consider De Kuyper Royal Distillers, which has been a family business since 1695. It's the sixth-oldest family-owned business in the Netherlands. De Kuyper is a global market leader in liqueurs for the cocktail market and produces approximately fifty million bottles annually. Bob de Kuyper, the eldest of the tenth generation of De Kuypers, is due to retire on December 31, 2009. His son Marc, who is still being groomed to take over the helm of the world's largest liqueur company, will officially become director in five years. Marc de Kuyper's arrival represents the advent of the eleventh generation of De Kuypers at the helm. And it really is an impressive company. Portraits of all the predecessors are hung on the walls of the boardroom, sending the unmistakable message to you as CEO that you have responsibilities towards them. It makes you wonder, "What am I really serving? To whom am I accountable?" Those portraits are literally and figuratively hung higher than you. So it isn't surprising that Bob de Kuyper isn't a CEO who evades his social responsibilities.

"Good house-fatherhood" like this is also possible if the Slotervaart hospital becomes the first hospital that's allowed to make a profit. Then it's possible that all will go well, on one condition – that everyone at the hospital agrees on why they did this in the first place, namely, to make sick people better. In a hospital that might be a commonplace, or self-explanatory, which is why highly educated people often don't discuss this, but that's a mistake. Things that are self-explanatory don't put themselves into words. They constantly have to be explained anew. Commonplaces, the things we all agree on, need to be re-affirmed every day, otherwise, in the course of time, we'll only talk about our disputes.

If the guiding principle is to make sick people better, then everyone will automatical-

ly know what their role entails and they can also hold others accountable. The CEO, for instance, has to ensure that he makes enough treatment and nursing capacity available to serve that common goal by making the burden of management, administrative staff and reporting as light as possible. And the new CFO, the chief financial officer, who will be part of the executive board of the new Slotervaart hospital, knows he has to interest bankers, insurance companies and financiers in investing their money in his hospital. At the same time, he'll have to use a flaming sword to keep them away from the treatment and nursing sections. This is where the company's core process is carried out, the place of "making sick people better." This process won't be carried out properly if other interests have to be served. However, the CFO can also demand an explanation from the specialist who deals carelessly with valuable treatment and nursing capacity. If the CFO doesn't do this, it will harm the financial parties' confidence in the hospital, and in five years there won't be any money left to keep making the sick better.

Structure follows strategy. That was the main message of Igor Ansoff, a professor of management. First, you need to know where you're headed and then you search for the structure and the means that are most suitable to get you there. Can a commercial organizational form, with its financial interests, be made to serve the goal of making sick people better? It may not be the ideal form, but if rules, budgeting and circumstances push you in that direction, then there's little choice. However, everyone has to be really alert and make sure that the end and the means don't switch places. The hospital's goal is not to become wealthy by providing care for the sick. The goal is to care for the sick, and if it serves a purpose for some parties to get rich as a result, then so be it. But if the nursing staff and the doctors are no longer given the freedom to show compassion and mercy, it will all come to nothing.

If more CEOs, supervisory board members and employees asked themselves "What am I really serving?" our country would be in much better shape!

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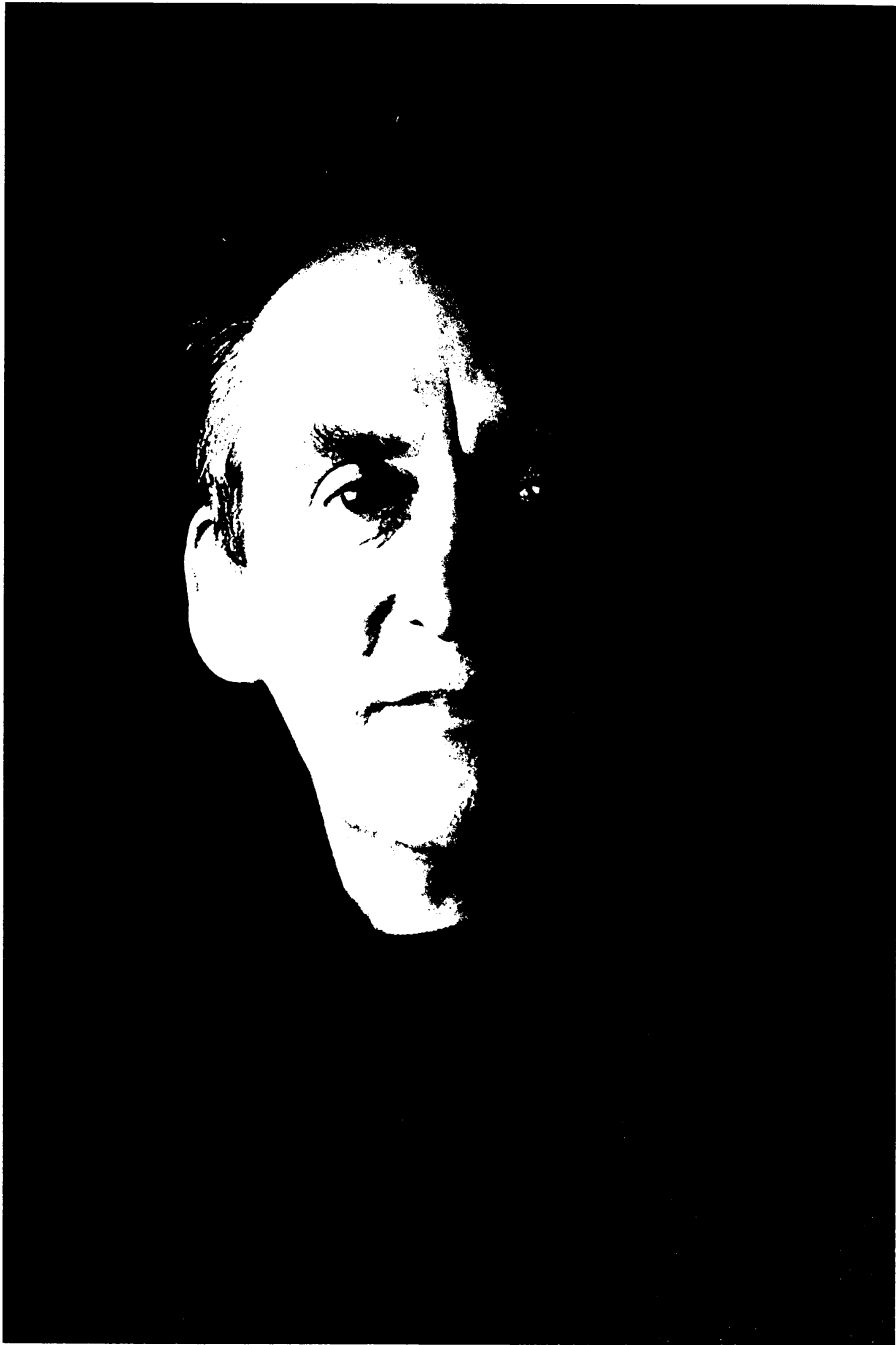
# On the historical superficiality of public administration

## Interview with Christopher Pollitt

Thijs Jansen

*Christopher Pollitt is one of the world's leading authorities on public management. He is currently a Research Professor of Public Management at the Public Management Institute, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. He was previously Professor of Public Management at the Erasmus University Rotterdam (1999–2006). Professor Pollitt has published widely in international journals. Public Management Reform. A Comparative Analysis (Oxford, Oxford University Press, revised second edition 2004) was published in 2000. This work, co-authored with Geert Bouckaert, is now the standard work on the subject. In 2007 he co-edited New Public Management in Europe: Adaptation and Alternatives (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan). His book Time, Policy and Management. Governing with the Past (Oxford, Oxford University Press 2008) explored an unusual subject in the field of public management. In April 2009 the International Research Society for Public Management awarded him the Routledge Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Public Management. He received this prize for his outstanding contribution to research into government management in a global context and because, as senior editor, he was the driving force behind the successful revitalization of the International Review of Administrative Sciences. Professor Pollitt has also worked as a consultant and an advisor to a wide range of organizations including the European Commission, the OECD, the World Bank, HM Treasury, the Finnish Ministry of Finance, the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and the Danish Top Executives Forum.*

In this interview, Professor Pollitt identifies two blind spots in public management as a science, both of which are related to a rather superficial awareness of history. Firstly, the New Public Management rage has paid too little attention to political systems that are different from the two-party systems. Its management methods, dominated by the Anglo-Saxon countries where privatization and deregulation are central, fail to take into account European political and judicial traditions. Secondly, international public administration appears to neglect the time factor in administration. The theories and explanatory models often lack a sufficient historical basis.



*Christopher Pollitt*

### The blind spots in New Public Management

The international dominance of the concepts that have become known as New Public Management is the result of at least three factors. Firstly, public administration theory developed as a social science in the Anglo-Saxon countries, which dominated – and continue to dominate – this discipline. In the 1970s most of the professors were American, something that can be explained historically. The Second World War was followed by a long period that was, understandably, characterized by American imperialism. The United States had more money, more power and more universities, and was therefore in a strong position to set the agenda. During that period, you had to ask an American if you wanted to know what the most important trends in the administration of various European countries were. The result was that a number of presuppositions from Anglo-Saxon countries came to dominate international public administration. One of these presuppositions is the idea that political systems are based on majority governments, just as in the United States and England; in other words, the assumed prototype was a two-party system in which either one party or the other governs. Furthermore, academics automatically continued to build on the philosophical traditions that are the norm in Anglo-Saxon countries. The result is, for example, that German or French philosophical thinking about the state, law and politics is unknown, and no one knows about Hegel, or French public law.

Secondly, public administration has always had a double agenda: you do research but also advisory work. You could say that the academic public administration community has always suffered from a sort of schizophrenia. On the one hand, there are the university departments, an academic community with its own journals and symbols that are part and parcel of scientific research. On the other hand, these very same researchers are also – and to an increasing extent – reliant on advisory work and consultancy to obtain funding. Funding largely depends on the work you're commissioned to carry out for international bodies like the European Commission and for governments. And that advisory work acts as a strong magnet. The fact is that universities suffer from a chronic shortage of money and so there is ever greater pressure to always be on the lookout for new sources of funding. I personally don't need to do consultancy work to earn money, but I'm not representative. In England, academic members of staff do much more advisory work, partly because they have to. This way they can earn the income they need. The alternative is that they could spend up to 100% of their time teaching and have no time left to do research. This is something that has changed enormously since the 1960s.

“By the way, I do advocate the practical combination of research and advisory work, but I believe it's important to keep the two conceptually separate. It's important to be aware of when you're acting in an advisory role and to make very clear that you're functioning in that role. Sometimes you act in both roles simultaneously: in your role as a researcher you might write something whose import or message is actually also intended to obtain advisory work. Academic work and advisory work mustn't be mixed. I think it

is even possible to separate the two in the same book as long as this is done clearly.

Thirdly, the whole management community has grown enormously over the last few decades. Many public administration departments have been “absorbed,” as it were, into the growing number of business schools with courses for management consultants. Public administration subjects are no longer found so often in the social studies or political science departments but in “business studies” departments, where it’s quite normal to view the government as if it were a company. This development has gone hand in hand with a neglect of the more constitutional and institutional aspects of government. The New Public Management movement has lent itself particularly well to this development.

Reforming the public sector has become big business. Management consultants earned a lot of money through this under the Blair government. Viewed historically, it’s striking that when management consultants’ incomes from the private sector fell, their incomes from public sector work suddenly rose sharply. This indicates that this was a development driven not by demand but partly by supply. We should be skeptical of claims in New Public Management literature that “the public demands a more efficient public sector.” The NPM industry is partly driven by the growth in consultancy combined with academic developments.”

### **Differences in reception of New Public Management**

Looking at the spread of New Public Management, we see that it has been introduced much more carefully in northern European countries. An important reason for this is that most of these countries don’t have majority government systems: many European countries have multi-party systems and the political systems are firmly based on consensus. This difference in political systems is one of the most important explanations for the difference in reception. On the one hand, you have the “turbo countries,” where NPM has been forced through in a more or less pure form. It’s no coincidence that these countries are characterized by majority government systems, that they’re Anglo-Saxon, and that they have an enormous management consultants industry. On the other hand, you have the countries that have done things much more carefully. Research shows that European countries that implement change more carefully hire advisors but carry out the reforms themselves. However, in the turbo countries the introduction of NPM is greatly influenced by party politics. The old idea of a politically neutral advisor like the famous Sir Humphrey in England is part of a bygone era. In the past, candidates underwent intensive training to become civil servants. Professional civil servants like this had no trouble at all working for a Labour government one minute and for a Conservative government the next. This has changed since the Blair governments. Blair surrounded himself with policy advisors to whom he had given a lot of power, and advisors like that are a different breed from the civil servants of the past. Anyone giving disinter-



ested advice was put in a corner, pushed aside. This is striking because it happened without any constitutional changes. Add to this the huge increase in the number of advisors. The Blair government loved management consultants: there were a number on the Prime Minister's staff and in other cases civil servants later went on to take up management consultancy positions. This sometimes resulted in a strange interchangeableness between consultants and civil servants. I think Richard Sennett was right when he wrote a long time ago in *The Fall of Public Man* that the dividing line between the public and the private is becoming blurred. That is a problem. In countries with majority government systems, that dividing line is already becoming porous. European countries that don't have majority government systems still have constitutional limits that check this blurring.

Geert Bouckaert and I tried to describe the difference in the reception of NPM by majority government, hardline NPM countries versus other European countries by describing the latter as neo-Weberian. Change in these countries has proceeded more slowly, calmly and cautiously: market mechanisms have been used to a certain extent but much less than in hardline NPM countries; erasing the dividing line between public and private, or making it porous, is less evident and not as extensive. Reforms have been introduced more cautiously, taking into account different interests. We only introduced the term "neo-Weberian" to describe the differences we saw between two types of state. Perhaps we got it wrong, because the term does seem to apply to the northern European countries – Germany, for instance – but it's much less applicable to southern European countries like Italy and Greece.

Just in relation to this, it's worth mentioning our experience during a conference in Tallinn, Estonia, where a lot of new or aspiring members of the European Union were represented. To our astonishment, they transformed the concept of the neo-Weberian state we had introduced into a normative vision of the sort of states they wanted. We were inundated with requests for advice: How can we build such a neo-Weberian state? They weren't at all keen on the New Public Management philosophy. And they have a point: New Public Management instruments only work in a stable political system. They can't be introduced into third world countries, for instance, because these countries don't have a stable public services sector that can serve as a foundation, as a stable basis from which to put out tenders and operate on a contract basis with private companies. In those contexts, the result would be an extension of the mafia's power. The idea of the neo-Weberian state was a pretty good description of what the new or future European member states were aiming for. They definitely didn't want the NPM methodologies: they had seen how these methods, imposed by the World Bank on third world countries, had caused problems there.

The last few years have seen progress in public administration. Whereas at first any criticism was ignored, it is now recognized that New Public Management isn't the only management instrument. The big question now is: Where do we go from here?

### **Time, policy and management**

I wrote *Time, Policy and Management* in order to consider how we can better do justice to the time factor in the subject of modern public administration. We increasingly feel things are getting faster and have to keep getting faster. This leads to uneasiness, for many reasons. One of the things we can point to is the growth of mass communication, which has led to a different style of operating. We can see the effects of this in the public sector. I noticed this in Denmark, where I was involved in a meeting with senior civil servants from different administrative levels. One of the issues to be addressed was what they required in order to administrate effectively. First of all, we interviewed them intensively. They were impressive people. Denmark has a strong, high quality public sector and a great tradition of classic civil service. Civil servants must generally act carefully and mediate in a context of minority governments. In this case, one of the things they wanted most was training in how to deal with the media. Media numbers have increased enormously and the media have also become much more aggressive and less respectful. Whenever something happens, a media statement has to be made. There's enormous pressure to announce that something must be done immediately, but those quick fix solutions are usually not the best option.

The desire to come up with a quick fix solution if things aren't going to plan is widespread and big consultancy firms play on this. Consultants turn up at a company, say they've often seen a similar problem and promise to solve it in a few weeks. They then set out a trajectory for change but have often already left before it's implemented.

I'm not nostalgic: we can't go back to a time when things were slower and there was less pressure from the media. Both media pressure and time pressure have increased.

This increased pressure is also related to our feeling that everything can be fixed. Impressed by the rapid technological revolutions in our lifetime, we have the feeling, for some reason, that it must be possible to find a quick solution to everything. Perhaps now more than ever before, we believe that humans can be perfected: Things can always be improved, and it therefore follows that they must be improved. That is sometimes frightening. In England, for example, the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, published a report on the state of the public sector. The report said the aim should be to ensure that the English public sector become a world-class service. Next, the high scores of the Swiss public sector were presented as the goal to be attained and the British government was called on to copy the Swiss. There was no realization that this was impossible and undesirable. It bears witness to an insensitivity to differences. The Swiss model cannot simply be copied in England!

I'm very suspicious of the use of general models, regardless of whether it concerns New Public Management, all sorts of "governance" models or Public-private partnerships (PPP). Those models only work under certain conditions and it will always be necessary to see how they can best be introduced into specific contexts. There's nothing wrong with introducing "citizen service charters" for civil servants, stating exactly what

citizens can expect from a particular service. However, they must be carefully adjusted to suit the requirements of the specific situation. Management techniques can't simply be transferred from one context to another, and certainly not from one country to another. In certain contexts it might even be advisable not to attempt to introduce management techniques.

The corrupting effect of setting short-term goals can be seen in how new countries join the European Union. I heard from a Romanian academic that before Romania joined the EU, anti-corruption units were set up to show that the country was pro-actively fighting corruption. This was one of the requirements that Romania had to satisfy in order to obtain membership. After gaining EU membership, the units were abolished and the old corrupt ways were resumed. This again shows that real results can only be obtained as a result of long-term efforts.

However, the danger is that politicians will mainly focus on short-term goals, for example, by announcing a change of policy. But such changes often require more time than these politicians spend in office, whereas they're under great pressure to think primarily of the next elections and tomorrow's newspaper headlines.

This haste and short-term thinking are completely at odds with the time scales used by professionals on the ground, where the cycles of time are much longer and long-term efforts are required. I interviewed doctors for my book about time and policy. I remember a doctor in Brighton in a cold, damp, run-down building – very depressing. The doctor I spoke to worked long hours. He had a small, cramped office covered in coffee stains, but he didn't complain. He was a very senior doctor – a doctor like this often works at the same hospital for ten years or more. However, he increasingly has to deal with people who influence his work and whose time spans are very different from and much shorter than his – consultants, who come for just a couple of weeks or months and disrupt the organization, managers or CEOs who constantly change jobs. At the hospital in Brighton which I studied for the book, the senior management positions had changed frequently and it was measured as a low-quality hospital by the government itself. Research even shows that, on average, CEOs in NHS hospitals were changing every other year.

The professionals on the ground, however, have a much longer cycle of time. Everyone knows that it often takes a bit of time before you function properly in a new organization. At first you have to get used to how things work and find your way. How can management and administration work well if they change every year or every two years?

It's important for those involved in public administration to study the long-term dimension more closely. One way of doing this would be to work in multi-disciplinary teams more often. In my book I've indicated how the history of institutions and organizations could be used in such research. Public administration should welcome a broadening of perspective: after all, it's a multi-disciplinary science. However, it isn't easy to implement this in a university context. Currently, the trend is for research at universities to emphasize "output," and this is precisely what discourages interdisciplinary re-

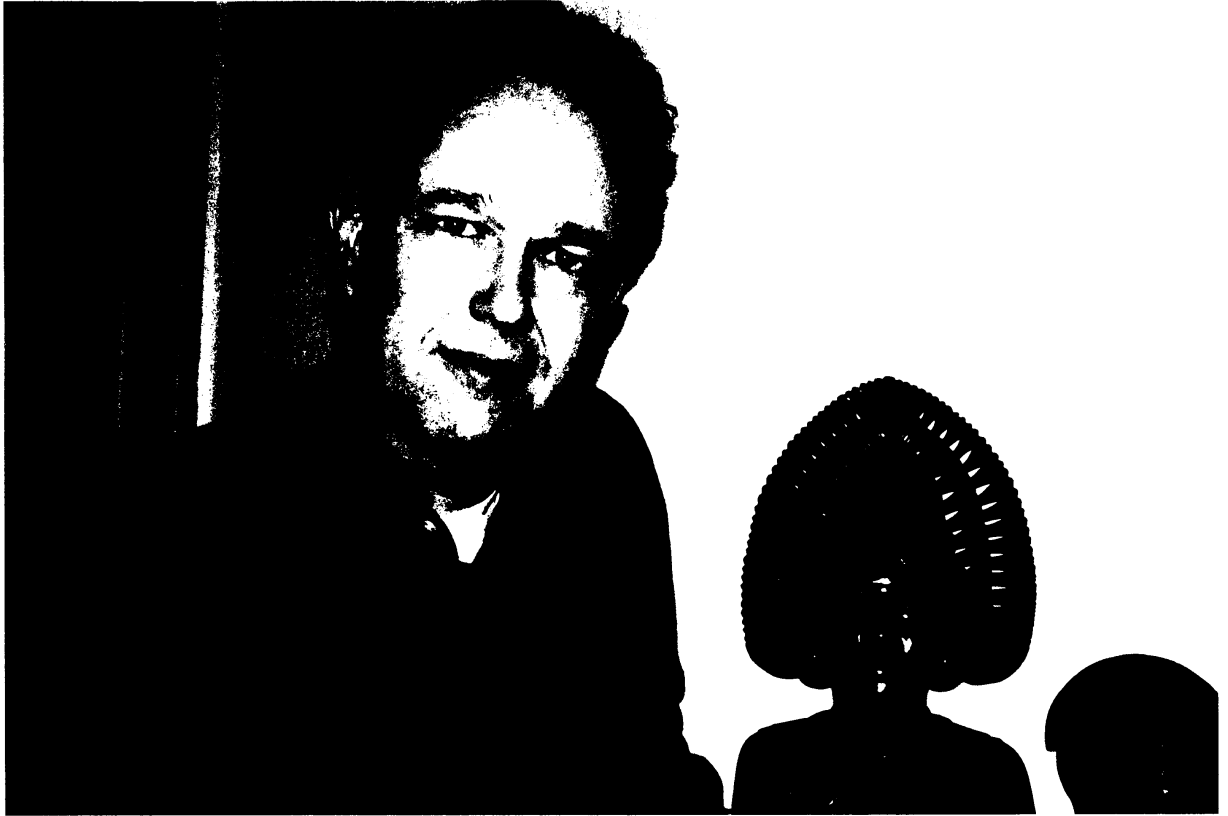
search. You have to publish a certain number of articles in the top five international journals in your own discipline. In order to get these articles published, they must often satisfy specific set models. Articles and research that are new, interesting, different are much less likely to be published, which is why researchers are wary of taking risks. The rise of an influential management class at the universities also discourages risk-taking – at least of an intellectual kind.

It's important to remember that the real knowledge of professionals resides with the people who do the work every day – the policeman, the teacher, the doctor and the social worker. I don't like the developments of the last five to ten years in England, the United States and Australia. In those countries, the politicians and the management consultants label the professionals as the problem. They've been written off as a source of innovation purely on the basis of unproven suppositions. That is a catastrophic development! I've met plenty of impressive professionals in the public sector. Clever politicians will ensure that professionals can do their work unhindered. To do that, they have to listen to professionals, sometimes give a little push, offer a helping hand, and give them time and freedom. All too often, I've seen that changes aren't even given a chance to succeed. When new staff are employed, or new structures and work methods are introduced, it often takes three or four years for such changes to be internalized and to really work well. In practice, professionals are often not even given a year. Then an audit is carried out and if its findings are unfavorable, everything has to change again. But there's nothing strange if a radical change doesn't bear fruit in its first year: it has yet to be completed! People have far too little patience. Changes in culture take a long time: people have to learn new routines; the external relationships – cooperative relationships – often have to change dramatically. This all takes time.

The art is to get professionals to the point where they are innovative again. After all, they have the knowledge, and it all has to happen on the ground. If governments constantly label professionals as lazy and untrustworthy, and time and again denigrate them, they'll end up shooting themselves in the foot!"

TRANSLATED BY VIVIEN REID

## **Operational space**



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Norbert Kemp, born in 1960 in The Hague, studied medicine and biology at the University of Leiden, followed by specialist training at the vU University in Amsterdam from 1995 to 1997 to become a nursing-home doctor. Since 2008, Kemp has been working at the Parnassia mental healthcare institution in The Hague.

From 2001–2007, Kemp was head of treatment coordination at Meavita WoonZorg in The Hague (an assisted-living organization) and, from 1997 to 2001, nursing-home doctor at the Houtwijk nursing home in The Hague. Since 2008, he has been treasurer of the regional board of the NVVA for The Hague and surrounding area. This is a professional association of nursing-home doctors and social geriatricians. On July 1, 2009, the title “nursing-home doctor” was changed to “specialist in geriatric medicine.” (Photo: Alexandra Gabrielli)

## **The professional pride of Norbert Kemp, nursing-home doctor**

*Alexandra Gabrielli*

Norbert Kemp (1960) became a nursing-home doctor by coincidence, or rather, it just happened. “Almost from the start of my medical studies I worked as a receptionist in a nursing home. I liked it there, with the old people. When I completed my degree, I did not really know what I wanted to do – family doctor, psychiatrist, internist? Internal medicine appealed to me, but that would mean working in a hospital which I did not want. I applied for a temporary position through an employment agency. I was offered a position as a company doctor for six weeks, but that did not inspire me. By then I had also put my name down to train to become a family doctor. Finally, someone said I should become a nursing-home doctor. He thought I would be suited to that.

“One day the director of the old people’s home approached me and asked if I had already graduated. He said he would ask around amongst his colleagues about vacancies. From twelve candidates, I was the one who, to my considerable surprise, was taken on. The others were all people with experience; when they recruited me, they said that it was because they thought I would see things through. At first it took me awhile to get used to the nursing home, but after a month I thought ‘This is it, this is what I want to do’.”

Nursing-home medicine became a recognized area of specialization in 1990. Three universities in the Netherlands offer courses for nursing-home doctors. These doctors also increasingly visit the old and chronically sick at home, as well as in nursing homes, partly as a result of the government policy to let people live independently for as long as possible. For this reason, the title of nursing-home doctor was changed on July 1, 2009, to “specialist in geriatric medicine.”

Geriatric medicine is still developing. Knowledge and expertise in geriatrics, convalescence and palliative care are the main focus, but more important is the doctor’s attitude. It is not the easiest form of medicine. The doctor has to cope with terminally ill patients and the chronically sick. Furthermore, little research has been carried out on the very old. Most medical research targets people 65 to 70 years old. A great deal, therefore, depends on the nursing-home doctor’s insight and ability to assess patients. Kemp: “Nothing is as clear with older people as it is with younger ones. You always have to use a lot of common sense in what you do. You cannot just give an old person with high blood pressure medicine to lower their blood pressure. The person can, for exam-

ple, become confused or dizzy. There are many restrictions. Young people are flexible, but older people have lost this flexibility. They lose certain functions, and certain treatments can cause an avalanche of effects on them. It is always a case of weighing the pros and cons. Which treatment is still viable and which isn't? What is the best course of action? Combining these two factors is a real challenge.

"I once had a case where weighing the pros and cons played an important role. One of my patients, an old lady who was becoming demented, had breast cancer. At an advanced age, this is usually not so serious, but in this woman's case, the tumor was growing very quickly. The question was whether or not to operate. I thought that she should be operated on, because there was a risk of ulceration which would be very unpleasant and painful. I talked to the family and they considered the options. The daughter and ward sister felt that the woman should not have the operation, but the son and I felt she should. Anyway, I am not the one who makes the decision. Then the nurse came and asked if she should try to tell the patient what was going on and see if she understood. She explained everything with enormous patience, after which the woman agreed to the operation. Then the daughter also became convinced. The woman was operated on, not to cure her, but to prevent complications and to ensure that she did not suffer too much.

"She had another good year after the operation, but then became ill again because the cancer had spread to her liver. Things moved quickly, and we started palliative treatment. I went to see her when she was very ill, and it was clear that she was going to die. Her children were sitting round her bed. I asked how she was and whether I could do anything for her. She beckoned to me. I thought that she wanted to say something and moved closer to her. As I bent down she gave me a kiss. That said it all. Then I knew that what we had done had been fine. If you ask me now what I am proud of, it is not the fact that she gave me a kiss, but the fact that I chose the right treatment. I also think it is not the treatment itself but of the respect you have for the people involved, for their lives and the way they live."

In August 2007, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport Jet Bussemaker launched an action plan to reduce the pressure of rules, bureaucracy and administrative burdens in the General Law on Exceptional Health care Costs (*Algemene Wet Bijzondere Ziektekosten* or *AWBZ*) in her pamphlet *AWBZ: Towards simplicity in implementation (AWBZ: naar eenvoud in uitvoering)*. It is a marvelous plan, and everyone who works in the sector should read it and carry it with them to dip into now and then. After reading it, no one can still state that the government is not making an effort to reduce administrative burdens. So why, in March 2009, were alarming messages still appearing in the media about the obsessive urge to register everything, as if the *AWBZ* had become some sort of bureaucratic monster? Was this because of the 2009 amendments to the *AWBZ*? Had the verdict of a professor of organizational studies two years before – that every abolished rule would be replaced by two new ones – actually become reality?

The *AWBZ* has considerable impact on Norbert Kemp, and he agrees that the number of rules has not declined in the last few years. He would like to see the current way of



referring patients through the Central Care Referral Organization (*Centrum Indicatiestelling Zorg* or *CIZ*) abolished and let family doctors decide whether someone should go to a nursing home. “The family doctor has a good overview of the situation, and if you do not regard that as sufficient guarantee, you can also have the nursing-home physician or someone within the organization make the decision with the family doctor. This makes a considerable difference in the amount of paperwork involved.

“Referring patients is a complex procedure. They start neglecting themselves, become forgetful, and then everything starts to go wrong. The family doctor is called in and contacts a mental healthcare (*Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg* or *GGZ*) institution. A number of things then have to be done.

“First someone visits the patient. I go along, too, to see what is going on. I draw up a report together with the nurse. We determine if the person has dementia. We recommend that the patient be admitted to a nursing home or an old people’s home (a nursing home offers a greater degree of medical care than an old people’s home). Then all sorts of paperwork needs to be completed.

“Nowadays this is completely automated. A referral advisor comes to make a recommendation, then the care office gives permission for admission on the basis of this recommendation. Then that age-old question is put to the person with dementia: “You are to go into a nursing home where you will be kept behind locked doors. Is this what you want?” Any right-minded person, and any person with dementia for that matter, would say ‘no’ to this question. If the person does not respond, it is assumed that he or she is willing to go into the home. This is, of course, ridiculous. The person in question doesn’t know. We used to sort this out ourselves – accept people as they were – and tell them they were going into an institution where they would be well-cared for.

“We are stuck in a culture where rules govern everything. The system should serve the people’s needs, but the people are increasingly serving the needs of the system. It would be better if we focused our attention on ensuring continuity of care for the aged, as this is what is missing. There are too many divisions between the various areas: family doctor, home care, mental healthcare, nursing homes, old people’s homes, hospitals. They are not coordinated and do not communicate with each other. People are terrified that money will flow out of exceptional healthcare into public health insurance and the reverse. My patients, however, are often borderline cases between these various areas. They fall between two stools and, as a result, do not receive the care they need. I think we should create one pot of money to finance care for the aged instead of the multiple budgets that we have now.”



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Hans Monderman in 2005 (Photo: archive Monderman family)

# **Hans Monderman and the Shared Space Philosophy**

## **Making space for social traffic through fewer rules and signs**

*Alexandra Gabrielli*

“A wide road with lots of traffic signs tells a story. A road like this sends the message: Go ahead, the road is yours. Drive as fast as you can. You don’t need to pay attention to your surroundings. And that is a very dangerous message.” These were the words of traffic engineer Hans Monderman in one of the many interviews he gave following the launch of his unconventional vision of traffic rules and the design of roads and public spaces. Here he is in another interview:

The present design of cities and villages means that people are forced to adapt to the car. If the government develops spaces in which the car is allowed to dominate completely, then the car-driving individual will behave in a way that conforms to those spaces. If you create spaces that are designed for people, then the motorist will adapt. He will no longer stand above society; he will become part of it. The moment you reintroduce the social aspect to space, you reduce aggression and infringements. The public space is the space that matters. It is where society affirms itself, and it is where you learn to deal with others. Citizens themselves, and not the government, are responsible for their behavior in traffic. If you take over that responsibility, people stop thinking – after all, a system has already been thought up for them. In this way a society no longer develops norms and values. Motorists often go to the limits of what is permitted. Anything that is not expressly forbidden is therefore permitted. 50 kilometers per hour is 50 kilometers per hour, even if there is a school on the street...You create a terrible world this way.<sup>1</sup>

### **Crossing an intersection backwards**

Monderman attracted international attention in the summer of 2003 as “the man who wanted to get rid of traffic lights.” He had all the traffic signs, traffic lights and road markings removed from the Laweiplein, an intersection in the town of Drachten. Approximately twenty thousand motorists and thousands of cyclists use this intersection every day. Monderman asserted that cyclists, pedestrians and motorists would be forced

to pay more attention to each other if there were no traffic signs and this would result in fewer accidents. After all, reducing the number of traffic signs promotes the social behavior of road users. They have to make eye contact with each other.

Instead of a busy intersection with yield lines, zebra crossings and stop signs, a large square that looks like a roundabout without signs was created. There is now a smooth flow of cars, buses and cyclists, with only the odd delay. Clear distinctions between road, cycling lane and pavement do not exist.

To prove he was right, Monderman crossed the intersection backwards, watched by a BBC reporter. The cars approaching from behind braked and drove carefully around him. There have been fewer accidents since the busy, messy intersection was changed into a welcoming square.

When Hans Monderman died in January 2008 at the age of 62, there were newspaper headlines like “Traffic genius dies” and “Radical Dutch traffic engineer gave new definition to traffic safety.” Journalists and foreign newspapers, such as *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*, hailed Hans Monderman’s pioneering spirit and outdid each other in praising his achievements. Internationally, Monderman had built a reputation as an innovative, promising thinker and actor in the fields of traffic and spatial planning. It was he who reintroduced simplicity and the human element to the design of streets and public spaces.

Hans Monderman was born in the Dutch city of Leeuwarden in 1945. He studied civil engineering and after completing his studies, he took up an appointment as an engineer in Friesland in 1968, with responsibility for designing motorways. Partly as a result of his work as a driving instructor in his free time, his interest in researching traffic accidents grew. He was in a position to observe motorists’ driving behavior close up, which was apparently a source of experience and inspiration for his later work.

The Dutch government, alarmed at the rapid increase in traffic accidents, set up a chain of traffic bureaus in the 1970s. In 1980, Monderman was appointed head of traffic safety in the province of Friesland. He introduced various remarkable plans to improve the safety and quality of public life. He began by narrowing roads, placing trees, flower pots and fountains in the newly available space. This was intended to have a psychologically calming effect.

Research had shown that road markings do not change motorists’ behavior. Fifteen percent of people will always behave badly in traffic, regardless of the rules. Monderman’s principle was “behavior follows design.” The road user must be able to see from the space – the roads and the surroundings – what sort of behavior is desirable and appropriate.

Monderman worked for the province of Friesland from 1968 until 2007. In the years before his death, he also was seconded to the Keuning Instituut, a center of expertise in the fields of landscape, cultural history and spatial planning in Groningen.

### **Shared Space: a philosophy for public spaces**

Monderman's insights and experience laid the foundation for the "shared space" philosophy, which was presented in the summer of 2005 in the publication *Shared Space – Ruimte voor allen. Een nieuwe visie op de openbare ruimte* (*Shared Space – Room for Everyone. A new vision for public space.*) Traffic experts, designers, planners and landscape architects around the world quickly embraced it. The core of the philosophy is that traffic is hindered more than it is helped by traffic lights and signs. Drivers no longer take personal responsibility for using the road. By removing traffic signs and allowing road use to coincide with other human activities, motorists – as well as cyclists and pedestrians – must pay attention to who has the right of way and how much traffic is oncoming. Drivers adjust their speed and can thus react swiftly and effectively to what is happening around them. Road users can make direct eye contact with each other, and they are also forced to seek that contact to avoid accidents. That works better than conventional traffic signs, even in a busy city.

The point is to design roads as public spaces where drivers promote socially desirable behavior. Thus, a motorist adapts to the worlds of pedestrians, playing children and cyclists in villages, inner cities, neighborhoods and out in the country. Shared Space means the integration of different road uses in densely populated areas, as opposed to segregation or division.

It will come as no surprise to learn that critics maintain that vulnerable road users – especially the blind and partially sighted, the aged and children – are not adequately protected in unclear situations. Monderman understood this, but he spoke of a process of habituation. "Give the redesign of the village center a chance. It just takes time for people to really let go of the traffic sign culture."

### **Shared Space: an international success**

The Shared Space publication was the starting point for the European collaborative project of the same name, Shared Space, which aimed to develop new policies for the design of public spaces at the regional, national and European levels. The project that was developed by Monderman and his team was carried out with seven partners – the Dutch municipalities of Haren and Emmen, the province of Friesland and the local authorities of Oostende (Belgium), Bohmte (Germany), Ejby (Denmark) and Ipswich (England). The project was jointly funded by the European Interreg IIIB North Sea Programme for sustainable regional development through an innovative approach and transnational co-operation.

The Shared Space Institute has existed in Drachten since January 2009, a direct outcome of the European Shared Space project that ended in 2008. The municipality of Smallingerland and the province of Friesland have made 750,000 euros available until

the end of 2012. The Shared Space experts will fulfill development and advisory roles in carrying out a variety of projects. One of these is the interregional project Shared Space Crossing the Border, *SSCTB*, which is being realized along the Dutch-German border. The Institute also collaborates with universities to carry out applied research and to advise governments.

Hans Monderman was named Innovator of the Year by the Ministry of the Interior at the Innovatie Festival in Dordrecht on April 6, 2006. He and his team were nominated for two prestigious international prizes – the American World Technology Award for Environment 2005 and the Belgian Philippe Rotthier European Prize for Architecture. It was the first time that a Dutch project had been nominated for the American prize.

#### *The law of rules and their limiting effect*

Monderman agreed with the ideas expressed in the essay “Business Ethics. The Law of Rules” (2006),<sup>2</sup> written by Michael L. Michael of the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA). Monderman is also referred to by name in this essay. Michael writes:

In an *ideal world*, one where rules are unnecessary, we could be counted on to decide safety issues correctly in light of our own skill, road conditions and various other factors. In the *real world* – the one with rules, including speed limits – rule-makers have decided for us what kind of conduct constitutes safe driving, and our focus shifts (quite literally) from others on the highway to our own speedometer. Somewhere between the *real world* and the *ideal world* is the space in which Hans Monderman works.

Michael’s essay is about the law of rules. Rules lead a life of their own from the moment they come into effect. Rules often have consequences that the makers of the rules did not intend at all. Michael does not advocate the abolition of all rules any more than Monderman did. Rules must remain essential guides for behavior. They provide a certain freedom and have a positive influence on morality. Laws that outlaw racism, for example, require people to treat each other properly and in the long run this requirement will lead to a change in behavior. But the advantages of rules have a price tag. There are rules that do not go far enough, that are “under-inclusive” and, in contrast, rules that go too far, that are “over-inclusive.” In both cases there is an imperfect match between rule and purpose. This is unavoidable, and not a single rule is immune, not even the most scrupulously drafted.

Since practically every study that we carry out nowadays begins and ends with rules, it is useful to keep questioning the purpose of rules. In our time, rules have become mandates for “correct” behavior in cases where the distinction between obeying rules and ethical behavior is blurred. We sometimes hear things like, “If it’s legal, it’s ethi-

cal,” or “As long as it isn’t illegal, it’s okay.” Rules obstruct moral judgment or, rather, obstruct improvement to our powers of moral judgment.

Rules also limit or diffuse our attention. They weaken our conscious attention and involvement, and they distract us from other people. We become less aware of others and more aware of whether or not we are surrendering to a rule, which is usually focused exclusively on efficiency.

If rules are part of the problem, then a remedy that relies too heavily on rules will only limit or even worsen, the problem. In order to avoid unintended consequences, rule-makers must be aware of the possible effect of rules. Rules do not aid in the awakening of our imagination or promoting our involvement. Their very nature means they do not stimulate us to make decisions ethically or to take a refined approach to problems. Rules undermine moral behavior, and people even start to act recalcitrantly in relation to those rules. Rules therefore cannot be the only solution to moral misconduct.

A better assessment of a situation or a better solution to a problem is more likely to be achieved if people’s thinking is “broadened” by exposing them to different and conflicting viewpoints and approaches. In contrast to the making of rules, moral programs in organizations focus on values like courage and integrity and they provide employees with skills. Employees must be stimulated to think outside the rules.

### **Sources other than rules to guide us**

Monderman was asked to disseminate his philosophy at home and abroad. He wanted to show that there are forces in life other than rules that can guide us. If we had asked Monderman to choose between participating in society and attending a conference about society, he would naturally have chosen to be in society. This contrasts with enthusiasts of statutes and rules who constantly busy themselves with yet more order and regulation and who are slowly hollowing out society, draining it of its liveliness.

Monderman rejected the idea that anything which was not based on a statute, law or rule did not exist or was not valid. He showed that things could be done differently. He could act, and he crossed a busy intersection backwards. He showed that people are perfectly capable of paying attention to their surroundings and that they want to take responsibility for the cordial interaction with others in traffic and, by extension, in society.

# **Administrative burdens for public professionals: Facts and fiction**

*Mirko Noordegraaf and Jasper Sterrenburg*

*In the public debate about “professional pain,” there are many complaints about the burdens of administration. However, research among local police officers, detectives, general practitioners, medical specialists and nurses indicates that it is actually not that bad. How can the volume of complaints be explained then? On the basis of research among staff in policing and health care, as well as youth welfare services and long-term care, the authors argue that a complex set of factors is at work here: support from within the organization, the extent to which the organization explains the purpose of and need for administrative procedures, the intrusiveness of these procedures on the professional but also the extent to which he experiences them as part of his work and his opportunities for defending himself against them. Pressure can also be caused by parties other than the government, so simply abolishing government rules and regulations will not solve this problem. More is needed.*

“How can we regain professional pride and, thus, quality in our work?” That is the central question for the Dutch Professional Honor Foundation, the Stichting Beroepseer ([www.beroepseer.nl](http://www.beroepseer.nl)), an initiative that aims to make “being professional” attractive again. As far as the foundation is concerned, the background of the problem is clear: “Respect for employees and their own self-respect is undermined by a bombardment of permanent reorganizations, increases in scale, and rules.” The foundation’s website cites various examples that bear witness to the consequences: the stories of nurses, police officers and teachers who say they increasingly have to account for the way they spend their time and money; professionals and the organizations they work for that are hindered by executives, managers, bureaucracy, rules and “overheads” that force them to do more and more administration so they have less and less time for their primary tasks.

These are important observations. They show that the core of the debate about demotivated and oppressed professionals<sup>1</sup> in an everyday sense centers on the feeling that they do not get around to doing the real work, that the work that it is “really about” is harmed. In public organizations, which are getting bigger all the time and are being run like companies, lots of forms have to be filled out, records have to be kept up to date and contact time has to be recorded because this is required by managers and “the bureaucracy.”



These are administrative burdens, burdens that then seem to result in even bigger burdens, namely, a loss of pride, expertise and quality. Over the last few years there have been extensive investigations into “burdens,” “pressures” and “irritations,” and there have been sweeping calls to get rid of them once and for all, making it clear that this is not limited to only a few isolated examples. The Socialist Party’s (SP) think-tank concludes, on the basis of a survey among thousands of mental health services professionals (Palm et al 2006), not only that the “work load is too heavy,” “the work load has increased greatly” and health workers “lose a lot of time as a result of bureaucracy,” but also that “the patient must be central,” “the human element must be the guiding principle,” “mega mergers must be stopped,” “the market approach must be stopped” and “diagnosis-related treatment (DBC’s) and the body that determines eligibility for care (the CIZ) should be abolished.” And finally, “there must be an end to the manager culture.”

The stakes appear to be high. In this chapter we will therefore closely scrutinize the administrative burdens of professionals without being swayed beforehand by the concerns that exist about those burdens. What are the administrative burdens for public professionals? How bad is the pressure of administrative burdens, really? What is the source of the burdens? What are possible solutions?

### Public professionals

According to the Stichting Beroepseer, professionals get caught up in cumbersome rules and structures. In principle, any employee taken at random in the Netherlands would recognize himself in this. But does this mean that everyone is then by definition a professional? A look at public debates seems to indicate that the definition of the term “professional” has indeed become so wide that the great majority of the Dutch workforce can refer to itself using the term. The main characteristic is that professionals work “on the ground” and are not “managers” or “policy makers.” Once this “criterion” is met, there seem to be few reasons why an employee should not refer to himself as a professional. There is nothing strange about this, because the term “professional” has a strategic meaning,<sup>2</sup> given that professionalism goes hand in hand with a degree of protection, freedom and status. However, partly because of this, it is important to define “professional” precisely, certainly in relation to the fierce debate about administrative burdens.

In this article we focus on professionals in public and social services like (youth) welfare, care, education and the police. Or, to be more concrete: doctors, nurses, general practitioners, teachers, foster parents, social workers, and police officers. “Public professionals” such as these have the following features in common:<sup>3</sup>

- 1 They work with and for individual citizens (clients, patients, pupils, etc.) but at the same time they serve social values like health, welfare, education and safety.

- 2 They deal with individual citizens as *specific* “cases,” but on the basis of *general* knowledge and experiences.
- 3 They have to a greater or lesser extent been trained for a profession, and they belong to more or less formalized professional associations that influence and regulate their behavior, but they work in or for public and social organizations.

These features are important, given that they make it clear that most public professionals work in, or are connected with, public and social organizations that also serve social values. For the sake of political, financial or legal motives, the work of public professionals will inevitably be restricted and “burdened.” Executives, managers, politicians, policy-makers, regulators and other interested parties concern themselves with the work of professionals. For the debate, it is important to realize that the core of the issue is not so much the actual burdens and restrictions on professional freedoms, but rather the extent to which they occur and, possibly even more important, the way they occur. Perhaps administrative burdens themselves are not so bad; they are bad if a professional has no voice in the matter.<sup>4</sup>

### **Administrative burdens**

Virtually all employees have to deal with administrative matters. Work includes administrative tasks that concern the work itself: A teacher has to record grades, a police officer has to write reports, a nurse has to update patients’ charts. But if we are to believe public opinion and studies like the Socialist Party’s research of 2008<sup>5</sup> (referred to earlier), professionals are primarily concerned with registering and monitoring how the work is done – for example, they have to record how many clients they treat, how much time that takes and if they have met all the legal requirements. Administrative acts are, therefore, literally administrative burdens or, even worse, “pressures.”

Before establishing the extent of the problem, it is also important to clarify which burdens we actually mean. According to the formal definition, administrative burdens – for companies, citizens or organizations – result from government-imposed requirements to provide information,<sup>6</sup> such as mandatory administrative activities like writing a report for a local council, a ministry or an inspectorate. However, especially for professionals, this definition of “administrative burdens” is too narrow. With regard to professionals, we must look at a wider definition of administration.<sup>7</sup> They also have to deal with administration that is imposed by third parties, organizations and “stakeholders” that place demands on the provision of services and professional practice. An example is health insurance companies for whom healthcare professionals and their organizations must keep records. However, the third parties might also be clients’ associations or journalists. Moreover, professionals also have to deal with administration imposed by their own professional group or organization, so-called internal administration. Exam-

ples of this are setting up a yearly plan (education), accounting for hours worked (the police) and completing an evaluation form after answering an emergency call (the fire brigade).

We must introduce a further nuance. Administrative burdens can be seen as factual burdens – the exact number of administrative acts performed and the time needed to do so. However, administrative burdens can also be seen as “experienced” burdens, where the emphasis is on how professionals *experience* administrative acts, the “irritations” caused by rules and administration and whether they see “the point” of accountability.<sup>8</sup>

To summarize, for professionals, administrative burdens comprise administrative acts required by the government, third parties and their own professional organizations, with the impact of these activities being determined by (a) the number of acts, (b) the time they take and (c) the way they are experienced.

### **Facts about burdens**

Several years ago, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations introduced a program aimed at tackling the problems of professionals and the pressure of rules and regulations. This program was called “Administratieve Lastenvermindering voor Professionals in de Openbare Sector” (Reduction of Administrative Burdens on Government Professionals). Within the framework of this program, several studies were carried out that quantified not only the experienced burdens of a number of professionals, such as local police officers, detectives and general practitioners, but especially the factual burdens (number of acts, time spent). These studies do not cover all public and social services and they are sometimes also small-scale. Nevertheless, they provide considerable insight into how supposed burdens work out in practice. They focus on several high-profile professionals like police officers, doctors and nurses. Moreover, while maintaining a certain distance from the public debate about burdens and professionals, they also show, more subtly, what the burdens (can) comprise, how they arise, and how they differ from profession to profession. Comparable studies have been initiated by other bodies, such as the Ministry for Youth and Families and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (vws), although they focused mainly on the burdens experienced by professionals. Below, we first discuss the results of a number of studies that have looked at both factual and experienced burdens. We then consider studies whose focus has been experienced burdens.

#### *Local police officers*

Local police officers spend an average of 20% of their on-duty hours doing administrative tasks. This works out at 1 hour and 37 minutes per shift. Approximately half of this time (49 minutes) is spent using the police registration system or X-pol. Incidents and

changes are recorded in these systems (Franck et al 2008). The same study showed that two-thirds of the local police officers observed indicated at the end of their shifts that they either did not mind at all, or hardly minded, the amount of time spent inputting data. The main source of irritation was the user-unfriendliness of the computer systems. Policemen complained that they have to open several screens, log on repeatedly and type in the same details again.

#### *Detectives*

Detectives spend an average of 38%, or 3 hours and 7 minutes, of their work time on administrative activities. At least one-third of this time (1 hour and 18 minutes) is spent using the police registration system or X-pol (Franck et al 2008). Detectives indicated that they hardly mind administrative burdens. They seem to understand that a large part of administration – including writing reports on investigations and contact with the Public Prosecution Service – is necessary to carry out their work. The most important complaint concerned, again, the user-unfriendliness of the computer systems.

#### *General practitioners*

A general practitioner spends on average 25 to 31% of his working hours on administrative activities. This works out at approximately 11 to 14 hours per week. The greatest part of the time spent on administration, approximately 80%, is spent updating patients' charts, an activity that general practitioners would also carry out if there were no legal requirement to do so. General practitioners indicated that they would still carry out at least 75% of their administrative activities, even if they were not required by legislation and regulation (Bex et al 2008). This means that general practitioners consider most of their administrative tasks necessary for running a general practice. General practitioners indicated that the greatest sticking points are the expense forms they have to send to insurance companies. For example, insurance companies use different formats and patients' details are not always recognized by the insurers (system problems).

#### *Medical specialists*

Medical specialists spend approximately 20% of their working hours on administration. This works out at approximately 2 hours per working day. Of these 2 hours, approximately 24 minutes are spent on updating patients' charts (Genet 2007). Most of the specialists in this study indicated that there was generally no question of administrative "nuisance." Despite the fact that some specialists said the volume of administration has increased and they therefore have to work longer, they apparently still find the 20% acceptable. The study also shows that the majority of medical specialists do not think administration is done at the expense of patients. The experienced increase in administra-

tive burdens has mainly been related to the number of administrative tasks – the diagnosis-related treatment system and the increasing demand for authorizations.

#### Nurses

Nurses at hospitals spend approximately 21% (1 hour and 44 minutes) of their working hours on administrative activities. Of this time, 48 minutes are spent updating patients' charts (Wardenaar 2007). Nurses at hospitals indicated that there is no question of an excessive administrative burden.<sup>9</sup> According to the professionals themselves, hardly any of the administrative activities could be eliminated. An important source of annoyance is the double, and manual, recording of details.

These examples create the impression that the actual pressure of administrative burdens for/of professionals is not that bad. Yet it would be simplistic to reach such a conclusion. After all, the above examples also show that professionals do not so much mind the fact that they have to carry out administrative activities as how they have to do them. This is confirmed by research that has studied the burdens experienced by professionals. We discuss two examples from research initiated by the Ministry for Youth and Families and by the Ministry for Health, Welfare and Sport.

#### Youth "chain"

Measurements by Van Bostelen et al (2008) show that, from the perspective of professionals who work in youth welfare services, there are several conspicuous "points of experienced administrative burdens." If the "chain" in youth welfare services does not work properly, extra links are added. Information and technology (ICT)-based recording programs are often not user-friendly. New working methods mean increased recording requirements. Talks and contacts must be recorded for so-called "product registration" and different accountability requirements result in extra work. The researchers conclude that it is not so much the rules themselves that cause the pressure, but that this "has far more to do with the way all parties involved deal with the rules." The organization of this sector is, thus, the core question. We are dealing here with "a sector that is mainly focused on covering risks as a result of increasing accountability requirements arising from political and social pressure."

#### Long-term care professionals

PricewaterhouseCoopers (2006) carried out a study of the burdens experienced by providers of long-term care, which is financed from the collective health insurance fund, the Algemene Wet Bijzondere Ziektekosten (the General law on Exceptional Health care Costs, AWBZ). That study focused on burdens experienced, although these

burdens were exposed subtly. First, the researchers tried to establish the source of the burdens – whether it mainly concerned government regulations or other factors. Second, the researchers tried to understand what the source of the experience was – whether the “irritations” existed in isolation or not. That led to several relevant conclusions. Many irritations appear to be caused not so much by regulation as by the way the rules are implemented – too many changes at once. It also appeared that irritations are reinforced because the meaning of rules is not always clear, and because of other structural factors. Irritations are exacerbated by the “care system,” the division of tasks (who has responsibility for what) and the way care organizations work.

### Explanations for (experienced) burdens

The above studies make clear not only that there is no one-to-one correspondence between actual and experienced burdens. What appears to be important is the nature of the burdens experienced, especially which burdens “are part of the work” and which are not. Moreover, it appears that it is not so much the burdens themselves that are decisive but the way the burdens are experienced, partly in light of how a sector is organized. When trying to understand differences between spent time (*which* burdens) and experienced pressure (*how* the burdens are experienced), we also need to explore *why* burdens are experienced. How can we explain the fact that there are differences between the time an act takes and the way it is experienced more precisely? How can we explain the fact that the volume of burdens varies for different professional groups? Partly in view of the results of studies referred to earlier,<sup>10</sup> the following partial explanations come to the fore.

- 1 The support from within an organization for carrying out administrative activities varies.
- 2 The extent to which an organization – including its managers – explains the purpose of and need for administrative activities varies.
- 3 The intrusiveness of administrative burdens on professionals varies.
- 4 The extent to which professionals experience administrative activities as a part of their perception of their tasks varies.
- 5 The opportunities for professionals to defend themselves against administrative burdens vary.

*The support from within an organization for carrying out administrative activities varies.*

The study of the administrative burdens of nurses referred to earlier (Sterrenburg et al 2008) shows that there are considerable differences among hospitals in the number of administrative acts nurses must perform. This is largely determined by how hospitals

fulfill the legislative requirements concerning quality contained in the “Kwaliteitswet Zorginstellingen.” Also, how an organization shapes and supports the work of professionals matters<sup>11</sup> – via administrative support (administrative employees take over the work), and digital support (when administrative processes are computerized, making them seem less oppressive and time consuming).

Thus, in police forces that have administrative employees to do some of the administrative tasks, such as writing daily reports or summaries, local police officers experience fewer administrative burdens than police officers who are responsible for recording all the information themselves. The management of the police force in Rotterdam-Rijnmond took measures at the beginning of 2008 to address this issue. There are now “work distributors” who do some of the paperwork. Trials are also taking place with a “neighborhood office” that records residents’ telephone calls. The expectation is that local police officers will then have more time for their primary tasks – surveillance and making contact with neighborhood residents.

Besides this, digital support has considerable influence on how administrative burdens are experienced. A hospital nurse who has to manually update a patient’s chart with daily summaries, overviews of medicines used, test results, etc., experiences more irritation and time pressure than a nurse who updates an electronic patient chart.

*The extent to which an organization – including its managers – explains the purpose of and need for administrative activities varies.*

Professionals’ experience of administrative burdens is closely related to whether it is clear why registration and monitoring are necessary. If it is unclear, an administrative act – even if it takes a relatively short time – is experienced as a (considerable) burden. Requirements are “oppressive” because time must be spent on administrative activities about which the professionals do not know (a) where the information is going, (b) what is done with the information and (c) why the administrative act must be done by the professional himself. The solution is partly to provide better support (see above), but the experience of burdens also partly depends on whether the organization (in particular, the managers) can explain the need for the requirements. That is not easy, because an organization and especially the managers themselves also often suffer from the pressure of these burdens.<sup>12</sup>

Yet managers can be selective and make burdens more meaningful by confronting professionals with only those particular requirements that are closely related to their daily work. They should not unthinkingly communicate everything that comes from outside. It is not necessary to confront professionals with all sorts of quality models and indicators to improve services. Instead, they should focus on the “real work” as a basis for improving the quality of services. They are also communicative and start discussions with professionals in order to ascertain how and to what extent quality can be improved. Words like “duration” can be used in a purely technical sense to achieve more “efficien-

cy.” They can also be used more meaningfully by connecting them with how issues, dossiers and clients are dealt with, and with the question of whether smarter (professional) methods might speed things up. Communication also means that managers are clear about what happens with possible registrations.

*The intrusiveness of administrative burdens on professionals varies.*

The work of professionals in various professions differs not only as far as the actual work and its associated “natural” burdens is concerned but also in terms of the influences surrounding the work. In some cases the work is surrounded by risks and liability, and controversies lead to additional “audits” and “accountability.” Sensitive court mistakes publicized in various media as “faults,” “errors,” and “failures,” lead to increased administrative activities for professionals like detectives and public prosecutors. Problems in youth welfare services, symbolized by media-prone cases of child abuse and child murder, have led to more emphasis on administrative records in youth welfare services, if for no other reason than to limit risk.<sup>13</sup> Administrative burdens are thus closely related to wanting to be able to show after the event, by administrative means, that everything had been done to prevent an incident occurring. That can clearly influence upfront work to prevent new incidents. Administrative activities reduce a professional’s or an organization’s risk of liability. That explains why the pressure is not so much about records but about the uncertainties that surround the work done by front-line employees. Possible accountability is not “actual” but “potential.”<sup>14</sup> A front-line employee – or his organization – does not have to experience an incident and be held liable for it, but that could suddenly happen.

*The extent to which professionals experience administrative activities as a part of their perception of their tasks varies.*

The extent to which professionals experience administrative activities as burdensome, oppressive and an erosion of their professional pride is largely related to the extent to which they consider administrative burdens to be part of their work. From the study referred to earlier (Bex et al 2008), it appears that general practitioners would still do 75% of their administrative tasks, even if they were not mandatory. A general practitioner’s work is eased by clear, up-to-date patient dossiers, so he would keep them up to date, even if this were not a legal requirement. The same is true for care professionals in a rest home. They, too, would not consider it an option to dispense with record keeping by means of a patient dossier. After all, this is included in their primary tasks. It is different when professionals have to carry out activities that are removed from their primary tasks. Examples of this are the teacher who has to coordinate completing forms for the school photographer, the local police officer who has to record his work activities in a time registration system, the fire brigade commander who has to complete an evalua-



tion form after responding to an emergency, or the general practitioner who has to sort out contracts with insurance companies.

Whether professionals see such administrative activities as primary or secondary will partly influence whether they see them as “being part of the job” or as “burdens.” Dealing with scarce time or capacity on the ground has traditionally been related to the organization, but perhaps it is also increasingly related to the professional or public sector employee himself. For example, a “new style” judge will make sure that he uses his court time as optimally as possible. However, administrative activities will continue to be experienced as burdens if front-line employees have absolutely no input about their own time, as is the case in the home care sector.

*The opportunities for professionals to defend themselves against administrative burdens vary.*

This last point brings us to the final part of the explanation for the problems experienced. Although in recent years professionals have mainly been portrayed as “victims,”<sup>15</sup> it is not always correct to say that professionals lack power and influence, especially in the more traditional professions. For example, medical specialists have such powerful professional organizations and positions in hospitals that reforms generally present fewer difficulties to them than to nurses (including nurses in their own hospitals) and other professionals.<sup>16</sup> Nurses are less autonomous. This is true, too, of district nurses, social workers and youth workers, professionals who all depend on other bodies, including those that establish “indicators.”<sup>17</sup> Other professionals are also dependent on others but are able to work more “freely,” although not as freely as doctors. Local police officers on the street, for example, experience less organizational pressure,<sup>18</sup> but their employment conditions, especially salaries, will in turn lead to more “oppressiveness” than is the case with doctors. The same can be said of teachers, who also increasingly complain about an increase in scale.

This all means that the experience of burdens varies, but also that dealing with experienced administrative burdens depends on professionals themselves – and on their professional groups. When professionals are made more capable of defending themselves, they will have more opportunities to “do something about burdens.” In this sense, too, the pressure of burdens is not symbolic of an inevitable situation but of the feeling that “all sorts of things” are thrown at professionals and that they are not given a chance to influence these matters. When this process is driven by incidents (see above), it is even more important for professionals to be given the opportunity to resist such outside pressure.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The above does not lead to a clear conclusion, either in the sense that “administrative burdens must be fought in order to free professionals” or in the sense that “administrative burdens are part of the deal and professionals should not complain.” Instead, the conclusion is that administrative burdens exist and they are a problem in several ways. However, the experience of burdens and the pressure of burdens are not so much related to the provision of services but rather to all the circumstances that are wrong with the provision of services. Incidents, uncertainties, interdependencies, the struggle to be heard – these things explain why many professionals experience burdens. This does not mean that administrative burdens must be eliminated to solve the problem. It means that several essential questions concerning the provision of services must be dealt with differently. We reach the following conclusions.

Our first conclusion is that administrative burdens exist, but that a clear distinction must be made between burdens that are by nature part of the work, such as those involving primary tasks like keeping records, and burdens of organizing the work that are often seen as secondary tasks, such as keeping a record of how much time is spent doing the work. A clear distinction must also be made between the time that is spent on administrative activities and how they are experienced. In addition, it must be made clear who is imposing the burdens – government, third parties, or the profession itself. This all means that professionals’ ideas about burdens are not in themselves the standard.

Of course one must ask, “What burdens do professionals experience?” But the search for solutions must also include these questions: How much time do professionals spend on administration and registration? Is it mainly a question of primary and/or secondary administration? Where do the requirements originate? Which administrative acts are burdens for them?

Then one sees considerable differences between various professions. In many cases, neither the time spent nor the number of burdens experienced is excessive (police officers, detectives, general practitioners). In other cases, the time spent is not excessive but more burdens are experienced (teachers). In yet other cases, there are indications that a considerable amount of time is spent and that many burdens are experienced (home care, youth welfare services).

The second conclusion is that comparable burdens and experiences cannot be separated from the circumstances surrounding professions. The question is also: Which burdens are experienced and *why*? The differences cannot so much be traced back to the work of the professionals but rather to all sorts of influences surrounding the work. The above actually shows three important circumstances that determine whether, and to what extent, professionals feel oppressed:

- 1 To what extent is professional work supported by the organization?
- 2 To what extent are administrative burdens meaningful?
- 3 To what extent can the professional influence the work himself?

Many irritations are primarily related to the way administrative tasks are carried out. Examples of things that cause annoyance are: Too many tasks still being done manually, filling in the same details over and over. This is a matter of inadequate support.

The presence or absence of irritations can also be related to the feeling of meaningfulness: Does the professional think the administrative tasks are a useful, indispensable part of the “real” work? General practitioners, for example, indicate that they see few possibilities for eliminating administrative burdens. They consider administration a necessary part of their work and practice. In addition, the experience of burdens is closely related to the extent to which the professional’s work is dependent on others and on influences that cannot easily be controlled, such as incidents.

The third conclusion is that “solutions” for the supposed problems are not easy to find, because the problems are not so much about the number of rules, acts or requirements, or the size of the bureaucracy. “Fewer rules” or “less bureaucracy,” for example, do not automatically mean that professionals experience fewer burdens. That is particularly the case when residual rules and standards have little meaning or when professionals have the feeling that they have no input. In other words, solutions will concern qualitative rather than quantitative dimensions of work

Such solutions are not easy to realize. It is easiest to make recommendations regarding inadequate support. Better support removes irritations, so computerize the administrative tasks and ensure that details only have to be entered once.

Solutions are less clear for the feeling that administrative acts have little meaning, although managers and perhaps professional groups can also take action. It is considerably more difficult when service providers serve large groups of clients and have to record numbers for an inspectorate.

It is even more difficult to solve professionals’ feeling that they have little say about their work. However, professionals themselves can perhaps ensure that they are more able to defend themselves, and politicians and executives can take liabilities and risks into account more consciously when “designing” implementation, for example, when establishing protocols or “chains” in youth welfare services. Registration is not so bad, but it is if you do it for others who use the registrations to dominate your work. Those are the real burdens of administrative loads.

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# The autonomy of professionals in public service<sup>1</sup>

Peter Hupe

*Over the past years the self-awareness of individuals employed in the (semi-) public sector seems to have strongly increased. Traditionally, many of them were seen, at best, as semiprofessionals, rather than as professionals. But teachers and others consider themselves to be practicing a profession; as such, they demand more latitude. The argument in this chapter explores several key concepts of the social-political debate, such as “professional,” “autonomy,” “regulatory burden” and “accountability.” The analysis reveals unexpected insights, including, paradoxically perhaps, that the growing burden of regulation in the (semi-) public sector may in fact enlarge the professional’s room for action.*

## **1 Introduction**

Iris is a teacher at a public primary school in an old district of a major city. She is 29 and highly motivated to teach children from the school’s populous neighborhood. This is also why she started working right away with a new curricular program. This program, developed on the basis of an innovative didactic concept, is recommended by the primary school teachers’ association of which Iris is a member. The board of her school formulated the objective of having more of its pupils move on to a mid-level high school. Recently, the Ministry of Education once again stressed the importance of school achievements for children from so-called disadvantaged neighborhoods. Because the children in her class come from different ethnic backgrounds, Iris devotes much time to language skills. Parents certainly expect Iris and her colleagues to perform well, but at the same time they are wary of too much school intervention in how their children are raised.

For some time now professionals in the public and semipublic sector have been calling attention to their workload. Quite a few teachers, nurses, police officers and others employed by the government or semipublic organizations feel that their workload has increased significantly. Increasingly, they have resisted this development by voicing their concern in public. Their job pressure has been increased particularly by tasks they interpret as not really belonging to their job description, such as task-related paperwork. In the Dutch public domain, attention has been called to this problem through publica-

tions on professional discontent such as *Beroepszeer* (Van den Brink et al, eds., 2005) and the working conference on “public professional pride” (*Publieke Beroepstrots*), held on October 1, 2008. This attention addresses the importance of the work these professionals perform for the sake of the common good.

Over the past years, lowering the burden of regulations and reducing paperwork has explicitly become part of governmental policy. In the project on “reduction of the administrative burden for professionals in the public sector,” the Dutch Ministry of Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations played a central role. This shows that the issue of *professionals in public service* has entered not only the social and political agenda, but also the public policy agenda. The ministry’s project is geared towards making the work of professionals in the (semi-) public sector “noticeably more attractive” within several years. The projected effects listed include “more effective and efficient (semi-) public organizations, better employee satisfaction, better services and resolution of specific problems associated with the job market” ([www.mijnechtewerk.nl](http://www.mijnechtewerk.nl)).

Professionals want more room to perform their actual tasks properly. The work of teachers, nurses, and police officers should pivot on their actual tasks, which are, respectively, teaching, nursing, being on patrol. To them, the content of the work constitutes a major incentive to perform public service (Steijn 2006; Perry and Hondeghe eds., 2008). They demand the latitude needed to perform their jobs, without having to comply with all kinds of regulatory standards and monitoring. The Dutch government supports this claim and designs policies accordingly.

Against this backdrop, this chapter concentrates on the room for action available to professionals in the (semi-) public sector and on how they deal with this room. This issue will be addressed on the basis of theoretical insights from the field of *street-level bureaucracy* and interrelated views from public administration. The focus will be on elucidation of relevant concepts, exploration of the variety of dimensions, identification of relevant factors and mechanisms, as well as on showing how these mechanisms operate. Our analysis will be illustrated by examples from practice.

Below we will first address the issue of the available room for action. As it turns out, the notion of “professionals in public service” refers to a substantial variety of professions, kinds of organizations and working conditions, as well as to specific individualized features. What are the similarities, what are the differences? Answers to that are in our second section. Next, in the third section we will consider more closely what professional autonomy looks like in practice. Individuals who work in public organizations have to deal with regulations coming from various sources, while they have to account for their performance in various ways. In this section the story of schoolteacher Iris will also be addressed in more detail. The large number of regulations seems to diminish the room for action of professionals. To find out whether this is an inevitable effect, we will consider how professionals deal with their room for action in the fourth section. Finally, some conclusions will be presented to round off the argument.

## 2 Professionals in public service: dimensions of diversity

### *Institutionalization*

To make more solid claims on how professionals in the (semi-) public sector deal with the latitude they have to perform their jobs, it seems sensible first to define whom we are talking about. In the Netherlands, for example, it is only recently that teachers, nurses, and police officers are seen as “professionals.” Of course, new terms for partly new professions are introduced all the time. For example, “job coach” and “family coach” serve as new names for, respectively, welfare worker and social worker, but they are also indicative of ongoing differentiation of tasks among professions. This differentiation reflects changes in institutionalized policy developments. Job coaches, for one, no longer administer welfare benefits only; they also should actively stimulate recipients to find a new job. The notion of “family coach” underscores the ever larger role of attention to youth and family affairs within social work. Until recently, the individuals employed in this public service sector would be called “civil servant” or “public official,” rather than professional. It is relevant, therefore, to consider this distinction more closely.

One of the classical questions in sociology is what defines a profession. The literature elaborates a variety of characteristics, such as the development of specific knowledge applied with authority. Because invariably ethical standards are at stake, including the possibility of sanctions, one may even speak of distinct professional cultures (Greenwood 1957; Johnson 1972; Freidson 1986). This set of standards consists of particular qualities tied to a specific profession and how society approaches that profession. As such, society allows for self-regulation (cf. sanctions) and it accepts the authoritative exercise of a specific profession with a large degree of distinctiveness. Socially, this involves aspects of exercising power. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe a profession as a practice in which those who perform the work have managed to define its conditions and methods. The specific knowledge and competencies developed constitute its basis, and also legitimize professional autonomy.

The specific features of professions and the ways in which society accepts their relative autonomy (*institutionalization*) have implications for how specific professionals active within some context (*organization and job conditions*) perform their job (*individual traits*.) Table 1 provides an overview of the three categories of dimensions of diversity (indicated here in italics.)

Traditional professions are, for example, lawyers, notaries, and architects. In addition, physicians have always considered themselves classical professionals as well. Their professional associations have a rich tradition. The sheer existence of medical disciplinary rules suggests the high level of institutionalization of the medical profession and its many specializations, while it also underscores that physicians in their contact with patients will let themselves be guided primarily by the standards of their field. Protocols



Table 1 Dimensions of professional diversity

Level	Category	Dimensions
<b>Profession</b>	<i>Institutionalization</i>	Nature of profession Content of profession Social recognition Self-regulation
<b>Organization</b>	<i>Organization and job conditions</i>	Political-administrative layer Policy formation/implementation Organization structure Role ICT in primary process Supervisory/subordinate position
<b>Professional</b>	<i>Individual traits</i>	Length and nature of training Habitus Job experience Gender Age Character traits

for treatment are part of everyday professional practice. They will be accepted and applied to the extent they are experienced as originating in their own practice and that of fellow-physicians.

Physicians are just one of many professional groups that complain about “bureaucracy.” Meanwhile the Dutch government itself has called upon citizens to report regulations deemed superfluous. Commonly, public officials are held responsible for “superfluous” rules. But like professionals in a category, groups of public officials are at least as heterogeneous – they come in all shapes and sizes. Based on the nature of activities, Van der Meer and Roborgh (1993) distinguish between managerial public officials and public officials who implement policies. The first category can be subdivided into policy officials and administrative officials, such as those employed in finance departments, human resources and the like. Officials who implement policies work, for instance, with municipal social services departments. It is possible to divide both managerial officials and officials who implement policies into supervisors and subordinates. For a long time, those active in teaching, nursing, and care-providing had civil servant status. In terms of collective labor agreements, they were seen as so-called “trend followers.” Since the 1929 Civil Servant Act (*Ambtenarenwet*), however, from a juridical angle the concept of civil servant has increasingly been narrowed. The Dutch State Service (*Rijksdienst*) is divided into various sectors, each basically having its own labor agreements, which has resulted in substantial diversity. Practitioners of the so-called “autonomous”

professions, such as medical specialists, lawyers, notaries and architects, often perform their work in the context of a partnership or other private form of organization. At any given time, they have to deal with patients and clients, colleagues active in the same field and government policies. The autonomy provided by their profession, then, is specifically embedded and therefore only relative. Even autonomous professionals are faced with regulations imposed from outside their professions.

Simultaneously, public officials also perform specific professional tasks. Those with the Police Department do not automatically become experienced and valued police officers. Policy advisors working at ministries need quite some time to grow familiar with the specific practice of political-administrative advising in their field. It is evident that there are differences in the degree of institutionalization. The profession of physician is not only much older than that of, say, job coach, but the knowledge base of both professions differs, and, thus, the length and standards of the training needed to perform the jobs differs, too. In relation to traditional professions such as physicians, in sociology the jobs of teachers, nurses, and police officers are designated as semi-professions (Etzioni 1969). In the performance of daily tasks, however, this distinction appears to be of minor significance. After all, many who perform some kind of work will see themselves as professionals. They were trained in some particular field, and this has provided them with the competency to exercise a specific occupation. It is a matter of professional honor to them to perform their work as effectively as possible. Their professional skills will continue to improve through practice and experience (Sennett 2008). Driven by the content of their field, they practice a form of “self-binding” – they are open to reflecting on their work and organizing their accountability. In fact, this feature perhaps distinguishes them most from non-professionals.

It is instructive to compare those who work in public service (defined broadly) in terms of the professional level at which they perform their tasks. Conversely, individual members of one of the traditional autonomous professions may shirk accountability or be mainly extrinsically motivated. Inasmuch as the contrast between public officials and professionals refers to differences in motivation, work ethic, and competence, the contrast is ideological and largely involves normative claims. At the same time, this observation justifies designating teachers, nurses, and police officers as “professionals in public service.” They have several traits in common. That they are professionals means, firstly, that they practice a specific job for which they received specific training and, secondly, that they have organized accountability for the work they do. That they are “in public service” indicates, thirdly, that they perform their job within an organization that is part of government, defined broadly. Given this general description, each time it is necessary to determine definitively the variable situations in which these traits can be identified. Within the same profession one should consider in particular the legal position and terms of employment. In the Dutch context, a general practitioner, for instance, is generally an autonomously working, self-employed professional, while his

colleague working as a medical examiner is employed by a social services department and can be called a professional in public service.

The common denominator of “professionals in public service,” then, refers to a varied group with more dimensions than job content (see Table 1.) Below we will explore further the dimensions of professional diversity at the levels of both the organization and the individual.

#### *Organization and job conditions*

If the job conditions under which professionals in public service perform their work vary, the kind of organization and particular character of these job conditions are bound to influence their work. At the different political-administrative layers within a country, as well as at the supranational level (cf. the European Union), one may distinguish between organizations that formulate policies and organizations that implement them. However, bureaucratic layers and organizational tasks do not automatically coincide. For example, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is clearly an organization geared to implementation at the national layer; in the Netherlands it is a deconcentrated government agency. Conversely, the social services department is part of local government, to whom Dutch legislators gave a certain degree of co-responsibility for policy formation in the area of local social policy (for an alternative case see Ringeling 1978.)

Within particular organizations, differences in hierarchical position (subordinate/supervisory) apply, but also differences between policy or staff employees and employees who implement policies or those who work directly with clients/patients. Wilson (1989) offers a typology based on the tasks that give government agencies their *raison d'être*. Not every government agency is the same; for example, the visibility of their activities and results diverge. Based on these two dimensions, Wilson has distinguished four types. In *production agencies*, both the activities and their results are visible. An example is the IRS. The activities in *procedural agencies*, such as the army in peacetime or a youth detention center, are visible to some extent, but their results are hardly tangible. In an army at war, however, the activities are less visible but the results are quite tangible – *craft agency*. Wilson also refers to the Forest Rangers as such an organization. In his view, the work performed by teachers, police officers and social workers is less visible, as are its results. Teaching, street surveillance and social work have an interaction-geared orientation in common – *coping agency*.

As regards this last type it should be added that Wilson's book dates from before the introduction of New Public Management (NPM). This means that all sorts of forms of output assessment introduced since then in the public sector remain unconsidered. But Wilson's preface to the 2000 edition of his study is devoted to NPM, and he ends it by claiming that basically things did not change much. It is possible to criticize Wilson's typology for other reasons, for instance that he is not explicit enough about the perspective from which visibility is determined. His typology does underscore, however, the em-

pirical diversity of agencies and organizations in charge of implementing government policies. Just as the contrast of public official versus professional mainly involves a normative claim, one systematically needs to specify the place where professionals in public service perform their work.

A classification of government agencies which highlights the effect of permanent innovative office technology is provided by Bovens and Zouridis (2002). They distinguish between traditional *street-level bureaucracy*, *screen-level bureaucracy* and *system-level bureaucracy*. The first type pertains to Lipsky's (1980) more or less ideal-typical description of a bureaucracy that is functioning at the basis of government. It is also Wilson's *coping agency*. One can view police departments, schools, and, to some degree, hospitals, as examples of this "contact bureaucracy." Contact, as in direct interaction with individual citizens, in divergent roles, constitutes the *raison d'être* for this type of organization. The primary process, such as patient care in hospitals, means that paperwork in such organizations is an offshoot of what is regarded as main task.

In contrast, paperwork is center-stage in the two types added by Bovens and Zouridis. Permanent office automation has created a situation in which, for instance, the processing of income tax returns by the IRS no longer requires specific human intervention in most cases. In such a *system-level bureaucracy*, the input of public officials is limited to designing software with information experts. Subsequently, the system automatically does the processing. *Screen-level bureaucracy* is in between these types. Although the influence of electronic communication is large, the degree of office automation permits case-by-case processing.

The continuous introduction of innovative office technology is likely to have a basic influence on the job of those who work with that technology. Sets of tasks and job descriptions will be articulated differently. In what measure this brings about de-professionalization – comparatively well-educated employees merely fill in boxes that appear on a screen – is an empirical question. The answers to this question will presumably follow the lines of the diversity of organizations and job conditions.

#### *Individual traits*

Since Weber's description of the ideal-type of bureaucracy, the application of rules, without respect to persons, can be seen as the cornerstone of this modern form of organization. From that angle, Zuurmond (1994) points to the rise of the "infocracy," in which automated administrative decisions preclude chances of favoritism, arbitrariness and discrimination. Still, variations in forms of organization and job conditions appear to continue to persist. Through information technology, the effect of the human element within government organizations has perhaps become less visible to society and to individual citizens, but it will always be a factor. This applies not only to direct interaction with pupils in school, patients in hospital, or citizens in the street, but also to housing corporation employees behind their computer screens and to IRS software de-

sign. It makes a difference in how employees act. Whether they are subordinate or supervisory – or non-, semi- or fully professional – is irrelevant to how they weigh the pros and cons of an issue and arrive at particular decisions.

In this section we addressed differences in the degree of institutionalization of professions, as well as in types of organizations and job conditions. A third category of dimensions of diversity pertains to individual traits (see Table 1, p. 121.) First, it is to be expected that the nature of a profession affects the performance of individual professionals in public service. Relevant factors here are the extent to which a profession is institutionalized and the nature of the values it embodies. For example, the so-called medical habitus is based on the established position of the medical profession, whereby social prestige and individual authority mutually reinforce each other (Witman 2008). The prevalence of issues of life and death in medicine is certainly a factor.

The length and character of the training needed for particular work depends in part on the nature of a profession. Admission requirements for the different (semi-) professions tend to vary. Most of the traditional professions require several years of academic training and are geared to conveying knowledge as well as professional skills. Above all, this training aims at socializing students and turning them into fellow professionals. Once they have entered professional practice, regular refresher courses are standard.

Besides training, job experience is also an individual trait. Both the duration of the period worked and the degree of experience in a position influence how people do their work, in particular professionals in public service. The longer they hold a specific job, the more exposure they are likely to have to successive policy changes. This mere fact forces them to take a position based on their professional habitus. After the introduction of new legislation and subsequent reforms in education, high school teachers cannot permit themselves to adopt an indifferent attitude with respect to new elements of their task.

A third category involves the strictly person-bound traits. Insights from psychology and neurobiology suggest that gender potentially has influence on, for instance, judgment. However, there is little knowledge as of yet on whether this is true in practice and what it exactly means for separate categories of professionals in public service. Similarly, there are hardly any generally accepted insights on the effect of age and certain character traits on the performance of professionals, which is why biases and unsubstantiated representations prevail for the time being.

By exploring the diversity of dimensions, we have mapped the structural context in which professionals in public service perform their work. Before addressing relevant mechanisms in Section 4, we first need to discuss this context in terms of accountability. What does the autonomy of professionals in public service look like in practice?

### 3 Autonomy and accountability

#### *The story of Iris, schoolteacher*

In the previous section we explored the meaning of professionals in public service. Next it is possible to say more about their professional room for action. In the absence of space to do this in a comprehensive manner with respect to the empirical diversity sketched, it is instructive to zoom in on a specific case. This chapter started out with the story of a schoolteacher named Iris. Though fictitious, this story brings into view the circumstances in which she and her colleagues perform their tasks (and this probably applies in a similar fashion to other professionals in the public and semi-public sectors). Based on the above sketch, several observations can be made.

First, we see a person, fairly highly educated, who is active in a specific profession. It is a matter of professional honor to Iris to perform well. Whether she is called educator, instructor, or “simply” teacher, and irrespective of her wage level, she has consciously chosen this job and also approaches it as a profession. Second, it should be observed that teaching involves more than simply delivering one lesson after another. Iris has to meet many expectations simultaneously. She carefully considers how to, more or less, satisfy the various interested parties. Pupils, their parents, colleagues, her school’s leadership – all put demands on her performance. In addition, at a more removed level, there is also the school board and the education ministry. Similarly, the professional association of which she is a member expects her to teach in a certain way. If the authority of teachers formerly went unquestioned and was accepted by pupils and parents alike, today teachers have to reckon with a range of social influences. The sources of influence seem to have increased in both number and intensity (assertive parents.) Faced with a multitude of expectations from different corners, which may conflict with each other, Iris tries to make the most of it. Regardless of the social status of her field, after all, she considers herself a professional.

The third observation pertains to how Iris is being “managed.” As a primary school teacher, the school’s director is her immediate boss. In the classroom she is in charge, of course, in the sense that only she is in contact with her pupils when teaching language, math and other fields. Still, she feels the pressure of the school board, as internalized by the school director, to make sure that more pupils will be able to move on to more advanced high schools. Conversely, the school director’s only option is to pass on the board’s desires to the teachers. The most direct form of management intervention, it seems, is to call on the teacher to account for the term results of the pupils in her class.

The story of Iris and the interrelated observations clarify that she has to cope with particular forces from different sides. Individually, each of them tries to limit her room for action differently. The question is what this means for the room as experienced and used by Iris. To address this question, first the forces involved need to be explored in more detail.

*Room for action and professional accountability*

Schoolteacher Iris considers herself to be a professional. She wants to teach well. At the same time she is – regardless of her specific legal position – in public service. Furthermore, Iris is receptive to the expectations of society, parents and others. The forces that influence her performance from various sides include the profession to which she belongs, legislation and policies, management targets and society. While the term “regulation” is commonly associated with government and bureaucracy, it may also be conceived more broadly as a prescription for action, coming from identifiable sources that each reflect a particular accountability. In her work, Iris has to deal with rules that come from a diversity of sources, at different levels of aggregation. As to categories of sources, one can distinguish a professional, political-administrative and participatory regime of public accountability, as represented in Table 2 (Hupe and Hill 2007).

Table 2 Typology of Public Accountability

Accountability Regime			
	<b>Professional accountability</b>	<b>Political-administrative accountability</b>	<b>Participatory accountability</b>
Level	vis-à-vis:	vis-à-vis:	vis-à-vis:
<b>Profession</b>	Professional association	Representative bodies Legal courts Inspectorates Other regulatory bodies	National associations of parents, patients, etc. Communication media National interest groups
<b>Organization</b>	Peers	Representative bodies Professional agencies Local authorities	Parent councils, etc. Local news media Local associations
<b>Professional</b>	Colleagues (inside and outside own profession)	Supervisors Employees Legal subjects Pupils, patients, etc.	Parents, patients, etc. Voters Citizens

Source: Based on Hupe and Hill 2007, 289. See also Hupe 2007, 100.

As regards professional accountability, several groups serve as accountability actors, notably immediate colleagues, colleagues at other schools, and fellow teachers from professional associations. Account is also given in daily interactions with professionals from other disciplines, such as, in Iris’s case, the neighborhood police officer. In this way, in dealing with her room for action, Iris practices so-called “self-binding.” As indicated

above, the formal arrangement of professional self-reflection and the pursuit of accountability distinguish the professional from the non-professional. Unlike Iris, the non-professional expects additional instructions, based on a vertical arrangement of authority.

#### *Room for action and political-administrative accountability*

Unlike independent or self-employed professionals, professionals in public service always, if not primarily, have to deal with political-administrative accountability as well. Their professional orientation may be largely horizontal, but in public service they, by definition, perform their work within a hierarchical structure. Even if in their own perception they practice a specific profession for which they were trained, legislators and ministries' policymakers view them as actors who implement particular policies (Hill and Hupe 2009). In the current practice of governance, the introduction of New Public Management also means that achievements are measured; aside from monitoring, all sorts of forms of contract management are visible (Noordegraaf 2004; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). Accordingly, political-administrative accountability covers three variants: constitutional and administrative accountability as regards the law, political accountability regarding issues of content (policy), managerial accountability regarding (meta) objectives for the specific mode of public service involved.

Essentially, *discretion* refers to room for action allowed in a relationship between the actor who sets rules and the one who applies them. Discretion refers to a set of rules coming from a more or less formalized accountability relation vis-à-vis the actor who sets the rules. Thus understood, rules may prescribe, but cannot determine action in practice. The text of a recipe in a cookbook allows a cook specific room for action, as it were – without being able to *enforce* the actions required in the kitchen.

If *discretion* is linked to rules, *autonomy*, in contrast, is a quality of actors. As a concept, autonomy does not so much refer to the room for action allowed to a person or organization, but to the actual latitude available. Individuals deal with such latitude by applying rules that come from more than one source. Because of the diversity of sources of rules, actors have more than one “accountability forum” (Meijer and Bovens 2005). This means that professionals do not only make decisions constantly about *how* rules should be applied, but they also assess *which* rules coming from which source to apply in a given situation.

Commonly the concept of autonomy is linked with the professional, while discretion belongs to the application of laws and regulation by civil servants (Freidson 1970). Unlike the concept of discretionary authority, perhaps, the notion of autonomy generally evokes positive associations. As regards professionals in public service, both concepts are relevant. After all, such (semi-) professionals practice not only a particular trade, but, working in (semi-) public organizations, they are in fact *street-level bureaucrats* as well (Lipsky 1980).



### *Room for action and participatory accountability*

The third category of sources of protocols for professionals in public service is the rules expressed and experienced in their relation to society (*participatory accountability*.) Citizens appear before a teacher as individual pupils or parents, but also in the more collective guise of, for instance, a parents' council. *Vis-à-vis* other professions, citizens perform the role of client (cf. welfare worker), patient (physician and nurse), legal subject (police officer) or similar roles. These are performed at different levels of aggregation, namely at the level of individual contact, at that of individual organizations (cf. a clients council or a municipal welfare department) and at that of the system (for instance, patients associations of those who suffer from a specific disease.)

In sum, there is multifarious diversity when it comes to professionals in public service. In Section 2 we saw that the (semi-) public sector features a structural diversity of professions, of kinds of organizations and job conditions, as well as of individual traits of professionals. Furthermore, in the accountability context there is also a diversity of rules, sources of rules and accountability forums. Each of the types of accountability identified is called for and provided at more than one place. Sources of rules originate at different levels of aggregation, namely that of system, organization and individual. It is possible, then, to extend the overview provided above. For example, at the level of individuals, the personal traits of professionals may well function as a source of rules, which partly determines their individually different actions. Above we mentioned, among other things, the nature and duration of one's education, length of service and experience and the profession's habitus. Professionals may even derive rules for action from their own consciences. They may pertain to, for instance, collegiality (professional accountability), the principle of fair play in interpreting law (political-administrative accountability) or restraint in dealing with tax payers' money (*participatory accountability*.)

## **4 Workfloor mechanisms**

### *Dealing with room for action*

In the above, the notion of "room for action" was mentioned several times. This concept refers to the room actors have available and use to do their jobs – often called autonomy, as a neutral term. This room can be distinguished from the room allowed to them by a separate set of rules, often called discretion or discretionary authority. The dealing with room for action refers to how actors relate to the diversity of rules, coming from a variety of sources, which they are supposed to apply. The actual room actors have cannot be determined from a specific source of rules; it takes shape only by and in their performance. This implies that the room available to actors coincides with the actual, variously determined, room taken by them. Methodologically the task is to develop a standard that

makes it possible to express the relationship between the room for action *allowed* by some source of regulation (“discretion”) and, given the many different regulatory sources, the actual room for action *taken* by an actor (“autonomy”). This would make it possible, in case of the same accumulation of room allowed, to explain variation in performance. From a theoretical angle it seems possible – although not easy – to measure the room for action permitted by each regulatory source and the actual room taken by actors, as well as their interrelation.

Next, there is the issue of the mechanisms behind dealing with that room. How do actors, individuals in particular, address the diversity of rules, coming from a variety of sources, which they are deemed to apply, and which factors are interrelated?

The diversity along the dimensions sketched in Section 2 offers insight into the factors that may influence professionals’ dealing with room for action. For example, this dealing will be interrelated, in part, with the nature of the (semi-) profession involved. Protocols can be seen as formalized ways of responsibly dealing with available room. In some (semi-) professions, the use of such protocols amounts to a larger part of the actual job than in others. It has been proven that working with checklists in cockpits or operation rooms, for instance, leads to a reduction of task-related risks. Following standard procedures in these situations is not simply imposed from the top down for management reasons. The procedures were formulated by the professionals themselves, in these cases by pilots, flight engineers and medical specialists. As such, these procedures can be seen as a form of institutionalized “self-binding” by professionals. The origin (profession-related) and the significance of protocols and standard procedures in professional practice indicate that maximizing room for action is not a goal as such.

Dealing with room for action is partly determined by job conditions. In his classic public administration study of *street-level bureaucracy*, Lipsky (1980) looked in particular to the full waiting halls and busy consultation rooms of welfare departments in the downtown districts of large American cities. Given their organizational structure, welfare counselors, police officers, and similar public officials who are in direct contact with clients organize their daily work in certain ways. The practice of “client processing,” the primary process, shows particular patterns. Lipsky lists: rationing of services; control over clients and reduction of uncertainty in the contact with them; prudence in rewarding means available; compensation of the negative effects of routines on one’s own job satisfaction. In this respect, Lipsky observed several *coping strategies*, such as having clients wait in the waiting room, setting a fixed number of minutes per client, differentiation by client type and treatment tuned to informal categorization (preference for easy clients, special approach for “bothersome clients”). Regarding the contact with citizens in the streets in police activities, Van der Torre (1999) speaks of informal job conditions. He characterizes police styles and distinguishes “pragmatists,” “pessimists,” “order restorers” and “care-providers” as types of *street-corner politicians*.

Next, person-related features will determine dealing with room for action. For exam-

ple, in the case of schoolteacher Iris, it is imaginable that she, given her age and other personal traits, will embrace the new curriculum enthusiastically (professional accountability.) At the same time, she is aware of the importance of better entry test scores (management targets as variant of political-administrative accountability.) A slightly older colleague of Iris, a father of three teenagers, also adopts the new curriculum, but he shows more restraint regarding the issue of the entry test. He stresses good contact with parents (participatory accountability.)

The example makes clear that the same regulations can be used in divergent ways. The *managerial* aim coming from the school board – to achieve better entry test scores – allows teachers in Iris’s school the same room for action (discretion.) And yet Iris and her colleague deal with it differently (autonomy.) Even in a situation in which all other factors are constant (in this case, both teachers are in the same school), actors from the same category sometimes have other considerations than their immediate colleagues. It is to be expected that variations increase proportionally when comparing professionals in public service at a larger scale. Apparently, mechanisms are at issue that do not directly follow from the rules, let alone that they would determine the actions of actors involved. Still, the regulatory actor appears to assume the latter.

With respect to Iris, it can be observed that she in relation to political-administrative accountability agencies first has to deal with the school director. Other regulatory sources are the school board, local government, the education ministry, the inspectorate and other overseeing bodies. Given their position and task, political-administrative actors will seek to direct the acting of the professionals who work in primary education more or less directly. Time and again they can ask for accountability as to how “their” rules are followed by Iris. Thus these rules are implicitly conceived as applying in a singular, one-to-one relation between a separate actor who sets regulations and an individual actor who applies them. Those who define the rules, who hierarchically are in a superior position, will try to impose them beforehand in a binding way.

#### *Regulatory burden as feature of the workforce*

Recent scientific developments, notably at the intersection of neurobiology and cognitive psychology, have resulted in new insights into the empirical relationship between people’s thinking and acting. Those insights qualify the modern assumption that thought comes before action, or, indeed, that systematic thought leads to adequate action. To what extent people weigh the pros and cons of decisions in advance, thus turns a normative assumption into an empirical question. Regardless of the assumed causal chain in the human brain, when people experience pressure exerted on them as too great, they will usually say so in one form or other. Professionals in public service will even express their discontent in the public domain if they experience job pressure as increased. In response, they claim more room for what they regard as part of their actual job description.

If for a long time it was enough for teachers to pursue a “happy” class (Thijssen 1926/2007), today a substantial number of goals have to be realized simultaneously, many seemingly at odds with each other. On what can be called the *government’s workflow*, all these goals and other rules accumulate as rules for action (Hupe 2007). It seems that at least in part, this “accumulation” of rules for action is at the basis of the discontent articulated. A regulatory source can be defined as an institutionally or personally determined set of prescriptions for action which express underlying values as standards. A regulatory actor, certainly one with a task within a political-administrative accountability regime, imagines himself to have a monopoly – only his rules count. This applies to the head of school as Iris’s direct supervisor, at the level of the organization, and, for the makers of policy papers at the ministry, at system-level. In contrast to the perspective from each of the regulatory sources separately, the individual professional has to deal with a multiplicity of sources of regulations that steer his or her actions.

As standards for this accumulation of regulations on the workflow, it is possible to rely on the concept of “rule pressure” or “regulatory burden.” The regulatory burden can be measured in terms of the number, character and mutual interrelation of rules for action as experienced by individual actors. If discretion is connected with regulation and autonomy is a quality of an actor, regulatory burden is a workflow feature. In the dynamic between rules for action largely coming from outside and the observable actions of an individual actor, the regulatory burden constitutes an intermediary variable. The definition given, then, has objective and subjective components. The number, character and interrelation of regulations may be expressed, perhaps, even in quantitative measures. Individuals may experience the same number of rules, of the same character and with the same mutual interrelation, differently in terms of their combined effect. Given a certain profession – a traditional one or a semi-profession – and considering the same organization, it depends on person-related features how high the regulatory pressure will be on the workflow. The degree to which discontent crops up and how it is expressed will thus vary per person (*ceteris paribus*.)

If we assume this relevance of individual-related features, it is to be expected that it will squarely cut across the diversity of (semi-) professions. For example, a medical specialist may complain about excessive bureaucracy, which in his view causes him to spend too much time on the so-called diagnosis-treatment combinations (DTC’s) paperwork. His colleague who works in the same medical center, in contrast, subscribes to the rationale of cost control and considers the paperwork of the DTC’s a necessary part of his professional task. Similarly, in primary education (Iris’s semi-profession) the difference between complaining and coping can be person-related. At the same time, professional competency can be raised by helping Iris and her colleagues, individually and as a group, identify and adequately use their room for action. This can be achieved through intervision and coaching on the workflow, specific workshops and other forms of extra training (see Table 3).

Table 3 Forms of Professionalism Enhancement

Level	
<b>Profession</b>	Formal education
	Certification
	Behavioral code
	Peer review
	Protocols etc.
<b>Organization</b>	Standard procedures
	Discussion of progress
	Intervision
	Coaching
	Offer of extra training, etc.
<b>Professional</b>	Peer supervision
	Participation in extra training, etc.

These theoretical findings and empirical assumptions put into perspective the general character of the conjecture that professionals in public service have a shortage of room for performing their work. The subjective component of the regulatory burden is that in similar circumstances it will depend on the person, how he or she handles the burden that is experienced as too heavy. The objective component in the concept's definition, namely the number, character, and mutual interaction of regulations, will show an increase rather than a decrease of the room for action. After all, as an actor is deemed to follow a larger number of different regulations, which may be contradictory, the need to weigh independently which rules apply in the here and now increases. Put differently, the multiplicity of regulations in fact creates room. As a result, the issue of how to act will depend on the person involved. On an assembly line, the absence of detailed instructions may cause the performance of tasks to stagnate, but it is characteristic of the professional that he or she can deal with that room for action and does not shy away from it. Judgment and experience, but also *peer review*, will allow him or her to deal with it.

The identification of what can be called *the paradox of increasing room for action* does not take away anything from the legitimacy of the articulated political claims to more room. Nor is it meant to downplay the reality of the discontent. Rather this paradox serves as invitation to move from general claims to a more focused angle on concrete situations – no matter how divergent. In the study of public administration, the paradox may serve as an invitation for comparative theoretical-empirical research. For example, after defining the concept of regulatory burden as a workflow feature, it becomes possible to study where and how regulations from the different regulatory sources dealt with by professionals in the (semi-) public sector conflict with each other. Which rules from which sources are experienced as either impeding or stimulating? Above all, the paradox

identified important points in enhancing professionalism in the practice of public service. Offered institutionally in all kinds of forms, such enhancement will provide opportunities to further strengthen the competencies of the individual professional.

## 5 Conclusions

Commotion about labor relations happens in all times. It seems a fairly new phenomenon, however, that people who work in government express their discontent about their job pressure in public in a broad sense without first, or mainly, asking for more salary. Recently, teachers, nurses, police officers and people in similar professions expressed a wish not only to be paid better, but also, especially, to be valued and appreciated more. In addition they claimed more space for practicing their field. They would like to focus less on paperwork and reaching management targets and to call attention in public to the importance of the work of those who in this chapter have been called professionals in public service.

Expression of dissatisfaction, certainly when voiced in the public domain, primarily serves political ends (Hupe and Van der Krogt 2008). In this case, the concerns put forward seem to be an expression of the need for support in particular. The image thrusts itself upon us that many professionals to a certain degree feel left to their own devices in their government jobs. For example, in some agencies the pressure to produce, partly because of stringent legislation and regulation in combination with organization-related targets, appears to be approaching limits of what is deemed workable. Similarly, publicly expressed dissatisfaction and interrelated claims still say little about the available room for action and how people use it in their actual practice. There is a difference, after all, between political activism and social debate in the public domain at a macro level and daily work at a micro level. Likewise, one can distinguish between what people say and their actual actions. This chapter centered on the question of the nature of the room for action available to professionals active in the (semi-) public sector, and how they deal with that room. Aside from conceptual elucidation, exploration of the variety of dimensions and identification of relevant factors, we tried to demonstrate which mechanisms are active, a fictitious yet realist case serving to illustrate the theoretical insights provided.

We may now formulate some conclusions. First, it is striking that the general category of “professionals employed in the (semi-) public sector” hides large empirical diversity. Professions may strongly differ from each other, while there are substantial differences in kinds of organizations and job conditions (regardless of the distinction between traditional and semi-professions.) In addition we also established that when other factors are assumed to be constant, personal factors may give rise to substantial variation.

A second conclusion is that there are multiple accountabilities. Neither “the professional” nor “the civil servant” makes account along a single line. The prevailing notion

is that those in public service, as subordinates of politicians, think up rules for society, while civil servants at the lower levels of the hierarchy merely apply rules mechanically. Professionals, in contrast, would merely have to do with the demands of their field and enjoy the freedom to perform their profession with complete authority. It will meanwhile be clear this involves a caricature and a cherished ideal, respectively, and that both are imaginary indeed. Even the traditional professional such as the medical specialist – cf. the checklists in the operation room – has to deal with more than one accountability regime. An actor's room for action, then, is never unlimited. At the same time, this room cannot be determined from one source of regulation, which conflicts with the general assumption of a separate actor who sets the regulations.

Our third conclusion is that people's dealing with room for action cannot be fully articulated in texts. If the actual results of a policy are not identical with the good intentions as formulated in the policy paper, the articulated claim to more room does not coincide with how that room is in fact used. Chances of a combination of what we called complaining and coping above are real. The regulatory burden has an objective and a subjective component. This means that the increase of the number of regulations, for instance by the introduction of new management targets, will have different effects on the workforce. In the regulatory burden, then, the objective component takes on another, yet, for all those involved, similar value. *Ceteris paribus* the response to it will differ along the line of person-related features; not a priori along that of the character of the profession. The self-image of Iris – she considers herself a professional – can be strengthened through her reaction to the new management targets. She does not shy away from the implications of the school board's wish to organize classes such that pupils achieve higher entry test scores, even if it takes extra efforts on her part – whereby she could use help of course.

In other words, people who work in so-called semi-professions may equally consider themselves veritable professionals who also act accordingly. A professional will continue to perform, even when the number of regulations goes up. He or she makes use of the available room in part to organize the work slightly differently and thus to regulate the regulatory burden experienced. This is not to deny that these same professionals may self-organize to reduce the regulatory burden at the source. From a political-administrative angle, for example, they are free to knock on the door of the ministry involved. It is possible to call upon social organizations, for instance at the level of the neighborhood, district, or city, in the case of a school. Professionals may also question the regulations from the perspective of their field, such as the professional association of which Iris is a member. Within each of these spheres, discontent and activism can be expressed on a scale ranging from having a talk with a colleague in the staff room and a change of managerial direction on the job, coerced or not, to putting an issue on the agenda in national party politics. In assessing the autonomy of professionals in public service, it is relevant at least to distinguish words from actions. Both deserve attention separately.

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TRANSLATED BY TON BROUWERS

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# Regulations, market stimuli and professional virtues in conflict: About self-regulation and professionals

Wouter de Been

*Give professionals a certain freedom to regulate their own professional practice. Allow them to do this within a framework of limiting conditions, focusing on previously determined policy objectives. This so-called “conditioned self-regulation” is characteristic of the Dutch approach. However, the implementation does not seem to be truly well thought-out. Those involved are free to “shop around” in three administrative philosophies: sometimes regulations are used; at other times market stimuli are implemented; and sometimes there is also a focus on professional virtues. This eclecticism is not effective because the three different approaches often conflict with each other. De Been advocates halting this eclecticism and choosing, in no uncertain terms, professional virtues as the anchor. This provides a more cohesive approach, and a great many solutions can be devised for the risks and limitations involved.*

## Introduction

Self-regulation has become a standard solution for the regulatory crisis in the modern welfare state. The government can no longer regulate the world from the center, and it is widely believed that professionals in the field must be given more freedom to develop their professional practices themselves.<sup>1</sup> This problem is often solved with so-called conditioned self-regulation. This is an approach that allows professionals a certain degree of freedom to regulate their own professional practices, albeit within a predetermined framework of conditions and policy objectives.

The instinct behind this article is that this combination of elements in conditioned self-regulation is more complicated and more problematic than is generally thought. In conditioned self-regulation, three administrative philosophies are intertwined. First of all, it embraces the trusted Weberian idea of administration focused on norms and regulations. In his work, the professional must adhere to a number of general rules and regulations. If these basic rules are not adhered to, sanctions will follow. This is the traditional administrative philosophy of the social welfare state. It is an approach that is chiefly focused on safeguarding a certain minimum standard for all citizens. Secondly, conditioned self-regulation encompasses elements of market control. Professionals are subject to the discipline of the market and are forced into a high level of service for a low

price through mutual competition. In the ideal case, no sustaining authority is necessary for this; the invisible hand does the work. Thirdly, this vision of regulation relies on a virtue perspective. Professionals are not driven by sanctions or stimuli to supply services, but by their desire to be good professionals and to excel in their work. Of central importance in this perspective are the practices that shape professionals, that make them into people who strive to excel in their professions and act according to their professional ethos.<sup>2</sup>

All of these administrative philosophies, or logics, are focused on important aspects of professional practice. It is, therefore, not surprising that all three have been given a place in conditioned self-regulation. At first glance, this may appear to be a balanced approach, but it raises the question whether we are dealing here with a form of eclecticism that Michael Walzer once identified as one of the cardinal sins of political and judicial theory, namely, the misconception that you can combine the elements of various systems that you find attractive and expect that – because of their common appeal – they will form an effective and harmonious whole. The things that appeal to us in a given practice, Walzer warns, are often functionally connected to elements that we find less attractive, or exclude elements of a practice that we want to combine them with.<sup>3</sup> With this Walzer does not claim that social practices form such a delicate organic entity that every change must lead to disaster. Adjustments are certainly possible, but we must not underestimate their complexity. Policy makers, you could say, should not behave like florists who quickly put together a stunning bouquet of flowers that flourish in extremely different climates and soil conditions but have no hope of surviving together in the long term. Rather, policy makers must think like landscape architects who combine flowers and plants that are comfortable in a certain place, that thrive in each other's presence and that can form a long-lasting symbiotic relationship.

The instinct underlying this argument is that various kinds of administrative logic cannot simply be combined at random. The various types of administrative logic emerge from very different moral perspectives, that presume a very different psychology and emerge from very different institutional, social and cultural contexts. It is, therefore, important to investigate how practices that are focused on maintaining minimum norms or on providing market stimuli can conflict with the objectives that call for the cultivation of professional virtues and ideals. In order to clarify the ways in which the various regulatory systems can conflict, we will go back to a famous allegory of judicial theory, the story of King Rex, that was first recounted by the American legal philosopher, Lon Fuller. This allegory will tease out a number of the problems that play a role in the self-regulation of the professions. Subsequently, these problems will be clarified and discussed in the second section of this article.

### Rex the Regulator

In his classic work, *The Morality of Law*, Lon Fuller uses an allegory to reveal a number of basic principles that are essential for a well-functioning judicial system. Fuller's allegory is about King Rex, who wants to develop a new judicial system for his kingdom. This turns out to be a great deal more difficult than he had foreseen and, through trial and error, King Rex gains a number of fundamental insights about justice. He discovers, for example, that regulations must be general; that they must be public; that they must not be obscure; that they must have a certain degree of permanency; that they must not apply retroactively; that they must not set impossible demands on the subjects; and that they must not conflict with their implementation in practice. Ultimately, Rex gives up on his ambition to devise a new code and passes on his kingdom to Rex the Second, disappointed and frustrated with his attempts to develop a better code.<sup>4</sup>

The problems that Rex struggles with are the classic problems of the rule of law. The problems discussed in this essay, however, emerge at a much later stage of the evolution of liberal democracy. They do not even come up when Rex the Second develops the Kingdom of Rex into a full-blown welfare state in which the fundamental issues of the rule of law have been settled and every citizen is offered a high degree of material security with a whole range of government regulations and interventions.

The regime of Rex the Second coincides with the industrial age with its great faith in rational planning and organization. Under the authority of Rex the Second, numerous social spheres that had always functioned in the traditional manner are brought under the control of the state and rationalized. This leads to an enormous improvement in the quality of services and products. In the past, many professions were organized into a type of guild structure that stood in the way of improvements. Outside attempts to penetrate such monopolies and to improve the quality of service were challenged as an infringement on the established order. The interventions of Rex the Second resulted in a situation in which uniform norms could be set that guarantee a minimum level of service provision for every citizen and that thwart the monopolistic practices of the professions.<sup>5</sup>

However, after a while, it becomes clear that all is not well in the Kingdom of Rex. Whereas the state was once an instigator of social change, it now appears to have transformed into a source of stagnation. The bureaucracy that was once developed to implement government policy, turns out not to be a selfless servant, but an authority with its own interests. So-called iron triangles develop between specialists in parliament, departments of the civil service and interested parties in society, all of whom unite around a specific approach and all of whom together, therefore, hold government policy in an iron grip. Many social institutions become lethargic, inefficient and averse to reform.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the centralized, ready-to-wear approach of the government seems less and less suited to an increasingly complex society that demands an ever-increasing number of tailor-made solutions.<sup>7</sup> At the end of his regime, Rex the Second realizes that rigor-

ous reforms are necessary in order to transfer the Kingdom over to his son in good condition. He decides to shake up the institutions with a policy based on the free-market system and privatization. If society has become too complex for the blunt instruments of the government, then the invisible hand of the market will have to offer the services that are needed. With a radical program of privatization and the introduction of market stimuli, Rex the Second succeeds in providing the government and society with a new dynamic. With the public sector in good condition, Rex the Second decides to pass the throne onto his son.

Under the rule of Rex the Third, the problems that are the focus of this article, first come to light. Initially, the reforms of Rex the Second seem to bear fruit, and Rex the Third rules in a period of unbridled growth and economic prosperity. However, after a number of years, Rex the Third decides to sound out the mood of the country. He sends out spies to discover what is going on among the people. His spies return with alarming news. Teachers complain that they no longer have control over their own work and that the quality of education is suffering because of it. Doctors and nursing staff complain that efficiency drives have changed the clinics and hospitals into heartless establishments with detrimental consequences for the patients. Judges moan that efficiency considerations are increasingly displacing the reflection on justice in the daily administration of court cases. The care and responsibility with which professionals traditionally performed their duties now seem, increasingly, to be replaced by a culture of calculating and strategic behavior. Meanwhile, little of the freedom and independence that was promised to professionals when market forces were introduced has materialized. The governmental involvement has only changed in character, not in the claims that it lays on individual professionals. The detailed instructions with which the command economy of the traditional welfare state operated have simply been replaced by the detailed accounting and control procedures of market-oriented government. Both require a great deal of paperwork, both significantly limit the freedom of the professional, and both have a negative effect on professional well-being.<sup>8</sup>

Rex the Third believes that he can meet this crisis with a clever plan. If professionals want to rule in their own domain, then he can use their desire to raise the level of service provision. The only thing he has to do is formulate a number of minimum requirements and a number of policy objectives that must be realized, and he can then leave the professionals to rave about their professional ideals and design their work according to their own insights. Only when minimum requirements are not met or objectives are not achieved will the government need to intervene. This is a true win-win situation, Rex believes, and he congratulates himself on the solution of the first thorny problem during his reign. He announces the new measures and lets his subjects know that henceforth he wants to be known as Rex the Regulator.

However, a year after the new legislation is activated, Rex the Regulator's spies discover that the mood of the professionals has barely improved at all. Some are confused about Rex's objectives: "If he wants to give us more freedom, why must everything be so

meticulously reported and checked?” Others complain about his hidden agenda: “Rex the Regulator is not sincerely interested in our profession. He is only interested in driving up our results and only pays lip service to our professional ideals.”<sup>9</sup>

Rex the Regulator is somewhat surprised with this confusion about his objectives and hyper-sensitivity to his primary motives, but he quickly gets to work to cope with the dissatisfaction in the professions. It does not take long before he has found a new solution: If the people in the field distrust the government’s intentions, then the power must be delegated to the field. Let the professionals themselves become the owners of their institutions, Rex decrees, and let the government observe things from a distance. New legislation is drafted and Rex is certain that, this time, he will solve the problems in the professions. Now that it is up to them, the professionals can hardly object to the way things are organized. However, after awhile, Rex’s spies again return with unpleasant news. The people are still not satisfied. For some reason, the delegation of responsibility has not led to professionals having more authority over their work on the shop floor. Although the delegation of authority to the professionals in the field initially seemed to be such an audacious plan, it ultimately proved to have had little effect on the professionals’ day-to-day work. The new legislation did not delegate the authority specifically to the professionals, but, rather, to the institutions for which the professionals work. Rex the Regulator had, in fact, given the management of the various establishments authority over the professionals. This management proved to have interests and preferences that were not essentially different from the central government bureaucracy, so that, for most professionals, there was little change in their day-to-day work.

This is a setback for Rex the Regulator, and he begins to doubt whether it is possible at all to achieve anything constructive with the authority of his position. Will he be able to provide society with an effective regime of regulations? After a few days, he is able to pick himself up and go on. He starts to see the issue of professionalism from a completely different perspective. Instead of regulations, the emphasis must be placed much more on how the professionals in the field can cultivate and pass on their ideals. Behaving as a professional is, primarily, a question of character, of the correct attitude and of the appropriate professional virtues, not of heavy-handed stimuli and minimum standards. The cultivation of a professional attitude must take place in the field, and Rex decides to establish a number of committees to create a framework in which professionals’ identities can be developed. Rex hopes that, this time, his approach will bear fruit and that satisfaction will finally reign in his kingdom. After a number of months, Rex again sends out his spies to see how the various professions have handled their task. This time, the news is mixed. The people are certainly happy that they are being taken seriously and the committees have been busy seeing how professionalism can be stimulated. But the results are somewhat disappointing. Many of the committees simply revert to the drafting of professional codes with minimum standards to which professionals must adhere. Ultimately, it is also difficult for people in the field to imagine precisely how professionalism can be stimulated.

Rex the Regulator is completely confused about this outcome. He had come to realize that he did not have all the answers, but it now appears neither do the professionals in the field. They are also at a loss when it comes to giving their professional ideals a more central place in daily practice. In need of answers, Rex decides to appeal to the academic world. He summons the most eminent sociologist in the kingdom to find out how the professions can be rehabilitated. Yet, after a couple of months, the sociologist decides to give up on his research and he reports back early. The sociologist has come to the conclusion that his commission was a pointless exercise. The task was to find out how the professions could be reorganized so that they would flourish once again. He quickly discovered, however, that one of the obstacles for the development of a professional identity was exactly constant reorganization and change. If people must invest in the development of a professional identity, if they must adopt the role of the professional with all of the values and attitudes belonging to it, then it is crucial that there is a certain degree of stability and permanency in their work lives. Why would people devote themselves to such a project if the professions are constantly being reorganized and the conditions under which professionals must do their work are continually being revised?<sup>10</sup> This is the last straw for Rex the Regulator. He decides to give up the entire attempt to reform the professions.

#### **Four Problems With Self-Regulation in the Professions**

The allegory of Rex the Regulator illuminates four problems with self-regulation of the professions. These problems can be summarized as follows:

- 1 There is tension between the legitimate demands of government for results on the one hand, and the need for professionals to make their own professional judgments, on the other. The setting of minimum demands and the provision of market stimuli can be at odds with the logic of the intrinsically motivated professional. How can we avoid having our concern for minimum guarantees and cost effectiveness stand in the way of the development of professional virtues?
- 2 In professional self-regulation, it is not immediately apparent who is the “self” doing the regulating. How can we avoid professional self-regulation being hijacked by a particular interest, which will lead to a result that serves neither the general interest nor the interest of the professionals?
- 3 Professional virtues are, to an important degree, a matter of the development of the correct attitude and the right character, not only a code with rules of conduct. How can we avoid the search for good professionals being reduced to the formulation of a code with rules of conduct?
- 4 Professional autonomy is often seen as an answer to the growing complexity and dynamism of the world. Dead knowledge and statistical expertise are not

needed; flexibility and the right competencies to control new developments are needed. Yet, at the same time, the development of professional virtues is difficult to imagine in an unsettled and constantly changing world. How can the stability that is necessary for the development of a robust professional identity be guaranteed?

These points will be elaborated, one by one, below. The aim is not simply to criticize recent attempts to breathe new life into the ideal of the self-assured professional, but chiefly to formulate possible solutions for the difficulties they give rise to. At the end of the argument, the points will be summarized in a number of “rules of thumb” for effective self-regulation by professionals.

### *Professional Freedom and Control*

For various reasons, the government often sends conflicting signals to the professional in the field. On the one hand, an appeal is made to his ideals while, on the other, an attempt is made to influence his behavior with coarse stimuli, or to exact a certain minimum standard with sanctions. Professional trust is bestowed so that a professional can carry out his work in accordance with his own views – he or she is, ultimately, the expert – but simultaneously his implementation is closely monitored and subjected to time-consuming justification procedures. The professional is urged to come up with creative solutions in his field, while at the same time his work is excessively embedded and standardized in order to guarantee a certain equality in the service provided to citizens. Every citizen, after all, has a right to an equal level of service. These mixed signals lead to four problems.

1. *If people are approached with distrust, or if people are treated as egotistical individuals who are mainly focused on their own advantage, then there is a great risk that this attitude will undermine precisely the ultimate objectives of the policy – the development of professional virtues. This is the central lesson of the so-called “crowding theory” of the Swiss economist, Bruno Frey. According to Frey, the introduction of sanctions or stimuli often have the effect of suppressing the intrinsic motivation of social actors. If, for example, donating blood becomes a market transaction because money is given for it – as occurs in a number of countries – then this often leads to a decrease in the number of blood donors. The problem here is that the intrinsic motivation of people who give blood – to serve a good cause – is undermined by paying a price for it. The charitable sentiment is displaced by a market stimulus. In short: People are prepared to contribute to a good cause, but they are not prepared to sell their blood for a low price. The appeal to self-interest that is inherent in market stimuli can undermine a focus on the intrinsic values of professionalism. If, in the field, it is ultimately only about the “bottom line,” then why should I work hard to excel in my profession?<sup>11</sup>*

Much like Frey, regulation expert, John Braithwaite, maintains – based on a great number of empirical studies – that as the control mechanism decreases in strength and



becomes less apparent, it becomes more probable that people will internalize certain virtues and automatically conform to them. Threats and stimuli are often counter-productive for the development of professional virtues. People are less inclined to internalize values that they see as norms to which they must conform because of secondary considerations, i.e. to avoid punishment or obtain a reward. What does lead to the acceptance of values is, according to Braithwaite, *soft power*, the force of deliberation and debate.<sup>12</sup>

In order to be able to function effectively, it is important, therefore, that professionals in the field gain the notion that autonomy is something that is good, in itself. If professionals are only given autonomy as a means to achieve some other objective, then it will probably fail. A professional wants to be taken seriously as a professional. Their professionalism and expertise are important in themselves and not simply as a source of income. Professionalism provides a person with a goal and an identity. Who someone is and what he does are aspects that become interwoven in the life of the professional. If a regulating regime loses sight of this aspect of professionalism and is solely focused on results and minimum norms, then that can easily backfire. If the values that a professional attempts to realize in his working life are only supported because they contribute to a maximization of the result, then that support will probably be experienced as insincere.

2. If professional autonomy is also to have significance in practice, then that means that there must be a certain amount of tolerance for the various ways in which professionals fulfill their responsibilities. Embracing the idea of professional autonomy demands a certain degree of tolerance for the diversity that is connected to it. The more professionals are encased in regulations and protocols, the less space they will have for passing their own professional judgments. This is not only damaging for professional pride, but also does not take advantage of the possibility to learn from the diversity that accompanies greater professional freedom. The two variants that are diametrically opposed here are designated by Herman van Gunsteren as the method of Analysis and Instruction (A/I) and the method of Variation and Selection (V/S). Analysis and Instruction is the accepted method of the government. The government analyzes the problem, formulates one general solution and instructs all professionals on the work floor to always apply a specific procedure and always adhere to specific rules.<sup>13</sup> Variation and selection is a different regulating technique. It is the logic of natural evolution, but also the method of the market and of science. V/S allows the field itself to generate solutions for tackling problems. The field will, over the course of time, select those solutions that are the most successful. Such freedom is, in modern western society, always vulnerable. Within the process of V/S, only one spectacular failure is needed to attract the attention of the public, and the impulse of the government and politics will be to intervene and repel the risks with new regulations. The stimulation of professional autonomy demands governmental restraint. Government should, through some system of self-restraint, limit itself to those interventions that are absolutely essential.

3. *The development of professionalism is well-served by a clear mission.* If the government introduces a system of conditioned self-regulation in order to provide a specific profession with more freedom, then it brings two positions together that are not easily combined. On the one hand, professionals are entrusted to use their own initiative and to structure their own professional lives. On the other, these same professionals are viewed with suspicion, the results of their independence are carefully monitored, and the minimum requirements are closely observed. Perhaps in a theoretical model of conditioned self-regulation this combination of suspicion and trust can be brought together in balanced whole. Yet, it is another question whether that theoretical balancing trick can also be pulled off by a real government bureaucracy. Bureaucracies are notoriously unwieldy and unmanageable and function best if there is a clear, unambiguous mission. With conditioned self-regulation, they are, in fact, commissioned to keep a close eye on the professionals and to make sure they fulfill their minimum requirements, yet to provide them with all freedom and trust necessary to do their work, while not forgetting to carefully assess their achievements. If this is the assignment for a government agency that is traditionally more occupied with the implementation of regulations than the nourishing of initiatives, the expectations should probably not be set too high.

4. *Large organizations are unwieldy and culture change takes many years.* This inertia of institutional mass suggests that the transition to a system of conditioned self-regulation demands long-term involvement. Understandably, civil servants are not happy to accept the risks that are inherent in the relaxation of oversight and the tolerance of greater freedom for how social services are implemented. The atavistic impulse is to guarantee a uniform standard and to specify what must be done. Both civil servants and people in the field often feel uncomfortable with the freedom that the new forms of regulation permit them. In their study, Coglianese, Nash and Olmstead discover, for example, that many civil servants and professionals do not like to work with achievement targets and general objectives at all and they have difficulty dealing with the freedom that such targets allow. According to them, it could take a generation for official organizations and social players to adjust to such control mechanisms. Meanwhile, the introduction of performance targets will lead to the government becoming so involved in the development of the work practice that it is, in fact, simply in charge once again. Moreover, objectives are often formulated so specifically and in such great detail that it remains an old-fashioned form of government regulation.<sup>14</sup>

The tension between stimuli and regulations, on the one hand, and professional autonomy on the other, rises to the surface in many contexts. Willem Witteveen provides a good example of this in his analysis of recent educational reforms in the Netherlands. These reforms were explicitly focused on the delegation of the decision-making process to the field and the attempt to provide schools with more authority over their affairs. They were part of a self-conscious endeavor by the government to withdraw as much as possible from the day-to-day micromanagement of public institutions and the wish to

stimulate the formation of horizontal relationships between all parties involved. Conditioned self-regulation subsequently had to create the conditions for the development of an inclusive vision on how schools must be managed. Nonetheless, the propositions were completely developed within the Ministry of Education without the involvement of the education professionals. Self-regulation was more or less announced by decree and the details were, for the most part, determined beforehand. According to Witteveen, it was crystal clear to everyone that the intervention to introduce self-regulation in schools had to be seen as a complementary instrument operating in the margins of the existing educational policy.<sup>15</sup>

In his recent work, the sociologist Richard Sennett is also highly critical of responsive regulation. According to him, this leads to a situation in which policy objectives are stipulated beforehand, but responsibility to achieve these objectives is shifted to the field which is then closely monitored. This leads to a situation in which government maintains power and determines policy, but responsibility is passed on to people in the field who must substantiate that policy:

Far from becoming weaker, the state remains strongly directive. The center controls infusion of resources into devolved institutions and monitors performance. It does not lead in the Weberian sense: power and authority instead divide. As in business, so in politics bureaucracies increasingly centralize power while refusing to take responsibility for their citizens.<sup>16</sup>

This is ultimately a method for farming out authority and creates forms of power without authority and forms of authority without power. Neither of these is desirable.

Regulations, stimuli and aspirational values cannot be easily combined. These are logics that pull policy in different directions. The analysis thus far suggests that it is perhaps better to strive for cohesion, not equilibrium, among the three administrative logics. This could, for example, be achieved by making a clear choice of one of the three logics and searching within that regulatory system for ways to accommodate the specific merits of the other two systems. For regulation of the professions, the aspirational logic of professionalism is the most obvious choice, so ways can be found within the perspective of virtues to have professionals defer to certain minimum norms and work cost-effectively. A clear choice for the logic of professionalism is, however, not without risk. A return to a regime in which professionals have a great deal of power over their own economic activity can lead to monopolistic behavior, stagnation and inefficiency. Procedures that can curb the self-serving tendencies of self-regulating professionals are, therefore, also necessary. That is the subject of the next section.

### *Who Regulates?*

If the field is allowed a certain degree of self-determination, it is crucial to determine who in that regime of self-regulation is involved in the decision-making. Delegating the decision-making to the field provides no guarantee of self-regulation that places the values of professionalism center stage. When we discuss self-regulation, are we talking about individual professionals, their management, their labor unions, their professional organizations, their trade organizations? Who has the right to determine the norms that should apply to the professional in the field? The danger here is that the regulation will be captured by one of the interest groups.

Attention to the public interest is, of course, difficult to ensure within a system of self-regulation. Self-regulation is, by definition, a process in which a well-defined group makes its own rules. It is only the representation of the people that can justifiably maintain that they embody the common interest. If the parliament delegates its authority to another body or institution, then questions will arise about its representativeness and legitimacy. Ultimately, a satisfactory answer can never be given to the question of who, precisely, must be involved in the decision-making process. That does not detract from the fact that it can make a huge difference who takes on the self-regulation. Is it the professionals themselves – the judges, teachers, professors, doctors – or the organizations they work for – management of the school, university, court or hospital? Do labor unions and professional organizations represent professionals or do trade organizations represent the institutions the professionals work for? The danger is that the administrators and managers of organizations professionals work for are going to control self-regulation, not the professionals on the work floor. These people do not necessarily have the same perspective and the same interests as their employees. For a renaissance of the professional, it is important that the perspective of the people who do the work are included in the decision-making.

A second consideration for self-regulation is the limited focus of professionals. A certain monomaniacal urge to excel in one's own discipline is an inextricable part of professionalism. This professional dedication to produce good work can be at odds with other important considerations. The importance of providing excellent service to an individual patient, student or client must not come at the expense of the interests of other patients, students and clients who are not present at that moment. This is, of course traditionally the task of the manager. The manager organizes the employees and the resources in such a way that the work is completed and everyone gets his due. However, we have just seen that there may be good reasons not to give the institutional bureaucracy a central role in the organization of the professionals' work. There are, also, more general considerations which make it important that professionals are involved in the decision-making process. The input of the doctor or teacher himself is ultimately essential in order to assess whether there is enough time to give a patient or student sufficient attention, or if there is too little time to offer an appropriate level of care or education.

In any case, the risk remains that self-regulated people will lose sight of the general interest and will allow their own interests to prevail. This is not a problem that can be solved with the formulation of a well-phrased, collective mission. The regulation expert John Braithwaite proposed taking the system of “checks and balances” that exists for the national legislation process and copying it at the level of public and private institutions. This does not need to be a precise, formal division of power, a *Trias Politica*, but can be a division of power that includes a broad range of groups, institutions, parties and organizations that all have an interest in the public service involved. In Braithwaite’s plan, it would not only be the doctors as a professional group who would be delegated authority, but also patients, nurses, administrators and insurance providers. Moreover, according to Braithwaite, it is crucially important that the process is designed in such a way that everyone has the opportunity to put his concerns on the agenda. It is important that precisely those parties who are not directly involved in a wrong-doing and who do not profit from it have the possibility to broach the matter. This increases the chance that a wrong-doing comes to light and is not covered up by those directly responsible – a widespread problem in traditional, hierarchical systems focused on punishment. Braithwaite summarizes:

The richer and more plural the separations of power in a polity, the less we have to rely on narrow, formal, strongly punitive regulation targeted on the beneficiaries of abuse of power. The more we can rely on a regulatory dialogue wherein an appeal is made to the sense of social responsibility of all actors with a capacity to prevent the wrongdoing, the more persuasion can replace punishment.<sup>17</sup>

#### *How Do You Cultivate Good Professionals?*

If people reflect on the implementation of professional ideals, then there is often a relapse into regulations and norms. If professionalism and professional virtues are important, the idea is to put them into a code to which professionals must adhere. Professional ideals and virtues, however, do not lend themselves to formulation in professional codes, however useful codes may be. Professionalism is a question of character, of attitude towards life. It is an identity that must be formed, a set of character traits that must be internalized. Virtues of professionalism are, in other words, values in which you must be socialized. This generally means that the professional goes through a certain initiation; that the professional takes on the rituals of the profession; that he or she learns to see himself or herself as the steward of a tradition, as part of a larger project. This assumes a collective, idealized image of the professional role that must be fulfilled, an image that is nourished by an iconography of exemplary predecessors and a narrative tradition of the development that the profession has gone through. It is these aspects of a professional practice that maintain the professional ideals and which are difficult to reduce to a code. Virtues are more than simply the attitude to apply the rules correctly.

People who want to stimulate professionalism, will have to search for solutions in the institutional architecture in which professionals function. Do proper conditions exist for the flourishing of professionalism? This means, for example, as we have already seen, that one must not depend too much on sanctions and stimuli to steer professionals. But it could also mean that professionalism thrives better in small organizations. Large, modern organizations are anonymous. They stretch what Donald Black once called the “relational distance” among employees enormously. The greater the “relational distance,” argues Black, the more anonymous the organization and the less trust there is among social actors within the organization. This makes the relationships more antagonistic and leads to a greater appeal of formal rules in order to allow the organization to function. The more intimate the organization, the more trust there will be that the shared values will be honored, and the more space there will be for professional autonomy.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Professionals and Stability*

In conclusion, stability is a necessity. Professionalism is not an off-the-rack suit that you can simply put on and take off. Professionalism is a philosophy of life that must be cultivated. It is something that takes time and effort. This is difficult to square with a culture of continuous change and reorganization. People are not prepared to make an in-depth investment in the cultivation of a professional identity, if they are not certain that there will be continuity in their work environment and the conditions under which they carry out their function. The self-image of the modern organization, however, is not one of stability, but of flexibility and dynamics. The world is changing too fast to strive for permanence. Plasticity is something that institutions pride themselves on. The modern organization is no longer an unwieldy hierarchy, but a fleeting constellation of networks and temporary project groups.

In this transient world, dedication to your professional identity is something that does not increase your chances. According to sociologist Richard Sennett, such dedication to your profession is even something that is viewed with suspicion. In organizations focused on the short term and on the fulfilling of continually changing tasks, such attention to professionalism is more likely to be seen as a sign that an employee has fused with his work and is fixated on a specific task:

The more one understands how to do something well, the more one cares about it. Institutions based on short-term transactions and constantly shifting tasks, however, do not breed that depth. Indeed the organization can fear it; the management code word here is *ingrown*. Someone who digs deep into an activity to get it right can seem to others *ingrown* in the sense of fixated on one thing – and obsession is indeed necessary for the craftsman.<sup>19</sup>

Precisely those qualities of professionalism – dedication, competence, expertise and experience – are the character traits that are at odds with what Sennett describes as the “culture of the new capitalism.”

Government itself has also become a source of constant change and dynamics. The speed with which new policy is conceived, adapted and implemented is much higher than the speed with which the field can absorb the new approach. This leads to a situation in which a continuous stream of new policy initiatives is fired off, while the people in the field are still implementing previous changes and reforms. Consequently, the professional is flooded with an unending stream of new policy initiatives which only get a cosmetic hearing. Sennett provides a lively description of such a barrage of new policy initiatives in Britain under New Labour:

As the policies kept coming, the public’s trust in them eroded. Within the councils of government, the manufacture of ever-new policies appeared as an effort to learn from the actions previously taken; to the public, the policy factory seemed to indicate that government lacked commitment to any particular course of action. At a meeting on the minimum wage, a union official glumly asked me, “What happened to last year’s policy?” The same process of spewing out policy occurred in education and the health services, with the same disenchanting effect.

With such a maelstrom of new policies, the government actually undermines its own objective of realizing a revaluation of the professional. This is a well-known problem in Dutch education. Year in, year out, teachers were deluged with a constant stream of new guidelines and policy initiatives. Many of them applied these only superficially and ignored as much of the essence of the policy as they could get away with. Since the Dijsselbloem Committee, a committee instituted to inquire into the failures of Dutch educational reform, even the Dutch legislators themselves can understand this attitude towards their policies.<sup>20</sup>

The proponents of these changes in the institutional culture do not, however, see constant change and dynamics as a problem for the development of a professional character. On the contrary, for them such a dynamic is precisely an important stimulus for the development of a professional character. The new employee must be flexible, courageous, creative and open to new developments. One could even say that there are precedents for this perspective in the republican tradition, precisely the tradition that is also an important influence on the revival of professionalism. For a classical republican thinker like Machiavelli, for example, the virtues were qualities that could protect the prince from the unpredictability of fate. Male virtues such as courage, strength and perseverance, according to Machiavelli, were necessary to keep the whims of *Fortuna* – Lady Fortune with her crafty and capricious nature – under control and to protect the prince from the vagaries of history. In a similar fashion these days, management gurus admonish the modern employee to develop transferable skills, abilities that can be used in vari-

ous contexts. Such skills must protect the modern employee from unpredictable fluctuations in the market and ensure that he can quickly adapt to new conditions.

There is, however, a crucial difference between these two points of view. Machiavelli praised a flexibility that was rooted in tradition. The current defenders of flexibility do not believe in rooting. The difference between these two perspectives is evident in the type of values that are named in order to withstand unpredictability. There is something resolute and unwavering in Machiavelli's list of courage, strength and perseverance. These are not the character traits that are generally called for in the employee who must look around for a new job. He must, on the contrary, be versatile and agile and prepared to rediscover himself at every change in the economic situation. Whatever the merit of such elasticity in the post-industrial age, it is not something that can be combined easily with the development of professionalism. Professionalism demands engagement, dedication and the investment of a great deal of time and energy to excel in a certain field of professional activity. If organizations do not offer any space for such dedication, they will not be able to depend upon the contribution of dedicated professionals indefinitely.

### **Conclusion**

In the above pages, a great number of problems were brought to light that will occur if legally conditioned self-regulation is implemented carelessly. The main points can be easily summarized in a list of "suggestions for professional self-regulation."

- Avoid contradictory signals. The combination of minimum requirements and professional ideals is not easy.
- Be careful of instrumentalism. For the professional, professionalism is a goal in itself.
- Professional virtues do not thrive with coarse stimuli and prohibitions.
- Self-regulation implies greater professional freedom, greater risks and a greater variety of professional solutions. You cannot have one without the other.
- Self-regulation is, by definition, regulation by a limited group and does not tend to coincide with the general interest. This problem can be eased by a system of checks and balances, but it cannot be solved.
- We live in a world dominated by rules and regulations. There is always the danger that the stimulation of professionalism will simply revert to a framework of regulations.
- Create space for dialogue and deliberation on professional virtues. This is crucial for the development of professional virtues.
- Avoid the creation of large anonymous organizations; these form a poor habitat for professional virtues.



- Ensure the necessary stability and continuity for the development of professional character.

The combination of various administrative logic systems within a system of conditioned self-regulation remains a difficult task, but if this list of considerations is taken seriously, there is, perhaps, a more realistic chance of success.

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# **The regulation of professionals**

## **Two conflicting perspectives**

*Wibren van der Burg*

Professionals and state regulators have incompatible perspectives, both on their professional practice and on the role of (self-)regulation. Regulators have a top-down perspective (with the state at the top) and focus on the product of the professions. They think quantitative measurable output is what counts, and regulation is an instrument to improve that output. Professionals have a center-periphery perspective (with the profession at the center) and focus on the professional practice. They think the quality of professional work is paramount, and the standards implicit in the profession are what should guide them. External regulation is usually a nuisance or a burden.

These perspectives clash, which may explain the current dissatisfaction among professionals. I discuss two partly successful strategies to mitigate this conflict. The first is to construct a buffer or transformer between the two perspectives, consisting of an interstitial managerial layer. The second is to try to reframe the opposition.

### **Understanding the conflict between the state and the professions**

Dissatisfaction among professionals seems to be widespread in Western countries.<sup>1</sup> Especially in health care, education and research, professionals complain that they are overburdened and cannot do their work properly. Their complaints are often directed against the regulatory state. The state continuously showers them with new regulations, protocols, administrative accounting obligations and extensive control mechanisms. Additional burdens follow from radical reform projects which have not been adequately tested or discussed and, therefore, usually do more harm than good.

This dissatisfaction is a complex phenomenon and various plausible explanations have been suggested. The increasing influence of market mechanisms is an important factor.<sup>2</sup> Attorneys and notaries are more commercially oriented than they were in the past. Universities depend strongly on contract research and competition for scarce government funds. In the Netherlands and various other countries, the public health care system increasingly depends on market mechanisms for allocation of scarce resources. Some professionals may flourish in such a competitive context, but others feel that it

prevents them from doing the things they are really good at.

In this paper, I will focus on another explanation – the alienation between state regulators and professionals.<sup>3</sup> My thesis is that professionals and regulators have incompatible perspectives, both on their professional practice and on the role of regulation within this practice.<sup>4</sup> Regulators have a top-down perspective (with the state at the top) and focus on the product of the professions. From this point of view, quantitative measurable output is what counts primarily, and regulation is an instrument to improve that output. Professionals, on the other hand, have a center-periphery perspective (with the profession at the center) and focus on the professional practice, on their activities. From their point of view, the quality of professional work is what they should focus on primarily and the standards implicit in the profession are what should guide them. External regulation is perceived as superfluous, at best, but usually as a nuisance or burden.

These perspectives clash. This clash is not only responsible for the alienation between regulators and professionals to a considerable extent, but also for dynamics that tend to deepen the conflict. I will discuss two possible strategies to mitigate this conflict. The first strategy is to construct a buffer, or transformer, between the two perspectives, consisting of an interstitial managerial layer. If it functions perfectly, this managerial layer will help bridge or dampen the conflict. Yet, it always runs the risk of becoming part of the problem rather than part of the solution. A second strategy is to try to reframe the opposition and construct an integrated perspective. I will argue that this reframing strategy can only be partly successful.

### **Conflicting perspectives**

The idea that there may be radically different perspectives between the state and its citizens has been developed by various authors. I combine four theories.<sup>5</sup> They are similar in some respects, but they also emphasize different aspects of the conflict. According to James C. Scott, the state “sees” in a different way and focuses on a different type of knowledge than those who participate in complex practices.<sup>6</sup> David Schön and Donald Rein, in turn, argue that intractable policy controversies are the result of conflicts between “frames” or “underlying structures of belief, perception and appreciation.”<sup>7</sup> In a similar vein, Willem Witteveen suggests that there is a clash of “perspectives” between the legislator and societal sectors. In the context of regulation, he claims, we should rephrase the familiar distinction between bottom-up versus top-down perspective as center-periphery versus top-down perspectives.<sup>8</sup> Finally, I have suggested elsewhere that there are two different “models” to understand phenomena such as law and morality – a practice model and a product model.<sup>9</sup>

In this article, I will use “perspective” as the more general term. A perspective is a way of seeing and constructing reality. It is not merely a passive perception; we also act upon a perspective and through our actions make it more true. The conflict is thus not

merely a cognitive conflict, but also a practical conflict. As different actors proceed on the basis of different perspectives, they will not be able to fully understand each other. Moreover, they may regard each other's actions as misguided, or even morally wrong, and as thwarting their own actions.

The analysis of the two perspectives is ideal-typical.<sup>10</sup> Usually the perspectives of actors are not pure. As they are confronted with other actors with different perspectives, they learn to understand them and even incorporate them – to some extent. Emerging types of alternative regulation may, for example, be seen as partly successful attempts to reframe the conflicting perspectives and construct a common one. In applying or testing such an ideal-typical analysis, we need to have an eye for variation, of course. National traditions, institutional contexts and specific tasks influence the professions. It is unlikely that an analysis of private medical practitioners will be identical to one of state school teachers in a large bureaucratic system. Moreover, I focus only on two actors in this article, whereas in reality other actors, such as patients, students, trade unions and consumer organizations also play a role – both in deepening and mitigating the tensions between state and professionals. Nevertheless, such an ideal-typical sketch may help us to understand the underlying tensions better.

### **Conflicting perspectives on the professions**

The modern regulatory state has good reasons to seek control over the professions.<sup>11</sup> The intensity of control may be controversial, but not that there should be some control. As the histories of the medical and legal professions have shown, there are serious risks of monopolistic practices, paternalism, inertia or inadequate protection of consumer interests. Moreover, most of the professions depend directly or indirectly on state financing (e.g., the teaching professions) or provide important goods that require substantial sums of money both from the public and from the state (e.g., if they work in a partly privatized health care system.) The legal professions are only partly financed by the state. Here the dominant state interest lies in whether the law is administered adequately and good services are provided to all citizens. The state has an interest, therefore, in ensuring good quality professional work at a reasonable cost. Finally, the democratic state may legitimately pursue political agendas. As the professions fulfil a central role in modern societies, the effective implementation of these agendas usually requires active collaboration with professionals.

However, state control of the professions is difficult to arrange, as the state is an outsider. Professionals have an internal perspective on their practice, whereas the state can only have an external perspective. For the most part, professional activities can only be completely understood by an insider, because they require practical experience and are highly contextual. They do not lend themselves readily to generalization. They are complex, highly variable, contextual, and illegible for the outsider.

James C. Scott provides an illuminating analysis of the state's perspective on similar illegible practices in his book *Seeing Like a State*.<sup>12</sup> To be able to steer and control a complex practice, the state has to simplify, standardize, measure, count and aggregate the activities of the professionals. It has to make the practice legible. Therefore, it is easiest for the state to focus on clear-cut minimum rules and the products the practice delivers, and to judge these using quantitative criteria.

There are at least four important differences between the perspectives of the regulatory state and the professionals. The state focuses on minimum rules rather than on aspirations and values. It is interested in the output of the profession rather than the practice itself. As a consequence of these two characteristics, the state evaluates in terms of quantitative rather than qualitative criteria. Finally, it relies on general, theoretical knowledge of the profession, whereas the professional works with local, practical knowledge. These four characteristics are not distinct but hang together. They are connected with the more basic difference between the state's external and the professional's internal perspective.

#### 1. Aspirations versus minimum rules

In the literature on professions, a frequent observation is that professions have an aspirational dimension.<sup>13</sup> They are inherently oriented towards ideals, and especially towards aspects of the common good, such as the ideal of good education, of good health care or of fair administration of justice. According to some authors, this is an essential characteristic of professions (which does not imply, however, that professionals are only oriented towards ideals; professions have other dimensions as well.) As a consequence, professionals are interested in how much they succeed in delivering those goods and realizing those ideals.

For the state, excellence is not easy to evaluate or measure objectively. There are many ways in which excellence can be achieved or approximated and these are often incommensurable. As a consequence, there is a natural tendency to focus on averages or even minimum standards which can be compared more readily. The advantage of minimum standards, from an outsider's perspective, is that they can most easily be formulated in terms of strict rules or measurable output criteria.

#### 2. Practice versus product

The professional is immersed in her professional practice, in her daily work of seeing patients, teaching students or advising clients. Her job should primarily be seen in terms of activities, not in terms of output. This is different from purely commercial jobs, where often the output is what counts primarily, e.g. "How many cars did we sell today?"<sup>14</sup> The activities of professionals are not so easily measured, whether or not they think in terms of billable hours.<sup>15</sup> Output matters, of course, but it is not the sole – let

alone primary – criterion of good practice, and it usually matters qualitatively more than quantitatively. Professional practice is oriented towards certain ideals of excellence rather than to measurable output criteria. These standards of excellence are embodied as much in the actions as in the results of those actions. Being a good professional is primarily learned by example, by hands-on experience under the supervision of an experienced colleague. Therefore professionals have a practice orientation rather than a product orientation.

To be able to regulate and control professionals, the state needs objective and general standards to evaluate whether they are functioning adequately.<sup>16</sup> Vague and complex standards such as good care or aspirational standards – which may be central to the professional's understanding of her work – are of no use in the state's perspective, because they cannot be measured. There are two possible approaches for the state to set more objective standards. One approach focuses on standards of behavior; the other on standards for output. Although the first approach fits better with the way professionals themselves perceive their practice, it has a serious drawback from the state's perspective. Most of professionals' activities are either legally shielded by rules of professional autonomy and confidentiality or practically shielded by the privacy of the home or the consulting room. To know the degree to which professionals conform to these standards, the state must rely on self-reporting, which is usually not very effective.

The state, as an outsider to the practice, is therefore driven towards output criteria. Regulators need clear criteria to evaluate whether their intervention has been successful. Output criteria measure more straightforwardly whether a profession functions adequately and whether government regulation has the desired effect.<sup>17</sup> For example, we can measure the number of international publications of a researcher, the average exam score of a school, the success rate of in vitro fertilization, or the average duration of a hospital stay. These are all objective and measurable data for the assessment of professional work. Whether they are the *right* criteria is a question that usually generates much controversy when output criteria are introduced. However, there seem to be few alternatives, and once it has been accepted that we need objective criteria to assess professional activity, these controversies tend to cool down quickly. Hence, the state's view is characterized by product orientation.<sup>18</sup>

### 3. *Practical, local knowledge versus theoretical, general knowledge*

Professional knowledge is often practical, local and implicit. An expression like “the clinical eye” refers to this partly intuitive, experience-based type of knowledge. Scott calls it a sixth sense that comes with long practice.<sup>19</sup> Even those professions which require academic training, such as medicine and law, depend largely on practical training involving real-life examples and on engaging in the activity itself. Scott refers to these practical skills and practical knowledge as *metis*.<sup>20</sup> This professional wisdom is not

easy to grasp in general theoretical insights, because it is so particularistic and contextual.<sup>21</sup>

For the distant state, this type of concrete, contextual knowledge is of little use. Policy design and regulation require more general, theoretical insights which are abstracted from the particular and lend themselves more easily to general application on a large scale. The state needs general, theoretical knowledge, like epidemiological data, rather than particular data about individual patients.

#### 4. *Qualitative versus quantitative standards*

In the qualitative perspective of a professional focused on the individual case, quantitative criteria seem out of place.<sup>22</sup> A teacher does not focus on the percentage of his class that graduates, but on whether he has been able to get the maximum capability out of each individual student. Neither does a good researcher find satisfaction sheerly in the number of peer-reviewed publications, but in the joy of doing research, solving problems and gaining the recognition of his peers for the quality of his work. A good doctor knows that much of her work cannot be measured quantitatively, as it is about giving each patient her due. Moreover, as professions are ideal oriented, they will often – without ground for blame – fall short of the ideal standard. A patient may die despite the perfect treatment; and students may fail the exam despite the high quality of the teaching and tutoring. Much research does not lead to the hoped for breakthrough and leads only to minor increases in insight – even if it has been performed adequately. For these reasons, most professionals have an innate resistance to being evaluated on the basis of quantitative output-criteria. It is not that output is not important – of course, it is – but that output criteria have the wrong focus.

For an outsider, the quality of a complex practice is difficult to evaluate. There are attempts to do so, e.g., in the assessment of academic institutions by committees of peers, but these are exceptions. Moreover, they are usually very expensive and cumbersome. For the state there seems no other alternative than to try and formulate quantitative indicators of the quality of professional practice. Once everyone is accustomed to those indicators, however, they tend to take on a life of their own. Rather than being treated as merely rough indicators of the things that really matter, they become the ends of the practice itself. Even if quantitative standards were introduced merely as indicators of quality, they tend to become standards in their own right. A university or faculty then demonstrates the quality of its research with aggregate criteria, e.g., the numbers of publications in A-journals, citations or impact scores.



### Conflicting perspectives on regulation

As the state and the professionals disagree on what the profession is about, it is no surprise that they also often disagree on whether the profession is functioning adequately. If the state focuses on external measurable output criteria and the profession focuses on the quality of its practice, a gap may be expected. Even if, in its own terms, the profession functions well, it would be a mere coincidence if this would lead to fully meeting the output criteria set by the state. This may lead to a situation where the state sees a need for more intensive regulation and control, whereas the profession hardly perceives a problem.

More importantly, the state and the professions have different fundamental perspectives on regulation. In most political theories, the state legislature is the democratically legitimate sovereign that should be obeyed by its subjects. In the simple positivist and instrumentalist version, laws are the commands of the sovereign to control the behavior of its citizens. This implies a top-down model of regulation. In the perspective of the profession, however, the state often lacks legitimacy when it regulates the professional field, because it lacks adequate knowledge. It is an outsider. The fact that it focuses on the wrong standards for evaluation (quantitative output criteria), moreover, will only reinforce this perception of the state as an incompetent, and therefore illegitimate, outsider. What is more, the state is an abstract entity far away, whereas the patients, clients or students are concrete and nearby. Therefore, it is natural for a professional not to take state regulation too seriously and to develop an evasive attitude towards it. This analysis, suggests three further aspects in which the perspectives of state and profession differ.

#### 5. Center-periphery or top-down

The top-down perspective is the usual, and probably the most dominant, perspective among regulators.<sup>23</sup> It pictures society as a hierarchical organization. Government and parliament are at the top of the chain of command (they derive their legitimacy from democratic elections), various subservient regulatory agencies are intermediary regulators and the citizens are expected to follow the rules.

In the social sciences, the usual opposite of top down is bottom up. In a hierarchical organization or in a dictatorial state, this may be a valid opposition, in as far as there is an effective command-control structure. However, it is inadequate for the relation between the democratic state and its citizens, and positively misleading for the relation between the state and the largely autonomous professions or professional sectors. Professionals do not regard themselves as mere subjects following orders from a legislative sovereign. They have a strong claim to autonomy, and often regard state regulators as inadequately informed outsiders who have no claim to authority. The relation between professionals and the regulatory state may look more like the medieval feudal relation

between a powerful count and a distant emperor with little more than a nominal claim to sovereignty.

As a result, from the perspective of the professionals themselves, we need a different characterization of the relation between the largely autonomous professionals and the regulatory state. Willem Witteveen has suggested that we rephrase this relation in terms of center versus periphery.<sup>24</sup> The professional's perspective focuses on his own practice; that is the center for him. There are a number of expanding circles from this center; clients, students or patients are very close to the center; colleagues and institutions like schools, hospitals and law firms are slightly further away; but the state is only at the periphery. It may provide funds and set certain rules, but these are merely external conditions.

#### *6. Burden or instrument*

This difference between who is at the top or in the center is reflected in the attitude towards state regulation. Usually a top-down perspective is combined with an instrumentalist attitude – law is an instrument in the hands of regulators to guide and control the behavior of citizens. For the autonomous professional, this may seem preposterous. Who do these incompetent people in the capital think they are looking for instruments to guide and control the behavior of expert professionals?

The typical form of intervention in the regulatory state is a statute. In the naïve instrumentalist perspective, passing a statute will suffice to change professional practice. Of course, it does not, so the sophisticated instrumentalist acknowledges that we also need detailed guidelines and auditing and control mechanisms.<sup>25</sup> These sophisticated instruments may help the practice conform more adequately to the rules. Rules are meant to improve the quality of the practice in terms of output criteria. We may therefore summarize the instrumental approach as the view that regulation is an instrument to improve the quantitative output (or to lower the costs required to realize that output.)

In the perspective of professionals, external regulation has an auxiliary role, at best, but usually it is considered a nuisance, or even an obstacle to doing one's work properly. The good, experienced professional does not need rules, as she knows perfectly well what to do. Rules and mechanisms for auditing and supervision, in this view, are for the weaker brothers and sisters and the inexperienced. Rules may guide their behavior. But as soon as a professional reaches full competence and has internalized the mores of the profession, she does not need them any more. Practical experience, the "clinical eye," will sometimes even guide the professional not to go by the book. If state regulation requires strict observation, this may actually impede good practice. When state regulation is combined with auditing and supervision procedures, the associated administrative chores may prove an additional nuisance for the professional.

### 7. Ignore-evade or command-control

The command-control approach is characteristic of the regulatory state – the sovereign legislator (or its subordinate regulators) formulates rules which the subjects are expected to follow. When citizens do not fully conform, the natural reaction from the top-down perspective is to formulate new, perhaps more specific, rules and tighten the supervision and control.

As was already suggested above, this is a perspective that professionals often cannot accept. Since they regard the state as an entity without practical authority and, quite possibly, with a controversial ideological agenda, professionals' natural reaction is to ignore the rules and evade them when possible. Strategic behavior towards state regulation is the result. Professionals do not internalize legal rules as guidelines, but regard them as external conditions. Output criteria usually do not intrinsically motivate professionals as something to aspire to. Once the criteria have been met (or at least if the presentation of the output can be manipulated so that it seems that they are met), professionals do their work according to their own professional standards. State rules may narrow the playing field (when they are implemented effectively), but usually they are regarded as mere obstacles that – in the interest of good professional practice – have to be avoided or circumvented.

### **Conflicting perspectives on self-regulation**

Professions usually favor self-regulation, because and to the extent that it results in rules and protocols that do justice to their practical needs and can be considered as mere rules of thumb. If the rules and protocols have been formulated by experienced colleagues, they usually reflect the practical wisdom of the profession. Auditing and control mechanisms which are devised and executed by fellow professionals are no serious threat or burden to good professional practice, and peer review may even improve the practice. The burdens of self-regulation will therefore be minimal.

The state may also favor self-regulation, but primarily for strategic reasons.<sup>26</sup> As it is developed and implemented by the profession, it does not require state resources. Moreover, there may be more support for self-regulation among members of the profession (but not necessarily among other stakeholders) than there is for state regulation. It may be expected that professionals will cooperate voluntarily and follow rules set by their colleagues. As professional behavior is often legally and practically shielded from external control (take, for example, the dark numbers of euthanasia and related practices), control mechanisms must rely heavily on self-reporting and internal control by the profession. Self-regulation can therefore be an effective form of regulation and control.

In an instrumentalist-state perspective, however, self-regulation should be legally conditioned in three respects.<sup>27</sup> First, self-regulatory autonomy should be conditional;

self-regulation should effectively solve the problems the state wants to address and reach the goals it wants to achieve (e.g., higher efficiency.) If it does not, the state should intervene, eventually. If professionals cannot adequately govern themselves, the state must reserve the right to step in. Second, there should at least be a basic legal framework of general values and minimal standards, preferably codified in statutes. Professional autonomy cannot be completely unrestricted – that would be too risky. Third, in order to allow an evaluation of whether self-regulation is effective, it must be comparable to state regulation. It must be formed of detailed, strict rules and allow evaluation on the basis of output criteria. This third element is often ignored in discussions of legally conditioned self-regulation, but it is important.

This implies that even though the state and the professions may both favor self-regulation, their expectations about what it will entail may differ. Whereas professionals support self-regulation because they expect that it will not require many changes and will remain close to the demands of their practice, the state supports legally conditioned self-regulation because it is a more effective form of control. Instituting self-regulation on such instrumentalist grounds, however, will probably be experienced as a form of distrust by the professionals and, as a consequence, will not be fully effective and will be the basis for continuing controversy.<sup>28</sup>

#### 8. Full or conditional professional autonomy

For professionals, the reason for professional autonomy is obvious.<sup>29</sup> Professionals are the experts, so they can decide best what to do. If regulation and control of the weakest elements is necessary, this is best done by peers who understand the problems and can decide which mistakes are minor, requiring merely an educative warning, and which transgressions are serious, calling for heavier sanctions.

The state must treat this claim to autonomy with suspicion. After all, for every profession, we find examples of professionals who did not function adequately, or worse. Apparently, professional organizations were not able to prevent bad behavior or guarantee good quality, and there is no reason to assume that they will be able to do so in the future. Moreover, the regulatory state has policy goals of its own for which cooperation of the profession is essential, like reducing the costs of the health care system or making academic research more beneficial to the economy. If the state gives professionals free range, then how likely is it they will be fully committed to those policy goals? In order to keep the pressure on the profession, self-regulatory autonomy can only be conditional.

#### 9. Rules of thumb and aspirations or strict rules

Many professionals strongly resist codification of their ethics as strict rules. This is perfectly understandable for two reasons. First, a profession has a strong aspirational dimension, a dimension that cannot easily be translated into rule-based codes. Second,

professional expertise is largely practical knowledge. Practical knowledge cannot easily be codified as strict rules.<sup>30</sup> We may formulate rules of thumb, and these can be helpful if we want to explain to students what we do. But strict rules do not allow for the contextual variation that characterizes the reality of professional life. Therefore, self-regulation should preferably take the form of a number of ideal standards as well as a number of rules of thumb, and should always leave room for going beyond the book. In fact, this is how, in Dutch medical practice, protocols (the product of self-regulation) are supposed to work – as default rules which should always be critically assessed by the practitioner in light of the concrete case at hand. They are not meant as strict guidelines to replace professional judgment.

From the state's perspective this is hardly self-regulation at all. General standards are too vague and multi-interpretable; rules of thumb can always be evaded with an appeal to ambiguous notions like "professional judgment." In order to be effective from the state's point of view, self-regulation of professional behavior should therefore take the form of strict rules. When the profession remains focused on aspirational standards and rules of thumb, nevertheless, this only indicates that professionals cannot be trusted to regulate themselves.

#### *10. Vague standards or legible criteria*

From the state's point of view, granting regulatory autonomy presupposes that the profession adequately regulates itself. But in order to evaluate whether self-regulation is successful, there must be clear criteria of success. For the state, the obvious standard of comparison is the standard that state regulation would set, if the state were to step in. As analyzed in the previous sections, this would take the form of minimum rules and output criteria. This implies that from the state's point of view, self-regulation should take the same form. Only then is professional practice legible to the outsider and is it possible to assess objectively if self-regulation works.

These are the wrong standards from the perspective of the profession, for the same reasons as were discussed above. Output criteria and minimum rules are not completely irrelevant, but they should not take pride of place. We should focus on aspirational standards and case-by-case evaluation. Consequently, the profession will have a natural tendency to resist the state's pressure to focus on output criteria and minimum rules, not only in state regulation, but also in self-regulation.

#### **The increasing tension between the two perspectives**

In Section 3, I sketched four ways in which the perspectives on professions differ. These differences need not be problematic in themselves, as long as professionals can function relatively independently from the state. However, in the regulatory state this is no

longer possible. The state intervenes in the professions in many ways, and state regulation and legally conditioned self-regulation are important instruments for this intervention. As a result, the difference between the two perspectives is transformed into a conflict.

In Sections 4 and 5, I showed how the perspectives entail diverging views on the role of regulation and self-regulation. Because the state's efforts to regulate professional practice are perceived by many professionals as interventions that are unjustified and misdirected, the conflict has a tendency to deepen. The strategic and evasive attitude of the professionals towards state regulation may easily be perceived by the state as a signal that stricter rules and stricter control are necessary. If they don't want to listen, the only way is to make them feel. Hence, the state makes more specific and detailed rules – in order to make evasion more difficult – and intensifies the auditing and control mechanisms. As a result, professionals feel even more threatened and disrespected by the state and become more evasive and strategic towards its regulations. The result is a dialectical process of decreasing mutual trust, increasing attempts by the state to control the profession and growing efforts by the professionals to avoid control.

This dialectical process is reinforced by the fact that once state regulation of a profession exists, it has a tendency to expand. Even if a profession functions adequately, follows all the minimum rules and meets all the output criteria, this will rarely be grounds for the state to lean back and be happy. Auditing reports will probably show that some professionals achieve better results than others. Clearly, these others do not perform as well as they can. Slightly increasing the output criteria may motivate them to be more productive. Instead of four articles in peer-reviewed journals, five should be the new requirement. New efficiency measures should make it possible to perform five percent more surgeries, or to decrease the average duration of a hospital stay by five percent. Professionals who protest are easily silenced with a reference to their colleagues who already meet the new standards.

A second tightening mechanism is based on the truism that good news is no news, but bad news gets attention. In our mediocracy, every new crisis or transgression in a profession or professional sector draws media attention and leads to a call for government intervention. For example, after the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in the Netherlands, state agencies introduced new protocols that not only require public institutions to take adequate measures, but also to do so in a controllable way and to report extensively that they have done so. After all, the operational burdens (flushing every toilet every week) and attached administrative burdens (reporting that it has been done) seem minimal in comparison to the potential loss of life prevented. If the media draws attention to new social problems, we simply instruct the schools to address them, e.g., by teaching civic virtues, integration, healthy diets or a new national history canon.<sup>31</sup>

These two mechanisms, minor increases of standards and responses to incidental crises, lead to an almost invisible, incremental increase in the impact of government regulation. In the long run, these minor increases add up, just as minor budget cuts add up.

A third mechanism of increasing regulatory burdens, of course, is radical reform. Once government control of a profession is in place, it is easier to introduce more radical reforms. If each new political majority seeks to implement its own political agenda within the four (or fewer) years between elections, this is a strong incentive for politicians to introduce reforms without the time-consuming consultation of professional experts. Moreover, such a timeframe leaves the field too little time to prepare for new changes and recover from previous ones.<sup>32</sup> In recent Dutch discussions on educational policy, the focus has been on those radical reforms and their rapid succession.<sup>33</sup> But we should acknowledge that it is the combination of radical reforms and incremental changes (sometimes combined with incremental budget cuts) that is partly responsible for the feeling of dissatisfaction of many teachers.

There are hardly any countervailing tendencies to reduce the level of regulatory intervention. After all, if the profession functions well, this may be seen as a sign that state interventions are successful. Obviously, we should not abolish the regulations that have brought us this success. Doing so might make the problems which the rules had solved resurface. Better safe than sorry, so it may seem.

The conclusion is that the tension between the two perspectives is fundamental and tends to be reinforced and intensified by state regulation. Self-regulation may seem an attractive solution at first sight, but the basic tension is merely reproduced, if the state aims for legally conditioned self-regulation. Therefore, we should look at other ways to solve or mitigate the tension. There are two basic strategies: institutional and substantive. The method of dealing with electrical tensions is to create a buffer or transformer between the two poles. In the institutional context, creating an interstitial layer of managers may be a plausible strategy. A substantive strategy would involve reframing the conflicting perspectives and constructing a new common perspective. It is to these two strategies that I will now turn.

### **Institutional solutions – creating managerial layers**

One way to reduce the tension is to create an interstitial layer between professionals and the state, or, if such a layer already exists, to give it the additional task of serving as a buffer and transformer. There are three possible layers.

The first one consists of administrative and other assistants. For example, general practitioners may hire secretaries and financial and technical assistants to assist them with bureaucratic paperwork, the technical rules that they have to comply with, the financial and other forms of auditing and so on. These assistants are subservient to the professionals. They can take care of much of the paperwork that comes with the regulatory state (and with the commercial side of some professions) and thus reduce the feelings of frustration which professionals often have because they are diverted from the tasks for which they have been trained. Thus, secretaries and assistants can function as

a buffer to reduce frictions and irritations. However, the professional is still in charge, which means that she herself still has to deal with the more substantive tensions that state regulation creates.

The second layer consists of managers – hospital directors and their staff, school boards, judges with managerial responsibilities. They fulfil the same buffer role as assistants, but they can also function as transformers.<sup>34</sup> As they are continuously confronted with the imperatives of the regulatory state, they must learn to understand the state's regulatory perspective. As long as they can also identify with the professional perspective (e.g. through intensive daily contacts with the shop floor), they may be able to effectively transform the commands of the regulatory state in ways that do not frustrate professionals. Ideally, they speak both “languages” and know how to implement the state's regulations without interfering too much with the primary processes of professional practice.<sup>35</sup> We must distinguish here between those managers who are recruited from the professions themselves and those with non-professional backgrounds. For the latter, it may be much more difficult to play the role of transformer.

The third layer is that of national professional organizations and national organizations of institutions and their managers. Examples of the first are the bar, the general medical association, the teachers' unions and smaller organizations of specialized professionals, such as those for history teachers or gynecologists. Examples of the second are national organizations of hospitals, school managers, and universities. Usually, these organizations are staffed not by professionals still active in their professions, but by former professionals or by managers without professional backgrounds. Moreover, they are not institutionally connected with professional practice in the way institutional managers are, and they do not get the daily feedback from the shop floor. As a result, their connection to professional practice is much looser. (There is an important variation here; smaller organizations, such as those of medical specialists, are usually primarily run by active professionals and therefore may be better connected to the shop floor.) To be an effective transformer, these organizations must be able to switch between the two perspectives. The continuous flow of state regulation and the intense contact with the state bureaucracy will ensure that these organizations, even more so than the institutional managers, will contribute strongly to a good understanding of the state's perspective. To what extent the organization maintains the ability to incorporate the professional perspective as well, is a different issue. Many of those working in the organization do not have first-hand or recent experience themselves, and, thus, their professional perspective becomes more distant than their daily struggle with the state's bureaucratic system. As a result, professional organizations run the risk of losing contact with professional practice and, hence, of losing the ability to function effectively as transformers.

The second layer is vulnerable to this risk as well. As long as managers in institutions are still in daily contact with professional practice, they may be able to sustain the tension and bridge the gap. However, when the managerial level is staffed predominantly



by people without professional backgrounds, the managers may lose the ability to function as transformers. They also run the risk of becoming primarily immersed in the state's perspective and internalizing it in their contacts with the professionals on the shop floor. Even managers with a professional background who become full-time administrators run this risk after some time. As they lose contact with professional practice, they are no longer effective transformers. Rather than shielding professionals from the pressure of the state regulatory institutions, they may become even more effective in implementing the perspective of these institutions and imposing it on the professionals.

This is the paradox of professional managerialization. Initially, constructing a strong managerial layer helps shield professional practice from the regulatory state and transforms the state's interventions into relatively harmless internal regulations. However, once a strong, effective managerial layer is in place, it tends to adapt to the state's perspective and finally to adopt it. Once the state's perspective becomes the dominant perspective of the managers, they are an effective instrument in forcing this perspective on the professionals. Rather than be part of the solution to the problem of conflicting perspectives, managers become part of the problem.

This paradox is reinforced by phenomena that need to be mentioned here, even if a full discussion would require a separate article. Firstly, most professions are also confronted with a third perspective, that of the market.<sup>36</sup> Those who feel the market imperative most strongly are usually the managers. In most organizations, their primary responsibility is to maintain a financially healthy, or even profitable, organization. Consequently, they have to focus on the financial aspects of professional practice. Secondly, after awhile managers are bound to develop perspectives of their own, characterized by their personal views and interests. In their position, efficiency naturally becomes a leading value. Moreover, if they are not professionals themselves, they cannot rely on practical knowledge; they must rely on general theoretical models about effective management or effective education, models that may not have been adequately tested in practice.<sup>37</sup> As a result, they develop agendas of their own – agendas which may sometimes coincide with that of the state, but which may sometimes be at odds with the perspective of both the state and the professionals.

The paradox of professional managerialization is not a given development, but a risk. There are strategies for reducing the risk that managers may become alienated from professional practice. Recruiting managers from among professionals and making management only a temporary step in professional careers can be an effective mechanism. This guarantees continuous input from professional practice. In professional organizations, the board, consisting of professionals, should have clear authority over the managerial staff, to counteract tendencies of overidentification with the state's perspective. In organizations such as schools and hospitals, a strong influence from the professionals among management should be guaranteed. If the risk of alienation is understood and if such mechanisms prove effective, being captured by the state's perspective

need not become reality, or can be kept to a minimum. Only under those conditions, will the creation of managerial layers contribute to an easing of the tension between the state and the professionals, or at least to a restriction of its the negative effects.

### **Substantive solutions – reframing and switching perspectives**

A second strategy for solving the tension is to construct a new perspective which incorporates the two conflicting perspectives. Schön and Rein suggest that we can solve intractable policy controversies through “frame reflection,” resulting in the construction of a new frame.<sup>38</sup> In this theoretical conflict, we should construct a new perspective that combines the top-down, product-oriented, quantitative and theoretical perspective of the state and the center-periphery, practice-oriented, qualitative and practical perspective of professionals.

It is questionable whether such a full synthesis is really possible. The two theories that were employed in Section 3 to construct the two basic perspectives imply that the differences are fundamentally incompatible. In Scott’s view, the state’s reliance on abstract knowledge and quantitative, measurable criteria is fundamentally at odds with the professional’s practical orientation towards implicit knowledge and qualitative criteria.<sup>39</sup> In my own view, the practice and product models are partly incompatible.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, we may conclude that there is no neutral transcending perspective.<sup>41</sup>

Partial reframing, however, may be possible. Both professionals and the state can learn to take into account some of the ideas of each other’s perspectives. For example, the emergence of evidence-based approaches in various professions can be seen as a partial incorporation of the state’s criticism that professionals should not only rely on vague standards and local knowledge but should also try to formulate more general insights – even if the practice perspective is the starting point. Such partial reframing does not bridge the difference completely, but might at least reduce the tensions.

Partial reframing may also be possible with regard to five of the six elements of the conflicting perspectives on regulation and self-regulation.<sup>42</sup> For example, sophisticated regulators may drop naïve instrumentalism and its associated command-control strategy and become reflective design regulators.<sup>43</sup> Some theories of alternative regulation, such as negotiated rule-making, or interactive and communicative legislation, can be regarded as attempts to reframe the different views on regulation. However, these forms of alternative regulation usually have only limited success, and my analysis may clarify why. The six characteristics hang together. There will only be a partial reframing, if the legislator drops the instrumentalist command-control perspective but still focuses on strict rules and output criteria. More important, even if we succeed in partially reframing the perspectives on regulation and self-regulation, we are still left with the four characteristics of the basic perspectives of the professions which cannot be completely re-framed because they are fundamentally incompatible. Consequently, the synthesis on

(self-) regulatory perspectives achieved by partial reframing is inherently unstable, because the tension between the underlying perspectives lingers on. It may be part of the solution and reduce the tensions, but a full synthesis will not be reached.

We can also look at reframing differently. Reframing need not take the form of constructing a single encompassing perspective as a new static frame. It may also take the more dynamic form of accepting that there are two conflicting perspectives, that they cannot be integrated and that, therefore, we must oscillate between the two perspectives. In a dialectical process, it may be possible to reduce the tension, at least in part, by mutual role taking. Legislators can learn to understand how professionals look at regulative measures, and professionals can learn to understand the legitimate concerns of regulators. This will not resolve the tension between the perspectives, but at least it may help all stakeholders deal with its consequences. In fact, such a process is what both Schön and Rein and Witteveen seem to have in mind when they discuss frame reflection.

This sounds easy to do but isn't. It requires intensive communication between the parties with different perspectives, and even then, it may be impossible for them to fully understand each other. The frames of the state and the professionals differ in major respects. In order to have an adequate dialectical reframing process, both parties must be able and willing to take account of the specific characteristics, biases and strengths of both their own and the other's perspective. For example, professionals must accept that the state has a legitimate interest in the common good (including that of regulating the costs of professional services) and that effective state control implies at least some general and quantitative criteria. The state has to acknowledge that it does not have the local and particular knowledge of the professionals and that the particularistic approach of professionals is legitimate, too. Both should be able and willing to learn from each other's perspective and use it to refine their own views. Most importantly, both should be willing to refrain from making their own view absolute.

Witteveen argues that we need a reflective and communicative legislature.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, a reflective and communicative legislature is necessary, if only because the instrumentalist command-control approach is partly responsible for the gap with the professionals. Nevertheless, this is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. We should be sensitive to what successful communication would require. It is not the idealized version of communication that one finds in the work of Habermas or in theories of deliberative democracy. Using a language metaphor, we might say that one party is speaking German and the other Dutch. Though both languages share many words, their speakers cannot fully understand each other, because of differences in vocabulary, grammar and cultural understandings that go with each language.

There are also practical reasons why an effective dialectical process of frame reflection is difficult, if not impossible. Schön and Rein present only one case where frame reflection was possible and successful – and even there it did not completely solve all conflicts between underlying frames.<sup>45</sup> The primary actor in this process was someone who

had not only worked in different roles during her career and knew the conflicting frames from the inside, but also had been able to take a year off for a sabbatical at Harvard University. Only during this sabbatical did she manage to reflect critically on the policy controversy she was involved in. Frame reflection requires people with specific talents and ample time for reflection. It requires only one such person, if the sole purpose is to construct a new frame that can be presented to all involved parties as a solution to the controversy. However, if we are looking for a dialectical process of mutual role taking, we need more than one person involved in the process. In fact, we need to convince all professionals to participate in it, to enrich their views and adjust their behavior. Similarly, we need to include all policy makers – not only the politicians and leading officials, but also (and perhaps especially) the lower level bureaucrats. Such an extensive dialogue is almost impossible to organize in practice, for reasons of cost and time.

These theoretical and practical reasons suggest that a dialectical process of frame reflection can only have limited results. It may help some professionals and policy makers understand why there is such a gap between them and it may give them at least some insight in how to deal with it. Completely bridging the gap, however, is theoretically and practically impossible. At best, reflective regulators and reflective practitioners may learn how to live with it and how to restrict it. Such an understanding may be enough to contain the negative consequences, but it will never solve the underlying tension completely.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper I have argued that the regulatory state and professionals have two fundamentally different perspectives on professional practice. The state, with its external point of view, is focused on minimum rules and quantitative standards. It is most interested in the output or product of the practice and relies heavily on theoretical, general knowledge. The professional, as a participant in the practice, is focused on qualitative standards and the aspirations inherent in the practice. She is most interested in the practice itself and relies heavily on practical, situated knowledge. These different perspectives are reflected in their views on regulation and self-regulation. The state has a top-down perspective. It regards regulation as a useful instrument and takes a command-control approach. The professional, on the other hand, puts the professional practice in the center and the state on the periphery. She regards state regulation as a burden and consequently tries to ignore and evade it. The state sometimes accepts that self-regulation is unavoidable, but mainly for strategic reasons, and it favors legally conditioned self-regulation. Professional autonomy is only granted conditionally, and self-regulation must take the form of strict rules and legible output criteria. For the professional, autonomy is unconditional. Self-regulation should reflect the aspirational character of the profession and hence consist of rules of thumb and vague standards.

In the regulatory state, these differences in perspectives lead to conflicts. Moreover, the tension between them tends to intensify. One way to deal with this tension is through an institutional solution by building a buffer or transformer between professionals and the state. A managerial level, both at the local level of professional practices, hospitals and schools, and at the national level of professional and sector organizations, may function as such a transformer and reduce the tension. However, once such a managerial layer is in place, it runs the risk of co-opting the state's perspective. Moreover, managers tend to develop a third, distinctly managerial perspective, which may even lead to increased tensions. Therefore, the managerial level can only be part of the solution, provided certain mechanisms are present which contain these risks.

A second approach to solving intractable policy controversies is the method of frame reflection suggested by Schön and Rein. Reframing and constructing a new integrative frame may be partly possible, for example with regard to the difference between command-control versus ignore-and-evade strategies. Nevertheless, in some of the most basic respects, the difference between the perspectives cannot be transcended. One coherent unifying perspective is impossible. This leaves partial reframing as a solution, which may help reduce the tensions, but not solve them completely. We can also regard reframing as a continuous dialectical process of switching between the two perspectives. However, one condition for an effective reframing process is that it includes most regulators and professionals. This condition is hard to fulfill in reality. Therefore, even a dialectical process of reframing can only be part of the solution.

A third strategy, which cannot be discussed fully here but which should be mentioned, is to take into account some of the actors and factors which were left out. This article only offers a simplified ideal-typical analysis based on a dualist model. If we were to include market mechanisms in the analysis, we might find factors that reinforce the tension between the state and professionals, as well as factors which counteract it. For example, reliance on a market mechanism may give professionals a feeling of greater freedom. They could provide a higher-quality or different type of service (e.g., pro bono legal services) if they so preferred, provided that they accept the consequence of a lower income. The same holds for third parties such as patients, students, consumer organizations or trade unions. They could perform the role of transformer, similar to the one performed by the managerial layers, or they could provide a third perspective, which may either reinforce or reduce the tension between the state and the professionals.

The conclusion of my analysis is that neither creating a managerial layer, nor reframing, offers a simple solution. The two perspectives are partly incommensurable, and there is no method to transcend the differences completely. However, this does not leave us empty-handed. Both regulators and practitioners should understand and accept that their perspectives are fundamentally different, and that the remedy is not just a matter of more effective communication to convince the other party that its views are incorrect. Understanding the fundamental difference between the two perspectives may be the first step in reducing the tension and mitigating the consequences of the conflict. The

next step is creating – and carefully monitoring – managerial layers which can function as buffers and transformers. The third step is regulators and professionals engaging in a continuing process of frame reflection, trying to understand the conflicting perspectives while doing justice to the legitimate concerns of both. These strategies will not completely solve the tensions, but they may help to reduce and restrict them in such a way that all parties can learn to live with them.

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# **Evaluations: Hidden costs, questionable benefits and superior alternatives**

Bruno S. Frey and Margit Osterloh

Research evaluation is praised as the symbol of modern quality management. We claim first, that output evaluations in academic research have higher costs than normally assumed, because the evaluated persons and institutions systematically change their behavior and develop counter strategies. Moreover, intrinsic work motivation is crowded out and undesired lock-in effects take place. Second, the benefits of output, and sometimes process evaluations, are questionable. These evaluations provide inadequate information for decision-making. Third, there exist superior alternatives. They consist of process evaluation and careful selection and socialization – and then leave individuals and research institutions to direct themselves.

## **Performance evaluations in academia: expectations and disappointments**

Performance evaluations have become a standard procedure in quality and performance management in many organizations. This procedure today is applied in profit-oriented firms, non-profit and governmental institutions. A particularly important area has been evaluation of academic research on which this paper concentrates. Research evaluation is often praised as the symbol of modern quality management which today has diffused throughout the academic system. There are several academic journals (e.g. “Evaluation,” “Evaluation Quarterly,” “Evaluation Review,” “Research Evaluation,” “Scientometrics”) specifically devoted to the approach. “Evaluations of evaluations” or meta-evaluations are discussed (e.g. Cook & Gruder 1978).

“Evaluation” here is defined as a formal, retrospective and external appraisal of performance of persons or organizations. Evaluations are undertaken by other persons, not by the persons whose performance is to be assessed. Our definition corresponds both to the academic and practical use of the term. Thus, for example Brook (2002: 173) states “By evaluation, I shall mean the situation where visiting experts come from outside your organization or system and say what they think about it.” The usefulness of evaluations is rarely questioned though some observers call it “a fad” (Birnbaum 2000), or an “audit explosion” (Power 1994), leading to an “audit society” (Power 1997), and producing a

booming evaluation bureaucracy and evaluation industry (Muller-Camen & Salzgeber 2005). But even the skeptics rarely discuss alternative instruments for raising the quality of research and allocating scarce resources (e.g. Daniel 1993; Gioia & Corley 2002; Holcombe 2004; Starbuck 2004; Weingart 2005).

This paper claims first, evaluations of academic research as currently practiced have higher costs than normally assumed in the evaluation literature. Second, the benefits of these kinds of evaluations are questionable. Third, there exist superior alternatives. We do not argue against evaluations in general but against the dominant form of output evaluation in academia. Instead, we discuss under which conditions process and input evaluations are appropriate.

We deal with the hidden, rather than the immediate costs of evaluation. The immediate costs of evaluation exercises in terms of academic manpower have been much complained about (e.g. Kieser 1998; de Bruijn 2001). This includes not only the effort and time expended by the evaluators. It also includes the costs borne by the evaluatees who have to provide voluminous evidence of their performance to meet the sophisticated systems of surveillance (Parker & Jary 1995:319) introduced for example in the United Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Neither does our paper focus on the difficulties of measuring performance in general (see e.g., Neely & Neely 2002; Starbuck 2004; Latham et al 2005) nor in academic peer reviews and bibliometric indicators. Many empirical analyses of the peer reviews reveal that peer evaluations diverge, contradict each other and are not consistent over time (e.g. Cichetti 1991; Gans und Shepherd 1994; Campanario 1996, 1998; Bedeian 2004a; Starbuck 2005).<sup>2</sup> Bibliometric measurements of publications, citations and co-citations as an answer to the growing skepticisms with peer reviews are also subject to major shortcomings, and can therefore not substitute for peer reviews (e.g., Üsdiken & Pasadeos 1995; Gmür 2003; Weingart 2005). These are important considerations, but they have been extensively treated elsewhere. In this paper we focus on the hidden, and therefore often disregarded, costs of performance evaluation.

The hidden costs of evaluation consist of two main types, discussed in the first part of the paper:

- 1 Evaluations distort incentives by (a) undue reliance on a restricted set of indicators (“you get what you measure”), known as the “multiple-task problem”; (b) counter-strategies to the evaluation exercise; (c) crowding-out of intrinsic motivation of persons evaluated as well as evaluators.
- 2 Evaluations induce undesired lock-in effects on the part of evaluated persons or institutions as well as on the part of evaluators.

The benefits of evaluations are usually taken for granted and remain unquestioned. The expected effects of evaluation exercises are efficient quality control, efficient allocation of resources, promotion of performance, and improved transparency of activity to princi-



pals, customers and suppliers. In particular, research evaluation is supposed to provide an effective signal to government agencies, sponsors, potential students, and their future employers about the reputation of research institutions. We argue in the second part of this paper that, first, evaluations provide inadequate information relevant for decision-making. Second, evaluations (in particular university rankings) lose importance due to new forms of scientific cooperation on the internet.

The third part of the paper is devoted to *alternatives to formal, retrospective and external evaluations of output*. They consist of

- 1 Interactive and supportive coaching of persons and institutions (concurrent process control).
- 2 Careful *selection and socialization* of persons charged with performing the activities in question (*ex ante* input control).

This paper does not provide a verdict on whether performance evaluations should be undertaken or not. This would, of course, require a comparison of *all* the costs with *all* the benefits. To the extent to which our analysis is correct, the hidden costs identified here should be added to the costs so far considered, and the benefits accordingly reduced. As a consequence, performance evaluation becomes less desirable. The intensity and frequency of evaluations should be markedly reduced and substituted by the alternatives sketched out.

### **Hidden costs of evaluation**

#### *Evaluations distort incentives*

In general it is taken for granted that evaluations have beneficial effects on performance. In standard economics as well as in everyday life, it is assumed that performance measurement and performance pay raise performance. The search for monetary incentives has come to permeate firms, governments and research institutions. In contrast, the negative incentive effects of evaluations, in particular output evaluations, are rarely considered. Performance evaluations lead to costs, which arise because the evaluatees systematically change their behavior in an unintended way.

#### *What is not measured is disregarded*

Persons and institutions subject to an output evaluation have an incentive to perform well in those areas of their work considered in the evaluation process. In contrast, they have no incentive to perform well in those areas which are disregarded (Kerr 1975). The phenomenon has been extensively studied in modern economics under the heading of “multiple tasking” (Holmström & Milgrom 1991; Gibbons 1998; Prendergast 1999; Fehr

& Schmidt 2004). Academic research, characterized by highly incomplete contracts (Masten 2006), has to deal with this problem in several aspects.

*Pressure towards “normal science” in the sense of Kuhn (1962).* Measurement exerts pressure to produce predictable but unexciting research outcomes that can be published quickly (Prichard & Wilmott 1997; Muller-Camen & Salzgeber 2005). More importantly, path-breaking contributions are exactly those at variance with accepted criteria. Indeed innovative research creates novel criteria which before were unknown or disregarded. The referee process, based on the opinions of average peers often leads to the rejection of creative and unorthodox contributions and rewards the mainstream (Frey 2003). Many rejections in highly ranked journals are documented regarding papers that later were awarded high prizes, even the Nobel Prize (Gans & Shepherd 1994; Campanario 1996). It would a mistake to assume that these are atypical and unfortunate special cases (Weingart 2005). Many luminaries in science such as Newton, Darwin, Kant, Mendel, Schopenhauer, Semmelweis, Wittgenstein and Goedel would have had little chance in a peer review system (Fischer 1998; Pasternak 2000; Gillies 2005a). Their path-breaking radical innovations could only be appreciated after decades, not within short evaluation cycles such as the four- to five-year British Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

*Eliminating type II errors instead of type I errors.* Referring to the theory of statistical tests Gillies (2005a, 2006) shows severe shortcomings of evaluations like the British Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). These evaluations are not devoted to eliminate errors of type I, but only aim to eliminate type II errors.

*Type I errors* occur if the test leads to the rejection of a hypothesis which is in fact true. A type I error in evaluation leads to funding being withdrawn from a researcher or a research program which would have obtained important results had it continued. The solution of the research problem will remain undiscovered for a long time. A notable example is the case of Semmelweis (Gillies 2005b) who did research on the causes of childbed fever in 1848, which was at the time the main cause of death in childbirth. Semmelweis (1861) followed a procedure similar to Popper’s conjectures and refutations (Popper 2002). The vast majority of the medical profession rejected his approach and ignored the practical recommendations based upon it. Semmelweis had to leave the Vienna Maternity Hospital in 1850, where he did his research. Hospitals went through a severe crisis and thousands of patients lost their lives. Only in the mid-1880s did the new antiseptic methods based on Semmelweis’s work become general practice.

*Type II errors* occur if the test leads to the confirmation of a hypothesis which is in fact false. These errors are less serious than type I errors. A type II error leads to funding being continued which in the end obtains no good results. A type II error leads to money being spent for nothing. Unfortunately most evaluations concentrate exclusively on eliminating type II errors in order to make research more cost effective.

To avoid the serious consequences of type I errors, Gillies (2005a) goes so far as to suggest that funding bodies should make sure that at least some funding is given to *every* research school rather than concentrating on the hopeless task trying to foresee which approach will prove to be successful in the long run.

*Homogenization of research endeavors.* On the institutional level, departments that have their eyes on rankings and output evaluations tend to become more and more similar, undermining the necessary variety in scientific discourse (see Holcombe 2004 for case of economics departments). They prefer to hire in the standard fields that get more citations or grants and avoid individuals whose work is outside the mainstream. Gioia and Corley (2002) argue that in business schools, rankings raise incentives to invest in short-term management fads instead of resources for basic research, which in management research follows heterogeneous approaches.

*Underestimation of work committed to the dialogue between academics and practitioners.* Academic work of relevance to real world phenomena is often disregarded.<sup>3</sup> Research departments rarely give credit to faculties who write books and magazine articles designed to intermediate between the research community and the general public because they don't contribute to the citation record. As a consequence, the gap between rigor and relevance of research is deepened and the dialogue between science and practice is undermined.<sup>4</sup>

*Incentives to conduct expensive research.* The tendency to measure research performance by the size of grants received creates an incentive to undertake more expensive, rather than relevant research (Holcombe 2004). Grants, of course, do not measure research output but rather resource input and have little to do with the scientific capabilities of an academic (Toutkoushian et al 2003).

#### *Counter strategies to evaluation exercises*

Evaluatees at risk to lose from the evaluation exercise will rationally muster resources to fight against the findings. They are often able to neutralize the evaluation results *ex post* and *ex ante*.

*Ex post neutralization of evaluation results.* Evaluatees have strong incentives to manipulate unpropitious results *ex post*. First, they can come forth with new criteria according to which they perform well or which are important to the decision-makers. Examples in research evaluation are criteria like teaching and administrative duties. Second, they claim that the low judgment of their performance is due to inadequate resources, discrimination of minorities, health problems, or simply bad luck. Third, losers refer to alternative ratings or rankings in which they fare better. It is well-known that there are always such alternatives available. Inconsistent university rankings are a striking example.<sup>5</sup> All these

arguments against the validity of a particular evaluation may be well taken or not; what matters is that they consume a large amount of attention, time, and effort, thus seriously distracting from research.

*Ex ante manipulation of performance criteria.* Less visible, though even more important, are strategic *ex ante* reactions of evaluatees intending to make forthcoming evaluations more favorable to themselves and their organization. There are many possibilities for such strategies that individually are rational but collectively represent unproductive and distorting rent-seeking. In political economy this effect is well known as “Goodhart’s Law” (1975) or “Lucas Critique” (1976), and it has been empirically confirmed (e.g. Chrystal & Mizen 2003, Brück & Stephan 2006). At the micro level it is known that schools evaluations can be manipulated by “teaching to the test,” excluding bad pupils from tests (for empirical evidence in USA see Figlio & Getzler 2003), or putting lower-quality students in special classes which are not included in the measurement sample (Corley & Gioia 2000). Scholars are encouraged to rank competing schools low to avoid the risk of lowering the rank of their school (Argenti 2000). Much has been written about managers who “cook the books” to raise their “pay for performance” (Bebchuk & Fried 2004; Frey & Osterloh 2005; Osterloh & Frey 2000, 2006; Foss et al 2006; Harris & Bromiley, forthcoming). In scientific publishing such strategies are undertaken by authors, editors and referees wearing different hats as evaluatees (Lawrence 2003).

Authors raise their number of publications by dividing their research results to a “least publishable unit” (Weingart 2005:125), slicing them up as thin as salami and submitting them to different journals (Lawrence 2003: 259). Authors may also offer to include another scholar among the authors in exchange for being put as co-authors on his or her paper. Time and energy is wasted by trying to influence editors by courting them, e.g. by unnecessarily citing them. More serious are manipulations of data and results. Cheating seems to be a wide-spread misbehavior. In a questionnaire among 8,000 scientists in the United States, about one-third admitted behavior such as “cooking” research data, using the ideas of others without appropriate reference, or failing to present data that contradict one’s own previous research (Martinson et al 2005). The change of publication practices in response to funding based on evaluations has been demonstrated in a study for Australia (Butler 2003). The mid-1990s saw a linking of the number of peer-reviewed publications to the funding of universities and individual scholars. The number of publications increased dramatically but the quality measured by citations decreased. As a result, Australia fell behind all OECD countries with respect to quality of research (Weingart 2005:126). Of course, the process does not stop there. When the evaluators realize their evaluation is undermined by maximizing quantity and disregarding quality (as reflected in citations) they will introduce the number of citations as quality measure. When authors adjust to this measure by maximizing the number of citations (e.g. by using citation cartels), the next step is weighing citations by impact factors, whose validity in turn is subject to strong criticism (see e.g. Adam 2002). As a

consequence, an endless process of more and more sophisticated, but useless, evaluations emerges. As a whole, "Success in the evaluation process can become a more significant target than success in research itself" (Brook 2002: 176).

Some editors freely admit that they induce authors to cite as many publications in their journal as possible in order to raise their impact factor (Smith 1997, Garfield 1997). They also like to see themselves cited in the papers submitted.

Referees are prone to judge more favorably papers that approvingly cite their own work and tend to reject papers threatening their previous work (Lawrence 2005: 260).<sup>6</sup> Willingly or unwillingly, referees induce authors to change their papers in order to secure acceptance. Bedeian (2003) finds evidence that not less than 25 percent of authors revised their manuscripts according to the suggestions of the referee though they knew that the change was incorrect. Frey (2003) calls this behavior "academic prostitution." It has often been lamented that referees steal ideas from the papers they evaluate. Similar strategic reactions occur in other peer review processes like evaluations of research projects or academic institutions, which are a major source of funding in all countries today.

If one considers the whole process including the reactions of authors, editors and referees, the output evaluation exercise has gained a life of its own even among those who should be involved in the very content of the scholarly discussion. As a consequence, the institutionalized evaluation process might not improve the outcome but rather move competition to an area where the critical academic discourse is weakened and substituted by signaling through publishing in peer-reviewed journals. The "quality stamp" given by peer-reviewed journals induces scholars to cite research results without ever checking them. According to the study by Simkin & Roychowdhury (2003), on average only twenty percent of cited papers were ever read by the citing authors. As a result of these distortions a "rat-race" (Akerlof 1976) is taking place where competition does not lead to positive outcomes but rather leads to an inefficient use of scholarly resources. It intensifies and rewards those scholars engaging in collectively unproductive rent-seeking activities and distorts the working of, and undermines trust in the scholarly system. These costs normally are not taken into account when evaluation exercises are considered. Therefore, the usefulness of evaluations is highly questionable. Academia is moving in the direction of a bureaucratic planning system in which the formal evaluation system has become an independent entity exerting a new kind of censorship (Biagioli 2002). Instead of competition, the institutions of a planned economy are introduced.

This process is comparable to the introduction of cost-benefit analyses in political decision-making. In contrast to what has been claimed by its supporters, and expected by parliaments and other political decision-making bodies, the main effect was not to improve the decision-making process. Rather, the discussion moved to a more abstract and formalized level. A negative consequence is that ordinary citizens find it more difficult to participate in deliberations, because they are not able to use the language of cost-benefit analysis. Well-organized groups, including public bureaucracy, benefit at the cost of ordinary citizens (see Self 1975). This is true not only in political decision-mak-

ing, but also in the academic field. Users of research results are excluded from the evaluation process, though it would be crucial to consider their views (Kieser 1989).

*Crowding-out of intrinsic work motivation*

The application of performance evaluation, in particular output evaluation, under known conditions has negative consequences on the intrinsic work motivation of evaluatees as well as evaluators (see Frey 1997; Osterloh & Frey 2000; Lindenberg 2001; Frey & Osterloh (eds.) 2002; Fehr & Gächter 2002; Bénabou & Tirole 2003; Weibel 2006; Falk & Kosfeld 2006). The crowding-out effect has been analyzed by psychologists and economists in hundreds of laboratory experiments. The most recent and extensive meta-studies are Deci, Koestner and Ryan 1999 & Cameron, Banko & Pierce 2001, as well as the econometric studies of real-life events (Frey & Oberholzer 1997; Gneezy & Rustichini 2000; for a survey of the empirical evidence, see Frey & Jegen 2001). For simple tasks, this is of little consequence, but it is generally acknowledged that for qualified, innovative and artistic work, intrinsic incentives are of decisive importance (Osterloh 2007). This aspect has been almost totally neglected with respect to research evaluations.

An evaluation exercise has two undermining effects on the intrinsic motivation of researchers. The first is that researchers cannot pursue their intrinsically motivated research but rather must legitimize their research activity according to criteria appreciated by the evaluators. They are forced to find and state goals in line with the evaluators. The second undermining effect is brought about by the close connection between evaluation and monetary rewards. Intrinsically motivated scholars getting funds may shift their interest from the research itself to the money. This is known as the “overjustification effect” which replaces internal with external incentives (Kruglanski et al 1978), and thus may undermine creative research.

Performance evaluation does not necessarily have to undermine intrinsic work motivation for two reasons. First, if the evaluation is perceived to be *supportive*, work morale tends to be enhanced. The same occurs if the evaluatees enjoy being the center of attention of the evaluators (the so-called “Hawthorne Effect”.) These two conditions are likely when performance evaluation is newly introduced. But once it becomes a continual exercise, it increasingly tends to be perceived as controlling, crowding out intrinsic work motivation. Second, performance evaluation may increase work effort if the crowding out effect is overcompensated by the relative price effect (Gneezy and Rustichini 2000). In the extreme case, if intrinsic motivation is totally crowded out by evaluation exercises, research can only be induced by further monetary incentives. But it is doubtful whether innovative research can therewith be achieved (Amabile 1996, 1998). Evaluations are moreover taken as signaling a loss of trust in the evaluatees, tending to erode professional ethical norms (Kieser 1998).

Evaluation exercises may also negatively affect the intrinsic motivation of evaluators. In many cases (e.g. in the approach pursued by of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences 2005) the evaluators are put in a straightjacket of formalized proce-

dures, leaving little or no room for aspects considered important from the personal point of view. They have to perform within a bureaucratic formal output evaluation system. In such an environment, evaluators have no scope to act as participants in an intellectual discourse, which often was the reason to engage in a particular evaluation process.

#### *Lock-in effects*

Once an evaluation system is in place in a particular organization, even those members who are aware of the hidden costs and questionable benefits do not oppose it. If they did, they would be accused of being afraid of the consequences. Therefore, it is a better strategy to go along, understanding the rules and playing the game. As a consequence it appears that most, if not all, members of the organizations evaluated accept the evaluation imposed, though in fact they are only resigned to because they see no other option.

Evaluators are also locked into the system. Scholars are often invited to participate in evaluation exercises because they have a personal or professional relationship with the persons or institutions to be evaluated. Once they have agreed, they have little or no incentive to oppose the bureaucratic procedures involved. They, therefore, become part of a quasi-socialist planning system, supporting its further existence.

Since both evaluatees and evaluators are locked into the system, formal evaluations are expected to persist for a considerable time.

### **Questionable benefits of evaluations**

Performance evaluations are often of little or no use for three quite different reasons.

#### *Redundant or contestable information provided*

In many cases information provided by evaluations is used only to bolster political decisions already made beforehand (Mittelstrass 2000). These decisions are mostly based on obvious criteria. In the case of a formal evaluation of particular individuals, substantial decisions (in particular promoting a person to an important new position or, in contrast, firing him or her) will only be taken if the evidence seems to be clear – and in the majority of the cases this is quite well known *before* the formal evaluation has been undertaken. The decision makers are often able to see well whether a person performs above or below average, according to the established criteria.<sup>7</sup> The same holds for the evaluation of projects and institutions. In that case also, the formal evaluation at best serves to support what already seems to be clear.

However, in some cases, new information is provided by the result of output evaluations – but such additional information rarely leads to changes in decisions. When the evaluation produces surprising information about performance, it is easy to put it into

doubt or to manipulate it at will (e.g. by changing the weight of the various components in the evaluation). For example, there have been many evaluations of possible sites for nuclear refuse deposits. There have virtually been hundreds of studies costing millions and even billions of dollars and euros but in almost no case could a clear decision be reached on the basis of that method. (e.g. the discussion on the Yucca Mountain in the US, see Portney 1991, Rabe 1994, Easterling and Kunreuther 1995).

#### *Information irrelevant for decision-making*

An evaluation should capture the *marginal effect on performance of additional resources*. How would performance change if an institution or a researcher could dispose over more or less means? This question is difficult to answer because it depends on a large number of conditions. An evaluation considering *marginal performance effects* is much more costly to undertake than evaluations considering absolute performance levels. Hence, the balance between the benefits and costs of evaluations is worsened. Accordingly, the consequence of a positive or a negative evaluation of a person or institution remains unclear. Should the resources available to the institutions and researchers evaluated as “bad” be reduced? Or should they be given *additional* means so that they can improve the quality of their research? Should the resources available to those evaluated as “good” or “excellent” be kept constant (or even be reduced) because they prove to be successful? These questions suggest that the result of an evaluation based on performance *levels* leaves an essential aspect unanswered.

#### *Rankings lose importance*

The internet has fundamentally modified the production process taking place in research institutions as well as in knowledge production in general. A thoroughly conducted study by Kim, Morse and Zingales (2006) reveals that the position of top universities leading to the Matthew Effect loses importance.<sup>8</sup> While in the 1970s residence in an elite university had a sizeable impact on individual research productivity (measured by impact equivalent pages per year), in the 1990s this effect disappeared. Also the percentage of co-authored papers with scholars of non-elite universities doubled. It follows that the externality of having better local research colleagues declines because it is easier to collaborate by internet with researchers located at any other university.

#### **Alternatives to formal output evaluations**

The much disregarded hidden costs and underperformance of currently practiced, output evaluations would matter little if there were no alternatives. Indeed, it has often been claimed that no reasonable alternatives exist (e.g. Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts

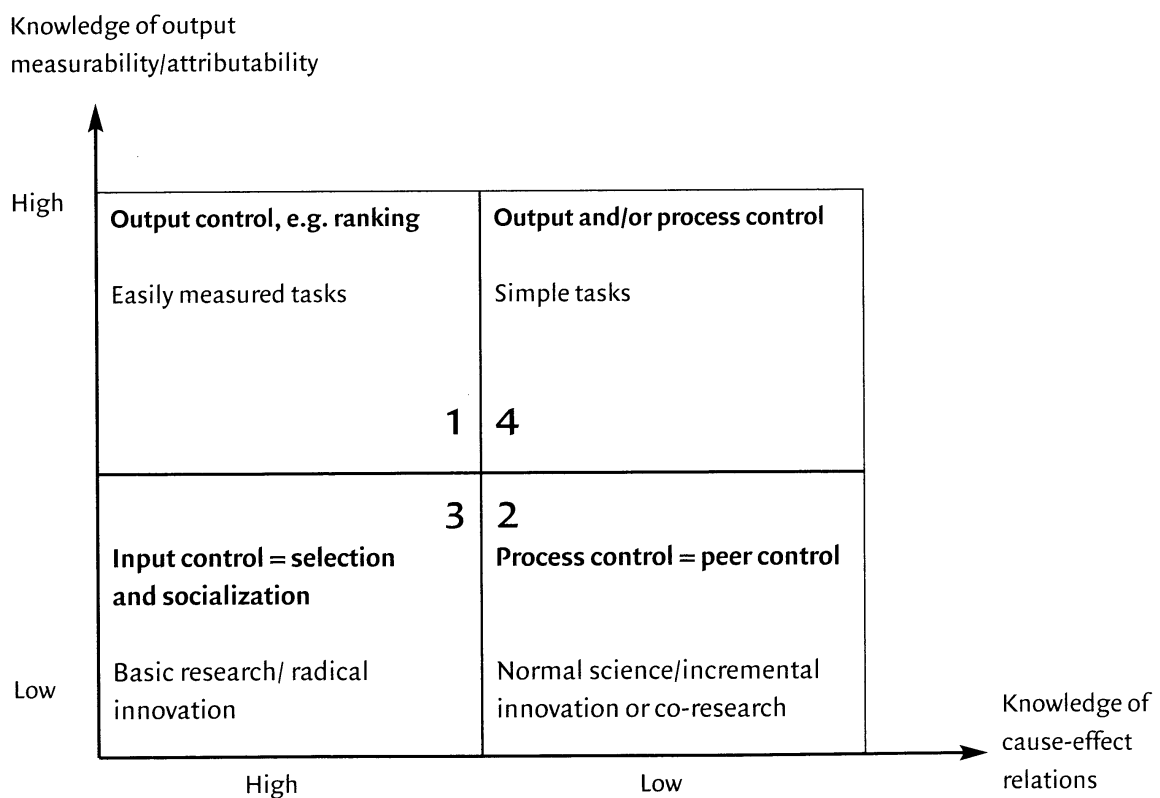


and Sciences 2005). But there are superior alternatives. In the following, three alternatives to retrospective output evaluations are discussed: Process control, input control, and a combination of process and input control.

We draw on insights from managerial control theory (e.g. Thompson 1967; Ouchi 1977, 1979; Eisenhardt 1985) which differentiates between output control, process control and input control. A major result of that theory is that the kind of evaluation or control system must fit the characteristics of the knowledge available to the evaluator (Turner and Makhija 2006). These characteristics are defined on one hand by “knowledge of measurability and attributability of outputs.” On the other hand, they are defined by “knowledge of cause/effect relations” (Thompson (1967) or “knowledge of the transformation process” (Ouchi 1979). The relationships between control forms and knowledge available to the evaluator are summarized in Figure 1 and discussed below. It is important to keep in mind that all organizations, including research organizations, employ a combination of control types, though with different emphasis.

We concentrate on process control and input control (cell 2 and 3). We do not discuss cell 4, because it is quite clear that activities that can be controlled by outputs and/or well-defined processes characterize simple tasks apart from research. To make clear why output control of research (cell 1) should be avoided, we start with comments on cell 1 from the point of view of managerial control theory.

Figure 1: Relationship between control forms and knowledge available to the evaluator



Output control (cell 1) is based on well-defined indicators, which is the essence of output evaluations, in particular rankings. An example of such an indicator in research is the number of published articles in refereed journals or citations. Since output controls do not specify the processes or cause-effect relations which produce outputs, such a control type is most appropriate when process or cause-effect relations are difficult to specify, as long as the outputs are measurable. Output controls are attractive to non-experts, like politicians, journalists and bureaucrats. Newspapers love output controls in the form of rankings, because rankings seem to provide easy-to-understand quality signals. Moreover, this kind of control gives the controlled person or institution a certain measure of discretion over how to reach certain goals or sub-goals, which has been discussed intensely in the “management by objectives” approach (e.g. Lawler and Rhode 1976) and in the literature about modularization (e.g. Baldwin and Clark 2000; Fleming and Sorenson 2001; Langlois 2002).

However, there are some preconditions of output control which are lacking in research. First, the knowledge relating to the output must be stable and not subject to change (Snell 1992). In research, desired outputs are ambiguous and the criteria of what constitutes good research are changing, in particular when radical innovations (Christensen and Bower 1996) or paradigm shifts (Kuhn 1962) are concerned. In these cases, the usefulness of established knowledge and of well-defined indicators is put into question. Second, outputs must be observable and attributable (Eisenhardt 1985). Today’s research is characterized by intensive, pooled interdependencies between the various scholars involved in a research enterprise, and therefore, often lacks attributability to particular scholars and even institutions. As a consequence, research quality cannot be captured well by output-oriented evaluations like rankings.<sup>9</sup> If they are applied nevertheless, multi-task problems emerge which distort incentives (as discussed above) and lead to risk-adverse and imitative behavior (Ouchi 1977).<sup>10</sup>

Fortunately, according to managerial control theory, there exist adequate alternatives to output controls, namely process and input control or a combination of both.

#### *Process control: interactive and supportive coaching*

As output control and formal output evaluations do not work well in the field of research, process control may present a useful alternative (cell 2). The preconditions are that evaluators (a) have the appropriate knowledge of cause/effect relations or of the transformation process of inputs into outputs and (b) have a shared understanding of the rules obtained. This is often the case in academic peer reviews. Peer reviews are useful to make sure that well-established standards of research methodology are met. However, as argued above, peer reviews have major shortcomings when unorthodox contributions are to be evaluated. As a consequence, process control works well only in the case of “normal science” (Kuhn 1962) or incremental innovations.<sup>11</sup> Normal science exploits potentials of established knowledge and introduces relatively few changes to it.

Applying process control to radical innovations or to paradigmatic shifts has major shortcomings, because there is little agreement about which criteria are applicable and which are not. In these cases, process control or peer evaluation can only be used if it takes the form of an interactive research process between evaluator and evaluatee in which new criteria are jointly developed. However, in this case the roles of evaluator and evaluatee are intermingled. The evaluator is no longer an external, independent outsider but is inevitably involved as a contributor to the research itself. The danger arises that he or she is no longer a person who evaluates from a neutral point of view.

*Input control: careful selection and training as alternative*

Neither *output control* nor *process control* work sufficiently when measurability and attributability of outputs is not given and the external evaluators' knowledge of the transformation process is limited. This is the case in most knowledge work and in particular in basic research endeavors. In these cases, *input control* in the form of careful selection and training is central (cell 3). In managerial control theory this type of control is also called "clan control" (Ouchi 1979). Selection and socialization has to make sure that candidates become members of a community in which aligned norms and values are internalized and are part of their intrinsic motivation. Input control represents prospective controls, regulates antecedent conditions of performance and manages potentials (Snell 1992). This is of particular importance for knowledge work, as social relationships matter for knowledge creation, retention and transfer (Kogut and Zander 1996; Duncan, Ford, Bousculp & Ginter 2002; Argote et al 2003; Nickerson and Zenger 2004, Bedeian 2004b)<sup>12</sup>. If input control is successful, mutual tolerance for ambiguity is possible, which is important in production processes where output measurement is questionable and procedural rules are unclear. This makes input control the main form of control for all kinds of knowledge work, particularly for basic research.

The strategy is to use resources to find the person best suited for a job and to consider how he or she is likely to perform in the future – and then to trust that he or she will indeed perform well. Thus, after careful selection and training, one has to abstain from external evaluations of output, and to some extent also of process control. Such a control approach to scientific research was emphasized by the famous President of Harvard University, James Bryan Conant (Renn 2002):

There is only one proved method of assisting the advancement of pure science – that is picking men of genius, backing them heavily, and leaving them to direct themselves. (Letter to the *New York Times*, August 13, 1945).

This view is still part of the “Principles Governing Research at Harvard,” stating:<sup>13</sup>

The primary means for controlling the quality of scholarly activities of this Faculty is through the rigorous academic standards applied in selection of its members.

Input control as main control form does not apply to the whole academic career. During the socialization and selection process, much process control and some output control must take place. They have to ensure that the candidate knows the rules of scholarly work, meets the established standards of research methods, is performing efficiently, and has sufficient intrinsic motivation to work on his or her own. These criteria serve as basis of trust in the ability, willingness and creativity of a researcher and are the preconditions to meeting ambiguous tasks. Being submitted to process and output control during a whole life is much different from being submitted to it during a certain, clearly delineated phase, knowing that the appointment will imply a wide extent of autonomy and self-determination.

The avoidance of output and process control after appointment as full professor is likely to lead some researchers not to perform after having been appointed, but this is the necessary price to pay for the most able and innovative scholars to flourish.

Selection and socialization processes combined with essentially putting faith in the persons chosen have been used with much success in many areas. It suffices to indicate three cases pertaining to some of the most important functions of society:

- (1) In most countries committed to the rule of law, high judges, after having been appointed, are not subjected to any sort of *ex post* formal evaluation process. This applies to chief judges in the United States, or the federal judges in Germany and in Switzerland. In many countries, the highest judges are elected for life, and thus are not even subject to a re-election constraint.
- (2) After the presidents and other top members of Central Banks are selected, their performance is not evaluated by any sort of *ex post* evaluation. Often, they are elected for rather long periods.
- (3) University professors were appointed for life, and not submitted to formal *ex post* evaluations, in countries such as Germany, Austria and the United Kingdom, when they were the leading centers of scientific research (Gillies 2005a).

In all three cases, the selection and socialization process is expected to be so careful that once completed, one can trust that the persons selected have sufficient intrinsic motivation to perform well. For high judges and top members of central banks this principle has remained intact. In contrast, for universities this principle has recently been undermined. Notwithstanding, it is crucial for research and radical innovations for three reasons. First, individuals as well as institutions are not induced to only focus on easily

measurable dimensions of their task and to disregard tasks difficult to identify and measure. The distorting effects of multi-tasking and rat races are evaded. *Second*, the process of selection does not induce crowding out of intrinsic work motivation because the affected persons do not perceive it as controlling. As long as the selection process is considered to be procedurally fair (for empirical evidence on procedural utility, see Lind and Tyler 1988; Frey and Stutzer 2001), their intrinsic motivation tends to be raised rather than lowered. (Osterloh and Weibel 2006). This effect occurs for the persons chosen, but less so for the persons not selected. Institutions are therefore well advised to apply the “up or out” rule. This selection rule makes sense in cases where intrinsic motivation is crucial and when the unselected persons are expected to have a lower work morale.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Combination of input and process control*

Input and process control may usefully be combined when institutions, not persons, are to be evaluated. The selection process and the autonomy of researchers being selected and appointed constitute the essential conditions for scholarly work. The process control of institutions therefore must ensure, *first*, that the selection process meets the requirements discussed above, namely a rigorous evaluation of the potential candidates, and, *second*, that they are granted as much autonomy as possible once appointed.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, some highly productive knowledge producing companies today at least partly follow this rule. Examples are 3M, Siemens and Google.<sup>16</sup> These companies allow their researchers to spend fifteen to forty percent of their work time in pursuing self-chosen goals (Brand 1998).<sup>17</sup> This should, of course, apply even more strongly to academic research.

### **Conclusions**

This paper’s goal has been to identify and analyze hidden costs, as well as questionable benefits of evaluations in academia which have been neglected or treated lightly, in particular of output and process evaluations. It is not intended to present an overall judgment of the desirability of such methods. This would only be possible if all the benefits and costs were considered. However, in so far as the benefits and the costs normally considered remain constant, the identification of additional costs result in formal evaluation exercises being less desirable.

Two main kinds of hidden costs were discussed:

- (1) Distorted incentives due to (a) identifying and measuring only some, but not all aspects of performance (the multi-task problem), (b) counter strategies to the evaluation exercises, which induce blocking reactions by the persons negatively

affected, and (c) crowding out of intrinsic work motivation crucial for creative scholarly work;

(2) Lock-in effects of evaluatees and evaluators, leading to undue persistence and expansion of bureaucratic interventions.

While formal *ex post* evaluations have undoubted benefits, they are normally overestimated. The benefits of these evaluations are questionable for three reasons:

- (1) They often do not produce new information not already known by peers;
- (2) The information produced is not helpful for reasoned decision-making;
- (3) Rankings of universities lose importance due to the new possibilities of scientific cooperation via the internet.

Some general, but important, conclusions follow from the analysis:

- Retrospective formal evaluations are not a method to be successfully used nearly everywhere as it is the case today. They *cannot* be considered a “modern” system of quality management, in particular for individuals and institutions engaged in research. Rather, retrospective formal evaluations should be used sparingly.
- Careful (*ex ante*) selection and socialization presents a superior alternative to *ex post* evaluation. The characteristic of a selection system is that once a decision has been made the principals put faith in the persons selected. Important positions in society (such as top judges and presidents of Central Banks) are elected either for life or for a very long time period without formal evaluations for good reasons. It is questionable why these reasons should not apply to research.
- The behavior of creative persons fulfilling ambiguous tasks of low programmability needs to be based on intrinsic motivation and the ability to direct themselves. The selection process must above all be directed to this goal.
- Research institutions are to be evaluated by a combination of process and input control. The evaluation primarily has to assess whether the research organizations (a) select the most promising scholars, (b) back them with institutional rules securing them autonomy, and (c) then leave them to direct themselves.

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## **Courage and voice**



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Binjamin Heyl was born in 1946 in Nijmegen. He started work as a trainee nurse at St. Servatius in Venray. He was awarded his A and B nursing diplomas at the Wilhemina Gasthuis in Amsterdam. He also studied theology in Amsterdam. Heyl worked in a range of areas including general nursing, psychiatry, with the elderly and the mentally handicapped, and he also performed various management functions. At the end of the 1970s he started to teach practical nursing and became head of practical training in a nursing home in Leiden. After spending three years in Israel, he entered the field of nursing education. He developed material for lectures that resulted in two books – Intercultural cooperation in healthcare and health services (Interculturele samenwerking in gezondheidszorg en dienstverlening) (1993) and The forgotten chapter within the history of health care: 1933–1945 (Het vergeten hoofdstuk binnen de geschiedenis van de gezondheidszorg, 1933–1945) (2006). In 2008, his book Concerns about healthcare (Zorg over de zorgverlening) appeared. (Photo: Alexandra Gabrielli)

## The professional pride of Benjamin Heyl: Championing the cause of good nursing

Alexandra Gabrielli

“I have certainly had times when I have felt proud. When, for example, I discovered that I was capable of more than I initially thought and that I had ideas of my own. I was still just a lad – I was sixteen – when I started to work in nursing. At the beginning you go with the flow and only later on do you start to understand how it all works. I had enough power to do something within the organization. I knew how to really shake people up. Later I became a teacher in healthcare and discovered that I really have something to offer my pupils.”

Benjamin Heyl (1946) began his A nursing training course in 1962 and then continued his studies and completed the B training course. When he went into nursing, he knew that he did not want to remain in one place and that he wanted to learn about and experience the various branches of healthcare. He worked in psychiatry and cared for the handicapped and the elderly. He held various positions, such as head of a ward, coordinating head, assistant director in an old people’s home and head of practical training in a nursing home (a nursing home offers a greater degree of medical care than an old people’s home).

Heyl has always made an effort to improve the position of nurses. In 2008 he wrote a short book *Concerns about healthcare (Zorg over de zorgverlening)*, a summary of his experiences in nursing. In this, he asks if healthcare employees are responsible for raising the alarm if the level of care threatens to become unacceptable. Too little attention is paid to the opinions of the employees when people talk about healthcare policy. That their voices are not heard is the nurses’ own fault. Their organizations are not coordinated and cannot combine forces and work together when it really counts. They all try to reinvent the wheel independently. Heyl: “In the eighties I helped with the activities of Nurses and Care workers in Rebellion (*Verpleegkundigen en Verzorgenden in Opstand* or vv10) in their demands for a five percent pay raise. The vv10 was the initiative of ‘nu 91,’ a professional nursing and care organization with 22,000 members. At a certain point during this campaign I said that we should go on strike. This was not because of the five percent, but because of the fixed rules that governed the way we performed our work – the fact that patients could only go outside for an hour every day, or be showered every other day, to give a couple of examples. At the time I said that everything revolved around

power in healthcare, but that if you do not use that power, in the long term you relinquish it.

“We are the largest group in the healthcare sector. We should be the most powerful, but in reality we are the weakest. We do not know how to achieve our demands or how we should coordinate our strengths. We always draw the short straw, on the assumption that we won’t abandon the patients. This sounds good, but in the long term we lose, and then the patient really is abandoned.

“Irrespective of what I said, I could not get through to those heading the campaign. They thought my proposal was inhuman, that we could not tell the patients we were not going to be there tomorrow. However, this is the line of action we will have to take, because we can’t get anything done if we don’t use the power at our disposal. This is reality, whether you agree with it or not. I sometimes say that we have a vocation complex, and this is why we will not abandon the patients. But nevertheless why shouldn’t we look for strategies we can use to achieve our objectives?”

Although he was unable to combine the various forces, Heyl did make certain achievements with his critical approach. “At first, when you expose abuse or want to change certain situations, people are eager to follow you. However, I quickly noticed that in our profession you often end up alone. People quickly feel that actions will lead to conflicts, which they don’t want. My personal experience is that you should only get into a potential conflict if you know you can handle it alone, because in the end that is what will happen. Everyone joins for six weeks or so, but then gets impatient and asks why it is not over. People quit.

“You can sometimes, however, bring about change. In the 1970s, I worked in the Amstelhof in Amsterdam, and I put forward a proposal stating that if we wanted to provide effective training, we would have to teach the students to be much more independent and that departments needed to cooperate with each other more. My proposal was discussed, but did not progress initially. In the end, however, I succeeded because many students were failing their exams. I had predicted that 40% would fail. People woke up when my prediction, unfortunately, came true. Then we started changing things and promoting cooperation between the heads of departments. Previously, each had their own territory which they defended and protected. Everyone just kept their heads down, which was not a good thing.”

Another example of Heyl’s foresight and involvement is his December 2008 open letter to the Board of the Social Psychiatric Services (SPDC) East in Amsterdam, where a patient was found dead in an isolation cell in September 2008. Two years earlier, in 2006, Heyl had already warned of the disorganization in SPDC East and said that if the policy there did not change drastically, the whole center would be closed. In January 2009, the center was indeed closed. In his open letter Heyl makes a number of worthy proposals for cooperation, for a human approach in care work, and for management to spend one day on the wards once a month to get a real idea of how things work.



Heyl is particularly proud of an integrated learning program that he launched in the 1980s in Leiden to train people caring for the sick, which he has been able to develop further since then. Heyl: “I have brought together nursing, the history of nursing, ethics and social studies to create an integrated program. A person is more than just a body, and in our profession the ethics of how we operate also depend on the society in which we live. In 2006, when I stopped teaching, the director presented me with a parting gift of a thick, 351-page printed book, made from all the handouts I prepared and distributed at the beginning of my lectures – *The forgotten chapter within the history of health care: 1933–1945* (*Het vergeten hoofdstuk binnen de geschiedenis van de gezondheidszorg: 1933–1945*).

“I have always felt that the period 1933–1945 was a major landmark. This period demonstrates the effects of society and politics on nursing. In Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, things happened in our profession that we would never have believed possible. Those dark years show how far our profession could sink through the behavior of people like you and me, people who were dragged into a system in which we would have refused involvement ten years earlier.

I always say that we are not an island. You can be a good nurse or a less-good one, but you live in a society with values and standards that can change, and which can affect organizations within the healthcare sector. People are not sufficiently aware of these effects. How critical are we? I have spent years teaching on this point. I have always told my students that they must be critical and enquiring. How do we respond to political pressure? Are we going beyond ethical limits? What is optimal, client-oriented care if no one can be called to account for what this actually means? And if no one can be called to account, because there is no actual description of the care tasks, then you quickly hear all sorts of excuses, for example that there are too few staff, or there is too little money.”

TRANSLATED BY SARAH HAMMOND



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Ton Moolenaar, born in Hilversum in 1947, took courses in business studies and computing after he completed his secondary education. He has worked for organizations such as the Volkskredietbank and the municipality of Amsterdam. While working for the municipality of Amsterdam, he transferred to industrial welfare work and completed an accelerated training course. Since November 1978, he has worked as a children's guardian at the Youth Care Office. Moolenaar is chairman of the Association for Youth Care Office Employees (BMJ) and, since 2008, has been a member of the steering group that supervises the Action Plan to Professionalize Youth Care. Ton Moolenaar is married and has two children. (Photo: Alexandra Gabrielli)

## The professional pride of Ton Moolenaar, children's guardian

Alexandra Gabrielli

Apparently, it is not easy being a children's guardian in 2009. Children's guardians struggle with their negative image in the media on one hand and heavy workload on the other. Public opinion on how Youth Care Offices (*Bureau Jeugdzorg*) function has been negative; there are even internet-based groups that spread hatred with the sole intention of bringing about the collapse of the entire youth-care system.

The Youth Care Office is a regional center where parents who are experiencing difficulties in bringing up their children can seek help and, when necessary, look for suitable children's guardians. The fifteen agencies fall under the supervision of the Youth Care Inspectorate and are financed with government subsidies. In the course of the next few years, a Center for Youth and Family (*Centrum voor Jeugd en Gezin* or *CJG*) will be established in each municipality in the Netherlands to help parents and children with problems. Currently, one hundred municipalities have already started developing such a center. *CJG*s are located where people live and are the first point of contact with the Youth Care Office.

According to Ton Moolenaar (1947), chairman of the Association for Youth Care Office Employees (*Belangenvereniging voor Medewerkers Bureau Jeugdzorg* or *BMJ*) who has been active as a children's guardian since 1978, "We have become sitting ducks. People can publish anything about us, but we cannot tell our side of the story. They have the right and freedom to blacken the name of youth care completely, but, on the grounds of privacy, we are not able to retaliate."

The criminal proceedings against the children's guardian of the three-year-old toddler Savanna who was murdered by her mother and her mother's boyfriend in 2004 have left deep scars on the profession and still haunt it today. Since criminal proceedings can be instituted against children's guardians as individuals if something goes wrong, children are taken away from their families more quickly. Employees have become frightened of making mistakes and so avoid taking risks. The North-Holland Youth Care Office, to which Savanna's children's guardian was attached, has since lost 80% of its children's guardians, and the case has resulted in outflow throughout the rest of the country.

However, the Savanna tragedy has also caused a discussion to erupt on the responsibilities of children's guardians – where they begin and end – and on the low level of in-

vestment in their training. In particular, the lack of a strong professional association became painfully evident. At the time, the Public Prosecution Service said that if there had been a professional association with a professional code of conduct, disciplinary rules and a register, the children's guardian in question would most likely have appeared before the disciplinary board, and legal proceedings would not have taken place.

It is impossible to imagine a society such as ours without social and youth workers. They have always played a vital role, as demonstrated by historical stories where the role of mentor or tutor proved crucial to the course the pupil followed in life. Ton Moolenaar has had such experience. "I once placed a child in a foster family where he lived for twenty years. That boy did very well. On another occasion, I broke all the rules to arrange a budget for a girl who suddenly told me that she wanted to study to become a hairdresser. The rules were such that she actually had no right to receive financing for this. She was so happy that she really gave her all during the training, completed the course and received her diploma. Prior to this, she had never completed anything. This girl gained a better position in society and was able to earn her living. I was very proud of this. What I did made a difference. Sometimes people come to me and say 'Hey Ton, you really did a lot for me.' Actually I am grateful, rather than proud, when this occurs. In my contact with these young people, I have always ensured that they can talk to me in private, away from their foster parents. I have always regarded this as important. Even if these were not always such fantastic discussions, the fact that you had given them the opportunity to talk freely to you was enough in itself. They really valued this. If you have legal authority over the children, in other words, guardianship, you bear all the responsibility and you really have to be there for them. They need to know who Ton Moolenaar is and also that they can pick up the phone and call me."

Moolenaar feels that in his profession, you should be resilient and committed and not just choose this profession for the short term – to earn your daily bread.

"In this profession you have to keep going. I say this because often, as a children's guardian, you are the only stable factor in the life of a young person. Parents split up or die, conflicts arise. As a children's guardian, you are, by definition, going to encounter dramatic and difficult situations, otherwise no supervision order (*ondertoezichtstelling* or *OTS*) would have been awarded. If society judges that the situation is so serious or alarming that parental authority should be restricted and a children's guardian appointed, this always has far-reaching effects. Parents feel threatened. Their personal right to bring up their own child is being compromised. If you restrict parental authority, you should also be able to offer something to replace it, and what you offer must be a constant factor in the lives of these children. The long waiting lists and the shortage of provisions – help and support at home; available foster families; places in children's homes, living centers and closed youth centers – can make this difficult. This is compounded by the fact that the number of cases being placed under supervision and the number of relocations from home continues to rise."

Since 2008, Moolenaar has been part of a steering group that supervises the Action Plan to Professionalize Youth Care. One of its objectives is to encourage employees of Youth Care Office and related youth protection and care organizations to become members of a professional organization. Ella Kalsbeek, chairman of the steering group, is also chairman of the Supervisory Committee of the Netherlands Youth Institute. The steering group is also composed of representatives of various help and care organizations, including the Netherlands Association of Social Work, (*Nederlandse Vereniging van Maatschappelijk Werk* or *NVMW*) and Phorza, a professional organization for social, pedagogic, orthopedagogic and aid functions.

There is an urgent need for strong professional organizations that can keep child care and protection employees informed, not only of the latest developments in their field and where they can increase their knowledge, but also when their professional actions can be evaluated using the disciplinary rules. This should include a professional register.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has one million euros available to finance the activities of the steering group, including funds to strengthen the professional associations.

In practice, however, it seems to be difficult to attract new members to the professional associations despite a national recruitment campaign.

Moolenaar: “So far only a few people have put their names down, but a lot more can be recruited. The social organizations that employ the people actually doing the work could start encouraging people to become members and impress upon them that a professional organization can take up their cause if they have any difficulties. People who are prepared to work for the association should receive compensation in the form of reduced working hours, enabling them to dedicate the extra time to the association.”

Moolenaar has more points on his list. What would he do if it were up to him? Moolenaar: “Firstly, I would drastically reduce bureaucratic procedures and protocols. I would reduce reports to a maximum of three pages long and recommend they be only one page for indicating what type of help is needed (since the argument supporting the recommendation is already in the report). In addition, I would make contact journals (daily reports) more compact.

“Secondly, I would increase support for the secretarial staff. For example, I currently need to find out how to finance twelve months’ of protected accommodation for a seventeen-year-old girl with a psychiatric problem. If I place her on a care farm (a working farm that provides structured activities for vulnerable people), the care farm says that this is a care package (*zorgzwaartepakket*) 3, category c case. If so, I can only request, say, ten thousand euros extra from the personal budget (*persoonsgebonden budget* or *PGB*). That won’t work, because this sum will only cover the care farm for eight months, not twelve; the girl cannot sit at home for the other four months, because she needs a daily program for the whole period. I have been working on this for months.

“Thirdly, I would like to start a number of trial projects with the so-called presence method devised by Professor Andries Baart of the University of Tilburg where the caregiver dedicates his full attention to the other person, to see if this is effective for youth care.

“My fourth point is that I would like to see waiting lists reduced by using more generous, intensive homecare for families. We should also identify problems earlier in school, so that action can be taken quickly, rather than resorting to drastic measures needed later, such as supervision orders.

“My fifth point is that one foster parent should be paid the minimum wage. Currently only expenses are reimbursed. Nowadays both parents often work. Perhaps they would like to foster a child but don’t because they cannot afford to lose income. If you finance one parent, that argument is no longer valid. For the whole of last year I searched throughout the Netherlands for a place for two children! In Sweden, France and Brazil, such a financing scheme is already in place.

“My sixth and final point is that I would like the secondary vocational education (MBO) and higher professional education (HBO) courses to prepare students better for what happens in practice. The work the people in the field perform is hard, and the client must be sure that the person handling their case acts professionally and is thoroughly qualified. In saying this, I should also emphasize the most important aspects of our work – making contact and forming a bond with the client and continuing in good faith, if your attempts do not work immediately. You can prepare all the paperwork perfectly, but ultimately that does not mean you are a good children’s guardian.”

TRANSLATED BY SARAH HAMMOND

# Trade unions and professionals in the FNV

Jetty Becking

*In recent years the focus on the content of work, it seems, has grown stronger within all trade unions of the FNV, the largest confederation of trade unions in the Netherlands. Passion for work, professional skill, job content – more and more trade unions consider these concerns to be union themes. Jetty Becking, policy employee with FNV-Vakcentrale, the union's central office, explores this trend by addressing questions such as: How does the FNV define professional skill? How is the increasing attention to this trend expressed? How should it be explained?*

Some twenty years ago I had a teaching job in higher vocational education, a period about which I have good memories. There was much freedom to practice and to develop my teaching skills, together with colleagues. As teachers we collectively determined, to a very large extent, the content and organization of our teaching. Each of us put together our own teaching materials and knew what our lessons were supposed to contribute to realizing the final exam standards. We discussed the nature of quality education in collegial deliberations and aligned our concerns with “the field.” In many ways, we were skilled professionals. But when I occasionally hear how the education sector is faring these days, my experiences seem part of a bygone era. Much has changed. Managers decide what is good teaching now. Today's teaching professionals have to report extensively to these managers on how they practice their craft.

In this respect, one of the FNV unions, the General Union of Teachers (Algemene Onderwijsbond, AOb), has formulated new policies. This union has paid attention to the content of work and to working conditions for a long time. Recent agreements with the Dutch education minister, Ronald Plasterk, are meant to result in a professional statute. Meanwhile a new bill on primary and secondary education has been designed to better secure teachers' professional skill and responsibility. Among other things, they will have “a say in the design and implementation of educational policies, as well as on the quality of education.”

In a similar way, other FNV unions have served as unions for professionals. Good examples are the Dutch union of journalists (NVJ), the union of employees in the hotel and restaurant business (FNV Horecabond), and the union of hairdressers and beauticians (FNV Mooi). In recent years, the focus on job content appears to have increased in

the FNV as a whole. Passion for work, professional skill, job content – more and more unions view these matters as distinct union themes.

In this article I discuss the role of FNV unions in the professionalism of employees present and past. First I consider how we should define “professionals.” Does this term refer only to employees in so-called “protected” professions (such as lawyers and physicians) and those with some kind of professional training? This article is not exclusively about the (semi)public sectors. Though I concentrate on issues of professional skill in these sectors and the interrelated role of FNV unions, I also seek to present ideas on this subject that circulate more generally within the various FNV unions.

After considering the concept of professionalism, the following questions are addressed: In what ways do unions support professional people? What causes unions to pay attention to professional skill? Is this attention really new? Is professionalism a theme that belongs among the tasks of the labor unions? Which kind of activities does it call for? Is there a single approach for employees in all sectors? Or is it important, depending on the context, to allow for differentiation?

### **Professionalism**

“Professionalism” is when employees or self-employed professionals are proficient in their trade and keep up their professional knowledge; when they know how to practice their trade successfully, in collaboration with colleagues; when it is a matter of honor to them to perform their work as well as possible and to generate quality products; and when they are passionate about their trade or profession and are willing to account for it to clients or users. This definition basically applies to all employees.

Optimal practice of professionalism assumes the possibility of acquiring knowledge of some trade, which should be based on quality (professional) training and further development of skills in that trade. It is also important to start from a comprehensive job definition and to have a say in the content and organization of the work. Likewise, it is relevant to account for the work’s quality, but without a bureaucratic duty to do so. Managers who know their trade and skillfully provide guidance and supervision are essential for optimal professionalism. Appreciation of the work is crucial, also that it be rewarded decently financially.

Frequently, professionalism is used more narrowly, attributed only to professionals, as defined by Jos Kole who claimed that within the working population professionals have a distinct role.<sup>1</sup> They have specialized knowledge and skills, mostly based on extensive training; they are expected to engage with particular social values – such as service-mindedness – while their professionalism is closely entwined with their personal identity. In my view, however, all those who work are expected to do so professionally, based on expert knowledge and being geared to clients’ wishes. For them, too, work is a major part of their identity.



Similarly, Richard Sennett has put much emphasis on professional skill or, the term he uses, “craftsmanship,” and its major influence on identity.<sup>2</sup> He feels, however, that it may apply to all employees. According to Sennett, craftsmanship means doing something well for its own sake. In other words, because you know how to make a good product, you make a quality product and enjoy working on it. The work of a good craftsman is based on experience and depth, and this applies to each employee, regardless of his level of training or position.

But Sennett observes that this craftsmanship has come under strong pressure. The economy’s internationalization calls for flexible employees who can deploy several skills in constantly changing companies and positions. Expert knowledge development and depth are much less relevant here, according to Sennett. Potential talent is what counts, while skill or craftsmanship is much less valued. Of course there are different levels of employee flexibility in the labor market. For example, consultants, who are representative of the “modern employee,” may periodically switch from one company or subject to the next. (This happens less often to teachers, police officers, and employees in the care sector.) Yet flexibility, according to Sennett, is the prevailing standard, while job content is deemed less important. In the Netherlands we certainly see this, for instance, in education, which increasingly pivots on guiding students in their learning process, while being less about the transfer of knowledge.

Both Sennett and Kole consider the identity-defining character of professional skill to be crucial. Although, in my view, they are quite right, both exclude major groups of employees from this notion. In my opinion, both the “modern employee” (Sennett) and the working individual who is not called a professional (Kole) have a sense of professional honor. But for some it is easier to shape their professionalism than others. The FNV would like to see all employees and self-employed professionals have the opportunity to perform their professional skills.

### **Activities of FNV unions**

The unions of the FNV provide support to professionals in various ways. Some unions function as professional associations, such as the union of journalists (NVJ), which labors for freedom of the press, safety of journalists, their right to information, source protection and copyright protection. The NVJ provides a platform for professional information, via its website and journal, while it also issues awards for craftsmanship. Other FNV unions address the narrowing of job definitions and the interrelated worsening of working conditions. They bargain in particular for good collective labor agreements, so that at least the basic conditions for good craftsmanship are secured: training opportunities, decent wages, fulfilling job definitions, limiting of flex-contracts, job pressure countering and solid professional training. Also without the threat of narrower

job definitions, however, these concerns are addressed in standard agreements routinely negotiated by the various FNV unions.

These unions' activities to support employees and their professional practices are diverse. The unions provide information and organize meetings and training on the latest developments in the field. They offer facilities to members for performing their work. Several unions have contributed to the establishment of advisory councils on job content in their sectors. The unions campaign for the (financial) valuation of professions. Debates are held on "passion for work," the content of craftsmanship, and having a say in job arrangements. The unions participate in trade fairs, television programs and theater tours. They have developed a professional code and a tool for measuring job pressure. They have geared their organization to professional groups again. The FNV union for so-called "self-employed individuals with no personnel" organizes and supports this group of working individuals who like to focus on the content of their work without interference of managers and bureaucratic rules.

#### **FNV unions' attention to job content**

There are at least two reasons why FNV unions are dedicated to professionalism. First is the close relation between job content and working conditions needed to practice a craft well. One cannot be seen apart from the other. This became clear last year when the NPB, the AOB and FNV-Bondgenoten campaigned for greater appreciation of the work of police officers, teachers and metal industry employees. It was about (social) valuation of work and financial rewards that do justice to the professionalism of these employees. These concerns also surface during meetings that unions organize on the latest developments in the field, for example, on the issue of job pressure. New developments, after all, often imply changes in work methods and arrangements.

The second reason is tied to the reaction of unions to changes in the economy and the labor market. From the 1980s, there has been a much larger spread of production, markets and finance. New technologies have conquered the market, while short-term investments and flexible policies are major trends. Companies need to be able to implement innovations (new products, new processes) swiftly. They must adjust rapidly to changing demands, both here and elsewhere in the world. Employees are simply expected to "move along" with this dynamic economy.

This changing economy has various consequences for employees and their craftsmanship or professionalism. Several are listed below, along with unions' responses.

### Flex-workers

Increasingly employees are hired on a *flexible contract*, creating a sharp division among employees, including crucial differences in their control over their craftsmanship or professionalism. Employees on a fixed contract, who constitute the heart of an organization, have much say about the content and structure of their jobs and various opportunities to develop their skills further. Employees on a flexible or temporary contract have little say in the content or structure of their work, and their opportunities for further development are quite limited.

With its campaign on “Decent work,” the FNV aims to improve the position of employees with flex-contracts by limiting the number of flex-jobs, having fewer small, part-time jobs, and paying equally for the same work. Similarly, other terms of employment, such as the right to training, should apply to all. For example, flex-workers, too, should have a right to shorter working hours, now relevant in this time of economic crisis, and ought to be granted opportunities for retraining or extra training.

The market in a number of industries dictates flex-work, narrower job definitions, low pay, very few or no opportunities for training and increased job pressure for whole groups of employees. This means that the professionalism of employees is severely affected, and there is even the risk that it will disappear. Consider, for example, postal workers and alpha care-providers. In these sectors, the unions focus particularly on working conditions to address their worsening status.

### Employability

All employees are expected to be *flexible* and work on their *employability*. They have to keep their knowledge up-to-date, but also acquire skills that will enable them to work in other jobs (or based on other job descriptions). It is in the employees’ interest to be able to work on knowledge and skills needed in their future careers. They cannot permit themselves to focus on job security; they should also acquire work security through “life-long learning.”

Unions have labored for agreements on training and development, in the form of personal development plans, job-oriented training, special tracks based on recognition of acquired skills, job-to-job tracks, and a central training budget that all employees can draw on. These agreements enable employees to further develop their skills.

Practice shows that employers are willing to train their employees in the knowledge and skills needed for their current positions. It is less common to offer training and development options to raise the work security of employees. This is why unions have recently been geared to bargaining agreements that allow employees to spend (part of) their own training budget on the training and development they deem necessary for a solid position in the job market. Various unions provide advice to members who want to stake out their future careers.

### *Limiting employees' input*

Today's changing economy calls for arrangements that offer room for employees to organize and perform their work based on their own judgment. In practice, however, the reverse seems true; the actual input is limited for many employees. The internationalization and flexibilization of both the economy and the job market created the expectation that the organization of work would change, too. We were going to see organizations with flat, network-like structures, decentralized authorities, broad and complex tasks, teamwork and flexibly deployed personnel. Many businesses, however, have restructured work only selectively.<sup>3</sup> While some innovate, others follow the Taylorist principle of management which was common into the 1980s. It features division of labor, hierarchically arranged organizations and central managerial control. More often, employees have a say about the content and organization of their work, both as teams and individuals. Jacques van Hoof has claimed that 40% of employees can decide on their own how to do their work, without having to follow imposed rules or instructions.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, however, Van Hoof observes that managers apply adjusted forms of control, for instance, by strengthening the culture of the organization and involvement with the organization. More often, managers choose to work with agreed-upon standards via the cycle of performance and evaluation interviews used to assess employees' efforts and achievements. And even though employees are part of teams more frequently, only 15% of them are semi-autonomous teams that have authority to divide and organize the work independently.

Despite management hype in recent years, in practice little has changed of managers' attitudes. If they really wish to enable their employees to practice their craftsmanship, they simply have to trust them – something that apparently is not yet addressed in management workshops. In 2009, the FNV planned a project aimed at employees' input in the content and organization of their job. In addition, we plan to offer activities that enable managers to increase their professionalism in order to raise the skill of their employees. Several of our unions, for instance, now organize meetings or training for middle managers.

Earlier, the FNV did a study of the role of managers or supervisors. This revealed several structural problems. Managers have insufficient skills in leading work meetings, conducting interviews on performance, communicating information and solving conflicts. They do not deal well with their position between employees and directors. They also seem to have too many tasks. Furthermore, the style of management is not always stimulating for employees. 15% of managers merely control things, 14% only carry out orders from above, 20% only aim at a higher output, only 22% coach, 30% do not provide any direction at all and, finally, some have trouble dealing with criticism.

Many managers, then, fail to deliver the content of their jobs. They are insufficiently capable of dealing with job pressure, expressing their appreciation of employees' performance, motivating them, contributing to their job involvement and formulating job

descriptions that make employees feel satisfied and offer them enough opportunities for training.

*Taylorism and accountability pressure in the (semi)public sectors*

One can find countless examples of “old-fashioned,” Taylorist arrangements in the (semi)public sectors, such as increasingly narrow job descriptions and tasks and authorities that are delineated in great detail. In the care and education sectors, the separation of the preparatory efforts from the implementation of work has increased, as has standardization of tasks. Bureaucratic accountability duties seriously impede individual initiative and quality of service.

In recent years, there has been a policy of more limited job definitions for the police. Employees are responsible for results in a more narrowly defined portion of policing tasks. No longer generalists, police are not responsible for knowing a whole neighborhood’s situation, and they are guided more strictly. Still there is slight evidence of change, partly because of the effort of the union of police officers (N P B.) Jan Willem van de Pol, leading executive of the N P B., mentions the so-called “neighborhood supervisors,” who are supposed to have a good grasp of all issues in play in a neighborhood and can deploy this knowledge. There are also plans to reduce the number of categories of positions, which will result in more broadly defined job descriptions. Moreover, Van de Pol labors for a collective campaign of unions in the (semi)public sector to counter violence against the police.

A familiar given in the (semi)public sector is increased central control. Employees have to report to managers in detail, following a specific protocol. As indicated above, the AOb has successfully negotiated for measures that offer room to those in the education sector to organize and perform their work based on their own professional judgment.

Edith Snoeij, chairperson of the FNV union of care sector and public sector employees (ABVAKABO FNV), observes a large turnover of care employees, caused by increased regulatory burdens, bureaucracy, job pressure, division of labor, increased number of organizations and the culture of accountability. For instance, in youth care, 40% of employees’ time is spent on clerical tasks and bureaucratic procedures. As a result, there is not enough time left for the actual work, such as paying house visits. Because of the many different organizations that play a role in youth care, there is poor coordination among them, which creates other risks. The separation of specific activities isn’t effective in homecare either. When one care-provider performs a variety of tasks, clients benefit more than when different staff members each perform a part.

Concerning regulations and their compliance, however, Snoeij claims to be a proponent of protocols as a way to guarantee the safety of patients and the quality of the work. But when protocols become aims in themselves, it is a different matter. Snoeij concludes that in the care sector, the market does not raise the quality of the work. Competition is

based on cost, not quality, while employees are, in fact, highly driven by content and the quality of their work.

ABVAKABO FNV provides support to employees through information on rights and duties, by collective labor agreements – on, for instance, maximal number of cases, professional codes, and the right to return work – and by political lobbying and publicity. The union is involved in a pilot project on self-scheduling in the mental health sector. In childcare, this FNV union doubles as a professional association. For example, it runs the site [www.iooprocentko.nl](http://www.iooprocentko.nl) where employees can discuss developments in their industry.

The public sector is marked by a heavy regulatory burden as well. Snoeij says, “We argue for job activities that are transparent, because one should account for tax payers’ money, but employees would be wrong to let themselves be governed by regulations to an extent that they evade risk. ABVAKABO FNV strongly urged that public officials have more room to deploy their own professionalism. A process has been set in motion where they discuss the meaning of public service with each other. How do you shape responsibilities towards politics and your individual social responsibility? Which aspects allow you to express your professionalism? A special state fund (A+O-fonds Rijk) has facilitated several pilot projects. On various occasions, ABVAKABO FNV has offered workshops on the “professionalism” of public officials.”

The public sector is still geared too much towards vertical accountability – being accountable to superiors. As a result, employees have insufficient time to perform their actual tasks, while the culture of control also causes a gap between government and citizens. Accountability to citizens, customers, patients, and clients – “horizontal accountability” – has to be further developed, in the view of ABVAKABO FNV.

### **Craftsmanship, a union task in the future as well?**

FNV unions will continue to pay attention to craftsmanship. It has always been a union topic. Unions organized activities in response to social developments and questions from members.

In the nineteenth century, for instance, organizations of educated employees labored for working conditions, but they also ensured that employees could keep their knowledge up-to-date.<sup>5</sup> A union journal informed workers in the metal industry of the latest techniques, such as the benefits of electric welding. Office workers organized courses on the newest insights in bookkeeping, modern office machines and correspondence in other languages. These organizations were rooted in medieval guilds, which put craftsmanship center-stage.

The better wages and other terms of employment that were part of the early-twentieth-century collective labor agreements made it possible for workers to educate themselves and develop culturally. Labor unions contributed by setting up libraries and

sports facilities. This attention of unions to development and education fit within the broader task that many unions considered their ultimate goal – the elevation of the workers.

After the Second World War, there seemed to be less attention to job content because of the emergence of trade unions devoted to specific sectors of business; employees were no longer organized based on their trades or professions. In the 1990s, mergers created even larger organizations, resulting in several sectors of business being represented by a single union. The specific job content interests of employees were less visible within these large organizations. However, several smaller unions continued to serve employees' interests regarding both job content and working conditions.

In the 1970s, drastic changes in the economy were another cause of the declining attention to craftsmanship or professionalism. Unions gave priority to keeping jobs and preserving working conditions. Strikingly, in the current economic crisis FNV unions have maintained their support for craftsmanship issues.

In recent years, interest in employees' professionalism has gone up in the FNV. Two issues have been center-stage. First is the interrelationship between job content, working conditions and job market perspectives. Second is the internationalization and flexibilization of the economy, which calls for a reaction from unions that does justice to the changing position of employees.

Presumably, these reasons will continue to apply for a long time. Various FNV unions will, therefore, go on supporting employees' craftsmanship in the near future, through activities aimed at job content and through agreements about the conditions needed to realize craftsmanship. The efforts will vary, however, by sector and by specific job. The following issues can be part of the FNV effort:

- employees' input on the content and organization of work;
- employees' input on working times;
- (broad) job descriptions that allow employees to grow in their jobs;
- strengthening the professional skills of middle managers;
- countering bureaucracy in businesses and institutions;
- supporting and facilitating the skill and professional pride of employees;
- establishing good development opportunities and giving employees input about their content;
- countering job pressure;
- paying wages that are in line with the professionalism of employees;
- countering flex-work and tiny, part-time positions;
- promoting (vocational) education aimed at adequate professional performance.

Activities and agreements negotiated for employees with little education and for flex-workers may differ from those for highly educated employees. For instance, the right to recognition of acquired skills (EVC) could be given prominence in training opportunities for those with little education. The FNV pays extra attention to agreements involving the influx of employees with highly limited labor market opportunities to small, narrowly defined jobs. If such employees have potential, they should be given the possibility to develop and move on to more broadly defined jobs.

In the years ahead, we will continue the debate within the FNV on the union effort related to craftsmanship and professionalism. Activities of various unions will serve as inspiring examples. Along with employers, employees, governments and organizations, such as the Professional Honor Foundation (Stichting Beroepseer), we would like employees to be proud of what they do and accomplish. The quality of their work should have a prominent place again; it will be advantageous to both employers and employees.

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*Jetty Becking was employed as a policy official with FNV-Vakcentrale until September 2010.*

TRANSLATED BY TON BROUWERS



# Works councils are dead. Long live employee participation!

Edwin Lambregts

Dutch law requires companies with more than fifty employees to have a so-called “works council,” whose members are elected by the employees to represent their interests. Far too often, however, works councils engage in outdated and time-consuming activities, purely out of habit. Now is the time to reinvent this council, so it can initiate and redesign employee participation, in collaboration with company leaders. The council must lead the way in creating the conditions for new and more direct forms of employee participation. At the same time, its task continues to be representing the employees at crucial moments in deliberations with other stakeholders (shareholders, government, board of directors, customers, suppliers.) This dual task requires knowledge, courage, creativity, and a healthy dose of self-confidence. Above all, however, it requires the willingness of the works council to transcend itself.

Must have dreamed

Must have slept

Must have wandered

When I dreamed that I slept

And everything was simple

And everyone was kind

Must have slept

Until someone called me

(Excerpt from “I woke up in a strange world” [“Ik werd wakker in een vreemde wereld”], lyrics by Huub van der Lubbe 1987)

Recently I was a guest at a works council meeting in my role as a consultant. On the agenda was a formal request for advice, which the council received only after long hesitation by the board of directors. It involved a plan to downsize the company’s sales department. The council chairperson kicked off. “I propose we start by going through the request for advice page by page, and afterward we come up with questions for the board. Agreed? Okay, here we go, page one....” Frits, a council member I had only just met and who appeared to be a cautious and meticulous person, immediately got up to speak. “I read here, in the first paragraph, that management has considered all options *critically*. I wonder what specifically is meant here by *critically*.” The council then took a half hour to

come up with a proper definition of the concept of *critical* and discussed whether they should first check with the board whether its view of *critical* corresponded with the works council's aim of ensuring maximal *carefulness*.

Baffled and amazed at this spectacle I finally raised my hand. "My dear ladies and gentlemen, what do the employees think about the reorganization plan?" Several council members stared at me like a deer in the headlights. Whoops! Over the past weeks, the council had completely forgotten to consult its constituency.

This incident is a rather extreme example of a problem I encounter quite often in the Dutch world of employee participation. After having served for years as consultant to both management and works councils, I have come to the conclusion that the "old-style" employee participation model has eroded severely. Increasingly, there is a gap between everyday organizational reality and the conventional routine managers and works councils jointly uphold. Works councils do seem to notice the changes to which employers are subjected, and their members may discuss them (among each other and with management), but they do not seem to be part of them – or want to be. This is a grim observation. Is this conclusion justified? If it is true, does it apply to *all* works councils in *all* companies and organizations? These are justified concerns, of course, which I hope to address in this article.

First I will briefly lay out a number of trends which, in my view, impact employee participation substantially. In recent decades, works councils have not adjusted sufficiently to these trends. The consequences are largely negative, but, fortunately, there is a silver lining. To illustrate, I will offer some examples of new modes of employee participation. My conclusion, finally, includes a call to bridge the gap between organizational reality and the current state of employee participation, the motto being, "Works councils are dead. Long live employee participation!"

### **How did it get to this point?**

Organizations in the Netherlands, particularly those in business, are facing a number of trends that drastically alter how they operate, including the following, by no means exhaustive, list: internationalization, rise of the Anglo-Saxon business model, individualization and diversity, fading of organizational boundaries, increased pace of organizational change. I will examine the impact of each trend on employee participation.

#### *Internationalization*

The first trend is internationalization. In the past few years, several large Dutch companies have expanded abroad or were taken over by foreign corporations. This has led to a diminished focus on traditional Dutch labor relations. Many of their clients, customers and employees are in other countries.

A good example is *VNU*. In the early 1990s, this publishing corporation was still very much a Dutch company. By the end of the 1990s, however, under the leadership of Rob van den Bergh, the company divested its general magazines section, and sold its regional Dutch newspapers to Wegener. The earnings were invested in information brokers, including the American company AC Nielsen. The objective was to refocus *VNU* on markets with higher and more stable growth. In those years, however, *VNU* became all but more stable. A planned take-over of *IMS Health* in 2005 was blocked by shareholders, and eventually *VNU* was acquired by private equity parties such as *KKR*, Carlyle, and Alpinvest. Today, *VNU* as such no longer exists. It was split into two companies – data company Nielsen and *VNU Media*, which publishes (online) professional journals and hosts recruitment sites.

These developments have had a huge impact on employee participation in the company. Nielsen is still active in the Netherlands, but in essence it is an American company, down to its ethics and behavior. For the works council of Nielsen it has been very difficult, if not impossible, to get a handle on the international process of decision-making. *VNU Media* is technically still Dutch, but its staff and activities have changed tremendously. The Anglo-Saxon, finance-centric regime of the foreign private equity owner is making it difficult for Rhineland-style employee participation to sustain a culture of liberation.

The example of *VNU* is hardly unique. Many international companies maintain a management model whereby decisions that fall under the Dutch Works Council Act (*Wet Ondernemingsraad, WOR*), such as organizational issues, investments/divestments and social policy, may be made in a variety of places and may have a rather different scope. The main decisions are made by the management of the business units, whose formal organizational structures may transcend national borders. This can be problematic for employee participation. Traditionally, the management of the Dutch holding is supposed to act as the chief partner in deliberations. For some time now, however, this is no longer the level at which pivotal decisions are made. Evidently, the old adage “employee participation follows its management” no longer applies.

#### *Rise of the Anglo-Saxon business model*

Parallel to the trend of internationalization, we see the rise of the Anglo-Saxon business model. In contrast with internationalization, this trend has also impacted companies that are not active across borders. Over the years, business as a whole has largely internalized the Anglo-Saxon mode, including such positive values as entrepreneurial spirit, transparent assignment of responsibilities, and focus on creating value. The latest generation of managers grew up with this approach in their *MBA* programs. Regrettably, many business schools pay far less attention to the European-style business model.

Sadly, I conclude that several basic principles which evolved gradually, such as deliberation, stakeholder dialogue and checks and balances, have lost influence in recent

years. This has complicated the role of employee participation. The Anglo-Saxon world is not familiar with the Dutch-style “works council,” and has trouble dealing with it. In the eyes of the manager trained in Anglo-Saxon countries or business schools, works councils are insufficiently capable of proving their contribution to the company’s return on investment.

As a result, many managers look at employee participation as a mere legal issue with little appreciation for the contribution of representative participation to the company’s successful operation. They just inform the company’s works council, within the framework of the law, to eliminate possible delays in the implementation of plans. Consequently, the notion that a works council might also contribute to the quality of the decision-making process and to solidifying decisions has largely disappeared.

The works council itself is partly to blame. From the sidelines, council members may groan in dissatisfaction, but they do little to bring the council’s contribution to company targets to the fore. Works councils persist in daydreaming of a Rhineland Walhalla, while failing to account for Anglo-Saxon business reality.

#### *Individualization and diversity*

In this day and age, a common sense of purpose and close relations between employees and employers is no longer evident. If in previous decades the standard was to have a job for life, today it is more typical for employees to look for another job every few years, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Particularly in fairly “young” fields, such as ICT or professional services, employees are similar to traveling artists, offering their services to the highest bidder. Others have decided to try their luck as “guns for hire” – self-employed professionals who can be contracted for specific projects. In addition, there are hundreds of thousands of employees working through temp-agencies. These developments have seriously affected the working relationship between employer and employee. One major consequence of this new dynamic is huge diversity in job contracts.

But diversity goes further than just contracts. Compared to the 1970s, female participation in the workplace has boomed. With migration flows and increased access to work for people of various ethnic backgrounds, the working population has gotten even more colorful and diverse. Employees have different interests, views, goals and individual attitudes about employee participation. Generally, one can say that solidarity as a basic value has been replaced by individual freedom over the past few decades. Instead of a single overarching, collective set of employee interests, currently there is a collection of partial interests.

Increased individualization and diversity pose several dilemmas for representative bodies. Which employees do they, in fact, represent? How can they represent the interests of employees, if these interests are no longer shared by all? How do they ensure equal representation of all groups of employees on the representative council? If there is no longer a sense of unity with the company, is it still possible to be excited about em-

employee participation? In my own consultancy practice, I observe that representative councils and their members rarely address these major (existential) questions. Instead, works councils continue to function by their 1970s frameworks.

#### *The blurring boundaries of businesses*

Increasingly, the boundaries between organizations are blurred. Functioning less and less as autonomous islands, companies have become increasingly dependent upon collaborations with other companies.

To give an example, in the past ten years many companies have outsourced their non-core activities. These days, not only basic services such as cleaning, catering, and building management are taken care of by third parties, but also crucial functions like ICT or HR. As such, companies employ countless people who seem to be their employees' colleagues, but, in reality, are employed by a different company or are self-employed. At the same time, they are still dependent on the company's performance, just like its regular employees. Should these external employees have a say via the works council of the service-providing company?

Another example of blurring boundaries among companies is the growth of the network economy. The "2.0 employee" acts within various networks, partly within the company and partly outside. To him or her, the concept of organization is more vague than it is for the traditional employee. Networks cut across the traditional hierarchical structure of companies. Already one can see new applications on the internet lead to new forms of organization, such as *web 2.0*, *online communities*, *social networks*, and *crowd-sourcing*. Work is increasingly disconnected from a specific place and time. If this trend persists – and all indicators suggest it will – the implications for companies will be far-reaching. Yet I do not know of any examples of works councils that have embraced a proactive stance about this trend.

The rights and obligations of representative councils are still linked to a conventional view of companies and managers. It is high time that works councils started reflecting on their role in a world where it is not exactly clear where a company begins and ends, and where managers no longer pull all the strings.

#### *Changed pace of change*

In the past, managers made strategic plans for a period of three to five years. One could count on predicting the company's working environment that far ahead, within certain margins. Organizational and social measures followed from that strategy. This made it possible for representative councils to anticipate the issues that would come up through so-called "endorsement requests" and "advisory requests." Very few sectors still operate this way, however. Strategy has become a game of constant adjustment to changing conditions.

In this context I use the concept of *strategy-on-the-go*. Decisions which have not yet been implemented need to be revised again. As a result, companies seem to operate in a permanent state of reorganization. Structured formally, employee participation has trouble keeping up with the high pace of change. The legally prescribed method of formal advisory requests and endorsement requests ensure carefulness and precision, but does not lend itself to bringing about swift changes. Still, this is a problem that could be resolved through a smart approach and early involvement, if managers and works councils discussed it in truly mutual trust.

A larger obstacle, however, is the formal structure of employee participation and its culture of deliberation. I found a telling example in a book on labor relations at DSM, a major chemical company in the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> This abridged citation tells of employee participation at the start of this century: “with regards to the various deliberative bodies...it is observed that a culture of meetings prevails....The Works Council meets 11 times per year with the Board of Directors. Prior to those meetings, there are 11 plenary preparatory meetings and 11 informal deliberations in section meetings. The three Works Council commissions meet 7 times each year, while as many times informal deliberations between the Works Council’s executive board (DB-OR) and the chairpersons of the Deliberations Council (RVO) take place. This comes down to a total of 40 meetings, not including informal deliberations. In addition, there are 20 to 25 meetings in the context of the External Deliberations Commission (CEOD), and the Central Works Council meetings need to be prepared and/or attended. In this way the total for a Works Council member with double tasks may amount to some 100 meetings per year, excluding the (in)formal preliminary deliberations.”

This quote describes the situation at DSM as it existed just a few years ago. Subsequently DSM has opted for a smaller and more effective employee participation model. This was a good decision because employee participation structures unfortunately have a tendency to create a dynamic of their own, one that is no longer attuned to the organization’s realities. Its delaying effect hardly benefits the decision-making process, and this causes managers to look for ways of avoiding the works council instead of seriously involving it in deliberations.

### **Is employee participation dead?**

The works council in its current form is a product of the 1970s. During that decade, the WOR took shape. Since then, this law has been amended only in detail. The WOR, as such, mirrors views on company democratization as present in Dutch society over thirty years ago. In short, the idea was that in a healthy company, viewed as a collaborative unit of labor and capital, employees should have a say in the company’s policies. This right pertained in particular to social aspects and decisions with a clear personnel component. These thoughts are perfectly logical in a world marked by strong ties between em-

employees and employer, collective interests, clear organizational boundaries, Rhineland-style management and a certain degree of predictability. All of these indicators have increasingly come under pressure, which has also caused the works council itself to come under pressure.

As a preliminary conclusion, I suggest that the current system of representative employee participation is not in good shape. Increasingly I have noticed a disconnect between the organizational realities and the dance of habit performed by works council members and company executives. Employees feel insufficiently represented and have lost interest in works council activities. This is why it is often difficult to fill positions on the works council, even while loosening criteria for selection, such as quality or representation. Next, management will start complaining about the works council's lack of skill and vigor but will take no action to rectify the situation. Instead, management neutralizes the works council by involving it no further than the legal minimum. No wonder, then, that works councils lose their self-confidence, exhibit "Calimero-behavior" (we are small and they are big), and resort to meeting rituals. This only widens the gap between organizational realities and employee participation, accelerating the downward spiral.

Why, then, still have a works council? Would it not be best to do away with this form of representative participation and devote our efforts to new models? That conclusion, I feel, is premature. It would do no justice to the many works councils which do engage in their tasks passionately and which accomplish excellent results. Nor would it do justice to the managers of companies who value input and are dedicated to stimulating employee participation. It is crystal-clear to me, however, that a reversal in thinking about employee participation is imminent.

### **Bring on that silver lining!**

Employee participation is in urgent need of new incentives. We must bring it back to its essence – making sure that employees participate in major decisions that pertain to the overall direction and structure of the organization. This can happen in many ways; having a formal representative body – the works council – is just one option. The concept of "employee participation," after all, is rather comprehensive and suggests many alternative methods for influence and having a say in company policies.

In my view, modifying employee participation needs to be developed along two paths. The first path is to improve the functioning of representative participation, for which executives and works council share responsibility jointly. The second path is to connect representative participation to other forms of employee participation. I will elaborate on these two paths below.

### *Improvements in employee participation*

More and more works councils conclude that modernization of employee participation is unavoidable. Many large companies active in the Netherlands have launched innovation programs, such as TNT, ING Retail, Philips and DSM. Their efforts vary, but they have several strategies in common, including these four:

- In a number of cases, such as the core works council for Philips Electronics, there have been initiatives to reduce the number of council members, so that a smaller group works exclusively on giving strategic advice and developing framework agreements. Since precise workings are addressed at a lower level, employee participation matches the level at which decisions are made.
- More often, internal experts (from outside the works council) are involved on a project basis in working groups and commissions. This model has been adopted by Philips and DSM. Its main advantages include improvement of the quality of analysis, lowering the workload and involving personnel. In some cases, this reservoir of expertise becomes semi-permanent, serving as a flexible resource to the works council. For this type of arrangement, of course, issues such as confidentiality and facilities have to be addressed. Along with the deployment of internal experts, regular use is made of sounding board groups (ING does this) or a network of contact persons (TNT).
- In companies such as TNT and ING Retail, works councils and management agree to collaborate based on a so-called employee participation dialogue. The works council is fully involved in preliminary planning at an early stage. No longer a response to fixed planning, participatory efforts actively contribute to developing plans and offering alternatives. Some go even further, as is the case at TNT. The works councils there co-write requests for advice with management. The benefits are plentiful – genuine involvement in decisions, influence on the process and substantially shorter time between advisory requests and advice (and thus, more rapid implementation of plans). In this model, the works council keeps up with the pace of change better. Real dialogue demands a lot of the relationships between management, the works council and its constituents; trust is the key word here.
- The quality and representativeness of works councils are in the public eye now more than ever before. It is no longer taboo to require members of works councils to meet a given minimum level of performance without violating the democratic principle of employee participation. In some cases, competency profiles have been defined. Likewise, other elements such as assessment, reward and career development are integrated in this approach.

### *Utilize opportunities for direct employee participation*

No matter how laudable the above-mentioned improvements, I doubt they will fully bridge the gap between organizational realities and old-school employee participation.



The solutions adopted largely follow the works council tradition. More solutions are needed. I believe that works councils would do well to think beyond their own organizational frameworks. A wide variety of new and more direct modes of participation are being developed in organizations, and employees seem quite willing to take part. Below, I elaborate on four of them:

- Managers pay much attention today to participation of employees in innovation programs. Take, for example, process improvements. If applied correctly, approaches such as Lean, SixSigma and the sociotechnical approach build on proposals for process improvements developed by employees themselves (see Frame 1). Instead of testing such proposals in retrospect, the works council would do well, in my view, to address the membership of process improvement teams and the “human dimension” in the application of such improvement methodologies. Unfortunately, works councils still have little interest in change management and are focused instead on the (hard) effects of organizational changes on staffing.
- Another example of participation is the associations of youngsters that crop up in some companies and government organizations. Until recently, these associations had a strictly informal social and networking function, but today they also embrace content-driven goals. For example, the website of the network for young government officials,

#### Frame 1

##### **Lean, SixSigma, and the sociotechnical approach**

Since the 1980s, business administration has paid much attention to work methodologies aimed at improving internal business processes. The drive for optimal efficiency, quality and ongoing output improvements (also called *operational excellence*) came from several schools of thought. *Lean Management* emerged out of Japanese management philosophy (most notably at Toyota), and its goal is to enhance the flow of production processes. *SixSigma*, a similar methodology, originally developed by Motorola and successfully picked up by General Electric and others, is project-based and leans heavily on statistical analysis of deviations. The *sociotechnical* approach can be viewed as the European variant of *operational excellence* and is based on system theory. The *sociotechnical* approach, which builds on the relation between people and technology, is less quantitative than *Lean* and *SixSigma*.

Although there are major differences, the aforementioned approaches have many similarities from a participation perspective. For example, the responsibility for improving processes is put in the hands of employees themselves. Often this is accompanied by forms of self-organization within teams. Managers have to be open to proposals for improvements from employees. In turn, employees have to be willing and capable of providing such proposals. There is great need for collaboration, often beyond unit or department boundaries.

### Frame 2

#### Web 2.0, online communities, and crowdsourcing

The internet offers a glimpse of organizational models of the future. At the start of this century, the Web was largely a place where a user could pick up data posted by organizations, such as companies, governments and educational institutions. Today, users themselves produce much of the available information (*user generated content*.) The internet provides every individual with the ability to post information, share with others, edit and merge new information. As a concept, *Web 2.0* covers these interactive applications, offering countless opportunities for innovative ways of organizing. Take, for example, *online communities* of enthusiasts that have come together around *weblogs*, Wikipedia and *social networking sites*, such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Companies, too, find more and more ways of tapping knowledge from the internet. One example is *crowdsourcing*, whereby the company presents its R&D issues to the public at large through an open call. This is possible through sites like *NineSigma* and *Innocentive*. Procter & Gamble is one corporation that uses it on a large scale. I am convinced that companies will increasingly make use of the *wisdom of crowds* inside their own companies as well. New technology will serve as an important catalyst for that, offering individuals the opportunity to exert influence in new ways. What role does representative employee participation play, if at one point each and every employee can have a say?

FUTUR, wants to offer the organization's views on innovation in the public sector. This is done by agenda-setting with government management, developing views and opinions, and so on. I wonder whether works councils and these new associations of young employees consider each other serious partners. If so, this is not (yet) reflected in the number of young employees who present themselves as candidates for membership of a works council.

- As indicated above, organizational boundaries have gradually started to erode even in established Taylorist management structures with rigid functional divisions and top-down management. The Network organization concept is on the rise, and it should be accompanied by new forms of participation. It calls for a larger degree of self-organization, *bottom-up* processes, decentralized decision processes and output management. Those in established forms of employee participation would do well to mirror its approach in future forms of organization. Unfortunately, all too often they hold on to the formal, deliberative structures they are familiar with.

- The internet offers a glimpse into participation forms of the future. The emergence of *Web 2.0*, *online communities*, and *crowdsourcing* (see Box 2) underscores that internet users are willing and able to self-organize, and to offer valuable input to companies and organizations. There is no reason why this new technology, if well managed, could not

be applied within companies and institutions. Occasionally this happens already, allowing for a very direct form of participation. For the time being, the world of employee participation doesn't have the knowledge and skill to use it proactively. However, now is the time to take charge of designing such forms of participation within one's organization.

### **Conclusion**

These examples underscore my view that employee participation is in need of a serious overhaul. Fortunately, alternatives and more direct forms of participation are available. Although formal employee participation plays a role in the design and propagation of such forms occasionally, this is certainly not the norm. In other words, these forms are hardly a genuine alternative to works councils; they are too noncommittal and have no formal basis. For effective checks and balances, a formal representative body will continue to be necessary in negotiations with executives. The various modes, then, are complementary.

As a vehicle of employee participation, the works council will have to be reinvented. It should initiate and redesign employee participation, together with management. So far, the emergence of more direct forms of employee participation has not yet affected works councils in any significant way. The general idea that formal, representative employee participation is very different from having a direct say is a misconception. Works councils will, in fact, have to lead the way in creating the conditions for participation. At the same time, works councils will continue to represent a company's employees at crucial moments in deliberations with other stakeholders (shareholders, government, management, customers, suppliers).

This dual task requires knowledge, courage, creativity, and a healthy dose of self-confidence. Above all, however, it requires a willingness of works councils to transcend themselves. If managers and works councils do not take this new task seriously, I fear the gap between organizational practice and employee participation will only grow larger. Sooner or later this will cause works councils to become marginalized, to no one's benefit. It is time, then, to wake up and open our minds for the new reality. The old works council is dead. Long live employee participation!

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## **Value-driven leadership**



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Jaco van Hoorn was born in 1961 in Middelburg. After secondary school and police training, he spent ten years as a sergeant first class in the police force in Nieuwerkerk aan den IJssel. In this period he also completed a part-time psychology degree at the University of Leiden. He then spent eight years as head of personnel of the Mid-Holland police force. In this position, he worked on the reorganization in which national and municipal police forces were converted into regional police forces. He then spent five years working as deputy police chief in the IJssel and Gouwe district. From 2004 till 2009 he has been chief of police in the Rijn and Veenstreek district of the Mid-Holland police force. Since 2009 he is district deputy chief of police in the Mid-Holland district. Jaco van Hoorn is married and has five children. (Photo: Alexandra Gabrielli)

## **The professional pride of Jaco van Hoorn, Mid-Holland district deputy chief of police**

*Alexandra Gabrielli*

“Police work is very special. This is something that strikes me every day, but to the outside world does not always appear to be the case.” Jaco van Hoorn (1961), deputy chief of police in the Mid-Holland district since 2009, is proud of his profession. He is also a rather philosophical man, something you would not necessarily expect in the police force. He can explain the essence of his work surprisingly clearly: “The essence of police work is the interaction between police and citizen. Significant things occur and we help people deal with the situations in which they find themselves. This includes comforting them, supporting them and really helping them. It also involves correcting them and confronting them about their behavior, which always has to be done appropriately, meaningfully and respectfully. In short, getting your message across in the right way – time and time again.”

Hoorn remembers not only large-scale operations he has led, such as successfully ending a series of cannabis cultivations in a large mobile-home park without tensions escalating, but also special encounters he has had in his career. “I was about 25 years old when I had to interview a suspect who was an 18-year-old boy. There comes a point when you establish contact with such a boy, who is in a no-win situation. He concluded that things were not going well for him and told me everything so that he could wipe the slate clean and turn over a new leaf in life. Then we were able to talk about what he needed. It is amazing what can happen between people in an interview room. That really has an impact on you.”

Of course other people do not always look at police work in that light. Van Hoorn: “Over the last few years there have been a number of developments in the police force, some of which have come from the direction of central government. One of these is results management. We have started measuring what we do as a police organization. This means we focus on large elements such as the number of statements made and what is sent to the public prosecutor, the number of fines given or the time it takes to handle cases. On the face of it, there is nothing wrong in doing this, but if you place too much emphasis on it, then a manager or supervisor starts thinking this is what really matters. The statistics become the only important things in your work – the quantifiables.

“This is, of course, not right, because quantifiable activities are only a fragment of police work. In fact, meaningful things that happen on the streets are often not quantifiable. I often say that the activities we count, we don’t talk about at home because they are not meaningful to us. ‘You can’t imagine what I experienced today!’ For example, bringing someone around who is unconscious – often a battle between life and death. We don’t count that. At home we talk about activities we do not record. This constitutes a considerable risk for people with a supervisory role. If we focus on what we measure, we miss the most important part of our work.

“The same applies to the process management we have implemented to achieve better results. There is nothing wrong with this; it is good to look at where things could be improved. But if we take this so far that we think protocols devised elsewhere will ensure we perform our police work more effectively, then perhaps we are making an error of judgment. Of course we can apply certain solutions for certain situations, but we should not forget that context, people’s behavior and situations can differ. It is exactly in that context, with those people and in those circumstances that good police work is carried out. Then it is not the protocol that makes for good work, but our expertise. As a supervisor, you should focus on this expertise in police work.”

When he attends social events and listens to conversations, Van Hoorn notices what a restricted image people have of the police. “I also notice this when I see newspaper reports about us and when I hear what politicians say. People only focus on what is visible, that we give speeding tickets when people are only exceeding the speed limit by three kilometers an hour, or that we are not around when we are needed. People speak in a very dogmatic way about the police – there is a problem, so the police should be there. When filmmaker Theo van Gogh was shot and stabbed to death in November 2004 in Amsterdam, people were pleased that the suspect was caught. But, when it came to light that a shootout between police officers and the suspect had occurred, did you hear anyone talking about that? It would have been nice if the minister had acknowledged that evening on television, the fact that members of the police force had risked their lives. Such things go unnoticed. I do not expect everyone to focus on this, that is not necessary, but you would expect some people to do so.

In fact, there is too much talk about the police and too little about the people in the police force. It is becoming an institution that is taken for granted and what it does is taken for granted too. However, I can tell you that things sometimes get pretty exciting in our work, that there are huge dilemmas – whether you take action or not, how you do it, whether or not you use force and how you approach an incident.”

In 2005, a number of police chiefs, including Van Hoorn, got together to search for the answers to a number of questions. Van Hoorn: “I got in touch with a colleague whom I knew had more or less the same ideas as me. He then took the initiative to set up a small club with a number of chiefs of police, partly in response to the increasing degree of re-



sults management in our work. We called ourselves Ithaca and started with questions like: What is the essence of police work? What inspires people working in the police force? It has since become a program at the School for Police Leadership. We have taken a number of steps together under the leadership of Jan Nap and Professor Cees Zwart<sup>1</sup> and are looking for answers to these questions by applying the narrative method. We have tried to show what happened in history, giving the story of the police after the Second World War. We discovered that developments and whims within the police force have mirrored those in society. We have shifted from extreme tolerance to hard results management, from being isolated from society to times when people complained that we interfered in everything and failed to keep to our core tasks. One important discovery was that throughout all this social change, a sort of timeless element existed in terms of our task. We then said to each other that all these changes are irrelevant and that this task is the real essence of police work.

You can describe that task in a variety of ways, but in the end it all comes down to the fact that we are always there for people in trouble and we stand for law and justice and for certain values in society, such as the right to life, freedom of speech, equality and the right of ownership. Whether we are in an era of tolerance or one where we are constantly giving out fines, if any of these values are jeopardized, then the police takes action.”

The name Ithaca is taken from Homer’s *Odyssey*, a story in which, after years of wandering and many ordeals, the Greek hero Odysseus finally arrives home in Ithaca where his wife Penelope is waiting for him. The Ithaca movement has also made a journey to find out what inner convictions and inspiration cause people in the police force to feel an affinity with the task they have in society. Penelope had the qualities of patience and trust. What qualities do people in the police force have? Van Hoorn: “You must be able to identify with people – we feel that this is important – and have compassion for your fellow man, otherwise you would not be doing this type of work. Without these qualities you would not be giving what you need to give in order to be a good member of the police force. You sometimes end up in uncomfortable situations in your work, you witness a lot of tragedy, you have to take risks, and now and then you are put to the test. Yes, you have to have something that motivates you.”

According to Van Hoorn, the police would be able to carry out their work more effectively if society had more faith in their ability to get things done. “I feel that addressing this is also the task of a chief of police. The police are often assessed on statistics and tangible results, as I mentioned earlier, but creating trust is a very subtle process and the basis for this – and I am not saying this to society, but to myself and my colleagues – is the way we justify ourselves to society. Not through the authority of my position, but directly. This means that at all times and in all places I must be prepared to demonstrate or explain what we do.”



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Ada van Apeldoorn-Kruissink, born in 1953 in Zevenaar, is married and has three children. Since July 2008, she has been manager of a cardiology clinic care unit, that forms part of the Isala clinics in Zwolle. Her basic rule is that a department is driven by the intrinsic motivation of its staff, and she is continually trying to bring out the talents of her staff. Ada has held various positions in a number of hospitals and institutions. She has organized symposia, established networks and work groups and implemented new ideas. In 2005, she took part in an exchange program for managers in care institutions within Europe on the theme of patient safety.

(Photo: Alexandra Gabrielli)

## **The professional pride of Ada van Apeldoorn, “head nurse”**

*Alexandra Gabrielli*

“In the past, hospitals had nurses at board level. These were people you could emulate. They had an impressive history of service in hospitals and were discussion partners on a level equal to that of the medical director. They stood up for the nursing profession. Nowadays there is no longer anyone on the management board with a nursing background. There are, however, nursing advisory boards that are able to make recommendations on aspects that relate to our profession. Many advisory boards are, however, defunct as a result of mergers or because they were not capable of embedding themselves sufficiently into hospital organizations. As a professional group we have not managed to build up any degree of power, we have no presence at the negotiating table and have actually stopped making an effort ourselves.”

It is certainly not the fault of Ada van Apeldoorn-Kruissink (1953) that nurses no longer have a place at the negotiating table. In the course of our conversation, the archetypal nurse in her was gradually revealed, a woman with a real vocation and tremendous experience. When she was seventeen, she started her nursing training. From the days when she visited the skippers of the large boats on the Rhine, riding on the back of the district nurse’s moped, up to today, she has never stopped emphasizing the importance of her work and its role in society.

Since July 2008, Ada has been manager of a cardiology clinic care unit that forms part of the Isala clinics in Zwolle, where she is responsible for three nursing departments, intensive care and heart emergency cases. Ada had a nice experience a couple of weeks ago. One of the heads of the intensive care unit brought in a magazine and said it was for her. On the front cover was a picture of Florence Nightingale, the British nurse born in 1820 who laid the foundations for modern nursing. Ada: “I found that rather touching, because my colleague felt I have a bond with Nightingale. Florence Nightingale was no stuffy spinster, as is often said to be the case. She was a woman with a vision.”

Ada is often jokingly referred to as “head nurse,” which she regards as an honorary title. “I am proud of my profession, of what I have achieved and of the fact that I still enjoy doing it. I am proud that, despite all the setbacks and opposition, there is still an effective care system and that people on the work floor still do their jobs with passion.”

The root of Ada's pride in her work was her personal contact with patients, when they told her they appreciated the time she took to sit with them and listen to their stories. "I have always found this to be the most rewarding aspect, as people put themselves in your hands. I can still remember a lot about the times when I had night shifts, when I would sit by someone's bed because I knew they were afraid. One is not concerned with protocol at such a moment. Contact with people is what has always made my work stimulating, not filling in an increasing number of performance indicators. We just need to allow more time for the real person in every patient. Last year I spoke at a meeting where young nurses were being awarded their diplomas. At such times, I try to convey the importance of maintaining contact with the patient."

Ada feels that nurses have to split themselves in two, because they have the obligation to observe a whole range of rules on one hand but still want to carry out their profession passionately on the other. Ada is least proud of the enormous administrative and supervisory mechanism. "Of course it is right that we should meet quality requirements. When patients are admitted, nurses are expected to analyze the complete situation at home in order to ensure that the patient does not stay in hospital too long. There is check upon check upon check. Everyone monitors each other. Sometimes I think it is becoming much too complicated. In the past we used to start training with Virginia Henderson's nursing theory. Since then, many other theories have appeared, but I sometimes ask myself – what is the essence of our profession? What are we actually talking about? A nurse has to maintain a patient file according to certain methods, but I sometimes wonder if that is really necessary. I know that we just don't get around to certain things, and, in my view, that means that there are too many superfluous tasks.

"Nursing depends too much on old structures and systems, and we do not sufficiently question why we do things in a certain way. This is the other side of our profession. We do not keep asking questions. We have too little time for reflection. I would suggest putting a few nurses together and getting them to discuss these things. We carry out too little research. Everyone knows that certain procedures must be carried out properly. People are well-trained on the wards, as there are clinical lessons, but I think that there should also be people who highlight what is necessary for the nursing profession as a whole."

Another focus point is the future of the role of nursing. Ada feels that the quality of trainee nurses in tertiary education is deteriorating. She is referring to the attitude of the pupils, their view of the world, their opinions and the way they communicate. "When I was still a supervisor on the ward, I sometimes got the impression that further work was needed on educating the staff. This of course relates to the society in which we live. I do not want to keep going back to the past, but going into nursing used to have a certain status. As a trainee you were taken by the hand and led through the entire process, and a mutual exchange of ideas took place between teacher and pupil. Now the

boys and girls only have short traineeships, which is why I like to visit schools occasionally to tell my story. Many young people watch fantasy television series about hospitals with lots of stress and adrenaline and develop a distorted view of reality.”

TRANSLATED BY SARAH HAMMOND

# **Organizations in service of the good life?**

## **A poetic reflection on modern management practice in the care sector<sup>1</sup>**

Gabriël Anthonio

*In classical philosophy it was not uncommon to describe and investigate themes or subjects through storylines or dialogs.<sup>2</sup> The richness and layering of such texts allows one to explore issues associated with ideals, social relationships, emotions and other concerns. This article has adopted this approach, which may give rise to new insights into our life and social world. The argument offers a reflection on modern management practices in the care sector from various philosophical perspectives and through a personal story of a director. I hope this will result in recognition, insights, and inspiration among readers. What follows is a report of Alex, a manager, and his completely unexpected encounter with Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.*

“As you know I was on vacation for two weeks. In that period I experienced something special, which I would like to share with you before starting our meeting, if you do not mind.” In this way, Alex (43), a manager of a midsize care organization in the western part of the Netherlands who is married and has three children, begins the first management team meeting after his vacation. Interpreting the subsequent silence as consent, he begins his account.

“As you all noticed, I was very tired before my vacation. I had put in long days and also took home much work....”

The secretary, Roelien, cautiously interrupts Alex, asking, “Should I take notes?” Alex gives her a friendly smile. “No, thanks, I would just like everyone to simply listen to my story.”

He goes on, “Add to that the negative report of the inspectorate on the quality of our care, the growing waiting lists and the extra cutbacks imposed by the care agency. I thought I was going to be able to solve these problems by working harder. Although I believe that working hard is not wrong, in my situation it simply went the wrong way. Because of the work pressure, I was often commanding and dictated to others what to do. This is against my nature. I could tell from your reactions that this caused resistance and people began to worry about me. You didn’t recognize me anymore. At home I re-

ceived similar feedback from my wife and children. My twelve-year-old daughter said she felt that lately I had been acting strange.

“I felt I had to find new inspiration, or I would get more frustrated. More and more, it seemed, I found myself in growing estranged from everything around me.<sup>3</sup> Many things I did automatically, in a mechanical way, and I no longer felt intrinsically inspired. It was precisely my passion for people that motivated me twenty years ago to work in this industry of caring for people, and later on, to take the position of director. But I had somehow lost the inner connection with my ambitions. I was struggling, then, with the issue of meaning in relation to my job. To me it was not just another vacation that started several weeks ago, but a time of reflection.”

Alex pours himself another cup of coffee and adds a dash of milk. After taking a sip, he briefly looks at everyone individually. “Henk [chief HRM manager] told me of his great hobby – hiking in wide and long gorges.”<sup>4</sup> While saying this, with some emotion in his voice, Alex turns to one of the team members around the table. “Henk, you told me of your special experience in unspoiled nature, and that each time you were struck by its peace and space and the strong impressions it left on you. You advised me to travel to Greece and go hiking, that it would be uplifting and offer me new energy. I am grateful to you for this advice and I will tell you why. During my first hike in a gorge, which would also prove to be my only hike, a strange thing occurred. It is an unbelievable story, but it really happened. I entered the gorge of my life, so to speak, enclosed on the right and left by sheer cliffs and with only a slightly upward sloping path ahead of me, each step generating a new thought.”

Several management team members move in their chairs and seem to be all ears. Soon all of them listen attentively, curious to hear Alex’s story. Roelien cautiously puts down her gilded pen. “After two days acclimating, I started my hike. The gorge was wide and easy to walk, having a length of about six kilometers leading upward to its final point. There, so I had read, you could rest and have something to eat in a tavern. It seemed a feasible and perfect first hike, given my limited knowledge and poor physical condition.

“After some three kilometers of hiking, however, the weather deteriorated and soon lightning started. A few times I felt a light tremor go through the ground. First I thought this was normal. Later it proved to be a signal of a severe earthquake that was on the verge of striking.

“At one point the ground started to tremble more and more, and I remember I tried to hold on to a large rock. A strange sound came from under the ground, followed by loud bangs. The ground beneath my feet tore open in several lines. What happened next I do not remember, but when I came to, I found myself in a dark, large underground space. My body ached everywhere. During the quake I had apparently fallen into a new crevice. I had several bruises. My right knee ached. Fortunately, I had no broken bones. When my eyes got used to the twilight, I noted the presence of many ghost-like figures. They all walked in the same direction, from whence a vague humming kind of singing

sounded.”

Alex takes another sip of his coffee. Pensively he seems to be staring into a void. With a sigh, he resumes his story. “Welcome to the underworld, stranger!” a voice suddenly said diagonally behind me. I saw three barely discernable figures approaching. The middle one introduced himself as Plato, and his two companions as Socrates and Aristotle.<sup>5</sup> All three had beards and the same kind of long garbs. Socrates was a short, stocky man with deep folds in his round face. Plato was taller and slim and had a strikingly broad forehead. Aristotle, the youngest of them, was the tallest and had a long, narrow face.

“The three men sat down in front of me and looked at me in silence for several minutes. I held my breath and didn’t know what to say. I remember saying to myself that now I had really died. Unsolicited, Plato began to explain where I was. ‘This is the in-between world, the world where we, the deceased, are awaiting a new time. There is no difference here between day and night, and all people speak the same language. We spend our time walking, talking and singing. We are all members of a singing group. Our songs are about the world that will be. Life here follows a constantly repeated pattern without change. This world down here and the one above us, earth, are mentally and physically separated from each other. This is why it does not happen often that a stranger enters our world. Apparently it had to be this way.’

“After the three men introduced themselves and I informed them about my background and the aim of my *vacation*, Plato spoke. ‘We do not have much time, because we have to sing later on. Let’s take turns answering the questions about your life and work as a manager. Each of us is likely to give a different view. I suggest Socrates start us off’.<sup>6</sup> And with a rightward gesture of his hand Plato allowed Socrates to speak.

“Socrates was looking at me with piercing eyes and posed a question.<sup>7</sup> ‘You told us what your problems are, the worries you have and that you have a demanding job. May I ask you a question, Alex?’ I nodded affirmatively. ‘What is most important to you in life?’

“I feel slightly caught off guard by that question. There are many things that matter much to me, such as my wife and children and colleagues.’ This seemed a rather general answer, and I looked at the old man to see whether it satisfied him. He said ‘You mention a series of individuals, but I still do not know what is most important to you. But let’s not waste any time continuing on this path.’

“Socrates went on with a second question. ‘What do you wish for these people in their lives?’ Again I had to think. ‘I wish them all well – happiness, good health and such,’ I responded positively.

“‘And what is necessary for them to achieve this?’ Socrates went on, asking a third question.

“I now had to think a little longer. This was a difficult question. ‘I’m thinking of all kinds of things such as education and care, but also things that guarantee their safety, such as the police, plus all kinds of laws and courts that protect them. I believe we need a just society that protects all the people’s rights. A society that cares for all its citizens.’

“‘And your organization does this as well?’ Socrates went on. I nodded cautiously.



‘Mostly, yes, we do our best. Every Dutch citizen with a “care indication” and health insurance may use our services.’

“While giving this answer I felt Socrates’ next question coming already. ‘And what do you do with non-Dutch citizens or uninsured people?’ ‘Eh, well, every now and then this happens, and we are not allowed to help them,’ I shyly admitted. Socrates paused and went on, ‘So the law determines who is allowed to get help and who is not? That you call just?’

“Socrates’ questions did not seem like mere questions, but also critical reactions to my answers. I had a feeling that I got stuck in my own reasoning on justness. ‘You raise many questions, but you’re right, our care system is not always just. Also in other areas such as education and legal situations, the law determines who may or may not participate. We need rules, after all, or people will use these facilities wrongly,’ I immediately became defensive. ‘Even the director (pointing at me) has to stick to certain rules.’

“Socrates nodded understandingly. ‘So you, as director, cannot intervene, cannot do the right thing for someone else, even if you want to, because, like all those others, you are bound by laws and rules?’ Silently I nodded affirmatively. It dawned on me that this was one of the reasons I felt estranged. Because of these rules and procedures, I could not give others the best or most fitting care. ‘What should I do, then, to have a just organization?’

“Plato looked concerned. Perhaps he pitied the director who helplessly posed a question. Plato addressed Socrates. ‘Socrates, you and all your questions, you confuse this poor director, just like you did when you were in Athens strolling at the market. As you noted then, ‘Just look at the many things that you can buy here which I will never need in order to live.’ In the same way you make this man feel a useless abundance of thoughts. Try to help him now that he realizes his confusion.’

“Socrates followed Plato’s advice and went on, ‘The problem with the laws and rules made by societies and organizations is that these rules develop their own internal logic and create their own bureaucratic power, resulting in all sorts of processes that include and exclude people.<sup>8</sup> While you would like to see your next of kin and all those other people enjoy the good life, these formal processes block you from acting. Possibly this is one of the causes of your feelings of estrangement. People become estranged from each other through the external legitimization of the mutual relationships and communicative processes of your organization. As a result, the conversation is about what is right according to the rules, rather than what is good for people.

“‘In Athens, we had the same problem.<sup>9</sup> There were all sorts of laws and rules, and we have known many forms of governance. In many cases, governments and laws dictate and dominate the interaction between individuals. Please note, I’m not saying you should not follow laws and rules. On the contrary, as long as a community has not been formed based on mutual love and affection, laws and rules are the only means to prevent a society from falling into chaos. Laws and rules justify the mutual relations and forms of conduct and ensure stability. But open relations, in which people are prepared to do

something for each other, such as relations based on friendship, do not need external justification. Friends, after all, determine how they interact and what they discuss. Such relations make room for a creative space. This open space gives rise to a new creative world that is based on what friends share with each other and, therefore, can be defined as communal.<sup>10</sup> This might be an ideal worthy of being pursued.

“My advice in reply to your question about a just organization is twofold.<sup>11</sup> First you should make your own growth more central. Love of the road to wisdom transcends everything, my friend! By reaching out for the good life, you can resist the alienation within.

“Second, you could contemplate the value of friendship, which is tied to all sorts of virtues, in your life and in your organization. Relations that come with elements of friendship give rise to creative space out of which new organizational principles – or even whole new organizations – may emerge. Relations based on friendship, in contrast to hierarchically determined relations, offer much more room for the participants to converse.<sup>12</sup> Only in such horizontal relationships can you actually have genuinely open dialog about the basics of life and the aspects of the good life worth pursuing. This is also, potentially, the remedy for the growing bureaucratization in your organization.

“Mind you, though, friendship is only a regulating thought and an appealing perspective – not a final answer to all your questions and dilemmas. Keep searching, keep questioning, and have others ask questions of you, because growing wisdom is found in the quest itself, not in its outcome. I have spoken!”

“After these last words, Socrates hit himself on his right knee and stared silently in front of him. Plato subsequently asked Aristotle to offer his view on my situation. Nodding his head, Aristotle bowed to Socrates. ‘With all due respect for your questions and your explanation, I will shortly give my reaction to Alex’s situation. But first I’m curious to know which issues now preoccupy Alex.’

“My head was spinning with all the interesting, yet hard to interpret, issues presented to me in such a short time: the limits of justice, granting others the good life, holding dialogs, having horizontal relationships based on friendship. In my mind I wandered off to my time as a student many years ago, in the early 1980s, at the De Horst Academy for social issues in Driebergen. Neo-Marxist theories, including those of Jürgen Habermas, were popular at the time. The philosopher Harry Kunneman, in the wake of Habermas, called the ‘system,’ consisting of power and money by all sorts of bureaucratic processes the ‘colonization’ of our social world, controlling our social world and, thus, our bonds and mutual relationships. Instantly, I recognized a connection between the classical views and those of this modern philosopher.<sup>13</sup> Thinking of this period I was also reminded of the shared social involvement among students with strong, grassroots, activist mindsets. Spiritually, I was touched by Socrates, instantly feeling a connection with my own, ideals-oriented past. I had the sense that a number of essential matters were at issue that might help me move on. The wise lessons appealed to me so much that I forgot my bruises and the pain caused by my fall.

“Contemplating the direction indicated by Socrates, I arrived at the following idea. ‘There are so many kinds of friendship and collegial relations that have elements of friendship. How should I integrate them into my leadership?’ I wanted to share this concern with Aristotle, and I asked him to address it.

“After listening to me, Aristotle spoke. He chose his words carefully and developed them into a coherent system. ‘First I will share a few general thoughts about friendship. Next I will classify the various kinds of friendship for you, in response to your questions and situation. Apart from the strong bonds that characterize friendship, friendship is almost a basic condition. After all, you almost cannot imagine your life without friends.

“‘No one would voluntarily choose to live without bonds of friendship, not even if all his material needs were satisfied.<sup>14</sup> Just as eating and drinking are preconditions to living in a biological sense, these do not amount to the good life in themselves. Likewise, working in an organization, a precondition for earning money and being able to live well in a material sense, does not coincide with the good life either. Real friendship refers to a higher dimension; it is sustainable and can make a human being feel intensely happy. This friendship is fully geared to the other. This is what I call friendship based on “character” or “nature.”

“‘My pupil Alexander the Great understood this well. He conquered the whole world and, until his death, had a group of steady friends around him. In the wars, they acted as his advisors and generals, but in their mutual interactions, they were his friends. He was their leader and, at the same time, their friend and confidant. Without this team of dedicated friends, Alexander could not have won a single battle.’ Aristotle paused, gazing sadly in front of himself. Perhaps he was thinking of his memories of Alexander, I speculated in silence. Aristotle went on, ‘Equality in friendship, creating a horizontal dimension, is therefore based mainly on such matters as respect and empathy. It involves the awareness that no one can determine the truth for someone else. This turns friends into equal partners in a shared world. Despite this space and liberty, friendship is far from noncommittal. A dear friendship should have all that is worthwhile, shouldn’t it? Our effort at this becomes stronger as our friendship becomes deeper. A negative act against the other, therefore, carries much weight. Friends stand by each other, through thick and thin, and do not let each other down. The special element of friendship is that the injustice one inflicts on someone else increases in proportion to the depth of the friendship.<sup>15</sup> In my view, then, friendship is the supreme virtue.

“‘These were the general points I wanted to share with you. I will now address the different levels and functions of friendship that I mean to have observed. Friendships can be based on three matters: Pleasure, utility, or the good.’ And Aristotle, as he was saying this, drew a triangle on the ground with a piece of rock.<sup>16</sup>

“‘I do not want to say much of friendship based on pleasure. The pleasure of eating and drinking together with friends is very short-lived, and, because of its superficiality, hardly worth elaborating. The only thing I would like to say here is that history teaches us that a society that is hedonist and merely geared to consumption and materialism is on the verge of its demise.

“Friendship based on utility has to do with the advantage a person seeks to realize. If this one-sided pursuit of services, goods or wages does not have an ethical dimension, this does not render it reprehensible yet. I think of the principle of exchange, such as getting what you deserve. Exchanging what is useful in a balanced way will strengthen the community rather than undermine it. People can only secure the benefit of exchanging, however, in a community where justice and solidarity flourish.<sup>17</sup>

“The most worthy pursuit, then, is friendship in the context of the *good life*. The good life is about the world behind material and visible phenomena – values, virtues and ideals worth seeking. Issues tied to pleasure or utility are ephemeral. The good life pertains to eternal (universal) values and virtues. It involves concerns that in a thousand years will still have great meaning, such as love, friendship, and beauty.

“The main quality of a good leader, one who is capable of creating a community of friends, is this. A leader should be capable of understanding the largest possible diversity of realities that influence the opinions and feelings of employees. Simultaneously, he ought to be able to communicate these realities and connect them with each other, creating a communal world.<sup>18</sup> What matters in a good leader is not the ability to draw links between people and himself or his organization, but to link the diverse worlds and opinions of his community in a way that is recognized by all participants, thus providing an open, creative space.’ After these last words, Aristotle looked diagonally over his shoulders, towards the sound of singing. ‘I will stop here, time is up, and I would like to call on my valued teacher Plato to speak as well. I have said enough!’

“Plato started speaking and began, like his predecessors, with a question. ‘What do you experience in your soul right now?’ His question was geared to my condition. He did not mean my predicament of being deep down below in the in-between world and the many painful bruises, but to the condition of my soul. I resolved to share the feelings that came over me with Plato. ‘Sometimes I just want to cry out that I would like to live again in a genuine way and connect with issues that really matter. I must say that I increasingly resent being a leader in my organization. My feeling is that all day I must do things that go against my willingness to do them, thus wronging myself and others. Nevertheless, I bravely go on.’ I could feel the tears welling up in my eyes.

“All the time Plato had been looking at me in a scrutinizing way. He reminded me of the minister of the local church of my childhood, perhaps because no one, except the old and well-read minister, ever asked me about the condition of my soul. He liked preaching about elevation and a virtuous life. If only he knew that I, despite having left the church, was now intensely contemplating my own meaning, helped by several wise and famous men, whom he probably studied as well. Plato nodded soothingly, after which I permitted myself to show my tears.

“Plato went on, ‘My respected predecessors provided an introduction about the good life being worthy of pursuit. Reflecting on your situation, they elucidated the virtue of friendship.<sup>19</sup> I will elaborate on this, but first I would like to share some general thoughts with you. Before putting your organization at the service of the good life, you

will need to explore this question on your own first. A human being, after all, has nothing to give away that he does not first have himself. Here on the ground, in Aristotle's triangle of friendship [see Appendix I, Figure B], I recognize the three levels of life. The first is the biological and material life, aimed at consumption, the *bios apolaustikos*. In an organization we need skills and craftsmen at this level. Second, it is important that our life has a certain order and pattern, the *bios politikos*. At this level, we need people with knowledge and leadership capacities in an organization. The third and highest level is that of the contemplative life, also called the *bios theoretikos*. This is the life of a contemplative, philosophical man, who reaches out to universal values, the divine world of ideas.<sup>20</sup> Rather than practical skills or knowledge, leadership or management requires being proficient in the wisdom that refers to the world of ideals.<sup>21</sup> A leader who operates at this level is a source of inspiration, instead of being just a manager. In my view, a good leader is he who has both leadership qualities and wisdom.<sup>22</sup> These qualities allow him to explore the worlds of others, to connect with them and communicate with them, as my predecessor Aristotle claimed.

“Creating a communal world of people who pursue shared moral values and ideals together is the highest art of leadership. These leaders refer to the world of the “eternal, the world of ideals,” in their words as well as their actions.<sup>23</sup> One aspect of the search for wisdom is the search for eternal life. We know that we do not have eternal life here, but we can link our soul and life with values that are permanent and, hence, eternal. The ideal leader is the wise king and the detached philosopher, the philosopher-king. In this way, the leader and the organization are at the service of the good life.’ Plato took a meaningful pause, plucking solemnly at his beard. He, in the wake of his predecessors, underlined, ‘This is what it is about!’

“I looked at him questioningly. I had heard enough generalities. I was ready for some practical advice. As if sensing this, Plato concluded by mentioning several activities that might get me going. ‘If you follow the line of Socrates you could begin by making more contact with employees and clients. You might ask them what are the main values in their lives. You could ask their stories behind these values. You could also ask them about aspects of the good life. What is health, welfare, happiness, friendship or wisdom to them? The stories and reactions might inspire you and your fellow managers to a form of leadership that is focused on the values of the good life – much in the same way friends are geared to each other.

“An organization, and in particular a care facility such as yours, should be in service of the good life.<sup>24</sup> The good life, after all, concerns those matters that have value in our life and daily work. It is about the meaning that employees, clients, and society give us and our organizations. If you would like to make further use of the thoughts of Aristotle, you could study how the various relationship layers connect in your organization. How do pleasure, utility and good interrelate in your organization? More insight into this aspect will make it possible to improve it, if you find it necessary. I mean to say that you may consider enlarging the number of situations in your organization that deal with the

meaningfulness and interpretation of the good life. This allows you to reinforce horizontal relationships, dialog among individuals in your organization, regardless of rank and status. This will create more value-driven, personal connections among the employees.

“My final advice is more personal. Embark on an inner journey. Work on your soul. My sense is that you are a capable leader, but you have neglected the development of self-knowledge. This neglect of your soul has alienated you from your own essence, your convictions and ideals. Finish what might be called the purification of your soul; come to terms with the unrest within, in both your mind and emotions. Sometimes we may get impatient, judge too quickly, and take too little time to examine issues carefully. Leading and organizing are not just about what is visible – an object (your organization), a means of production (machines and people), a product (health care) – but also about life itself and its meaning! This is why you need to examine philosophical and theological traditions, study the stories, and reflect on the holy writings. Make sure, then, that you gather sources of wisdom that you can draw on regularly. Also gather wise friends around you. Life is too short to be spent in a superficial way, my best seeker. Wisdom begins with personal reflection; this will increase your self-knowledge and your human wisdom in general!

“There is still much to say, but we really have to go now. We will go, singing about the things to come. I have spoken!’ And with these last words, Plato got up. Silently the other two men followed him and, without saying anything further, they turned their backs on me and walked off into the darkish distance. After some minutes I heard monotonal singing.”

Alex moves his hand up and down like a conductor, humming to indicate how the music sounded. All this time, his colleagues had listened breathlessly. Silently, they look at Alex expectantly. Then Alex’s hand moves to the back of his head.

“Suddenly I felt a nagging pain on the back of my head. When I opened my eyes, I looked straight into the face of a worried gorge hiker who offered me water from his bottle. I must have fallen and lost consciousness. Friendly hikers took me back to my hotel. After several days of rest, I took a plane home, where I shared this story with my wife and children. I still do not know whether it really happened or came to me in a dream. I was given a spiritual peek behind our material and visible world. At least that was one of the good things about it! We will keep talking about it for a long time, as I try to grasp the implications for myself, my family and my work.”

Excitedly Alex looks around. Hesitantly, all nod in approval.

“And this contemplation, my friends, cannot take place without you. I would like you to join me in contemplating two issues in particular, two ‘slow questions’ that may preoccupy us for a long time.<sup>25</sup> Would it be possible to put our organization at the service of the good life for our employees, clients, and ourselves? Is it possible for our organization to take on features of a community of friends and thus become an organization of people who wish for each other the best, the good life? In the time ahead, as far as I am

concerned, we will address and explore these questions in our work together. But for now I have said enough!”

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TRANSLATED BY TON BROUWERS

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## Appendix I

Figure A.  
The triangle “friendship” and the  
“good life” according to Aristotle

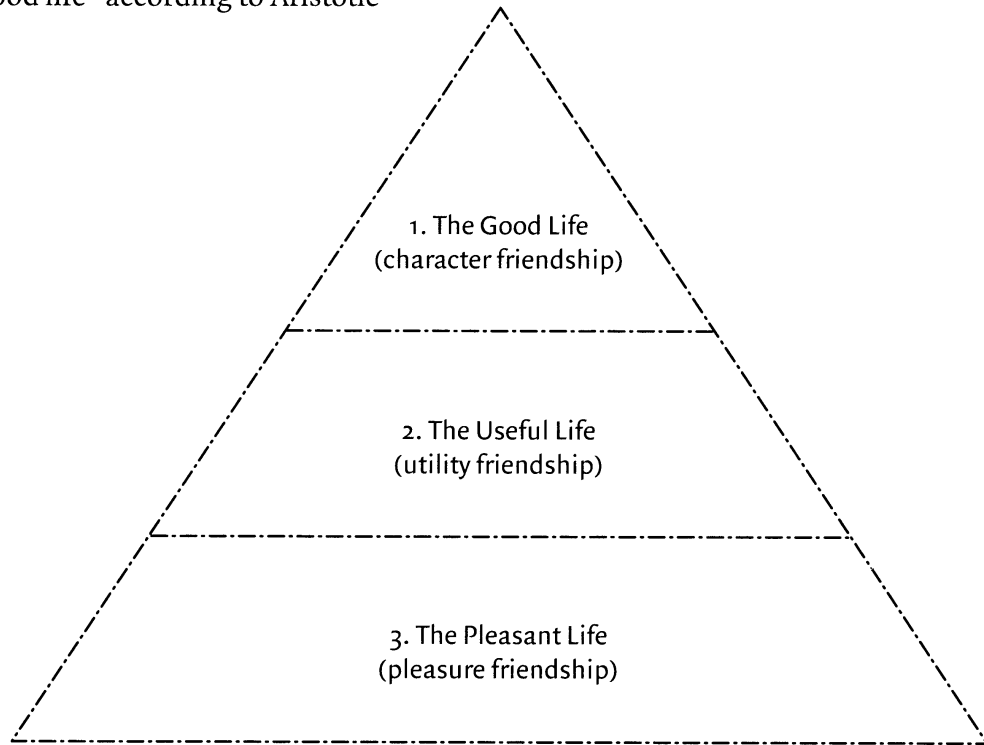
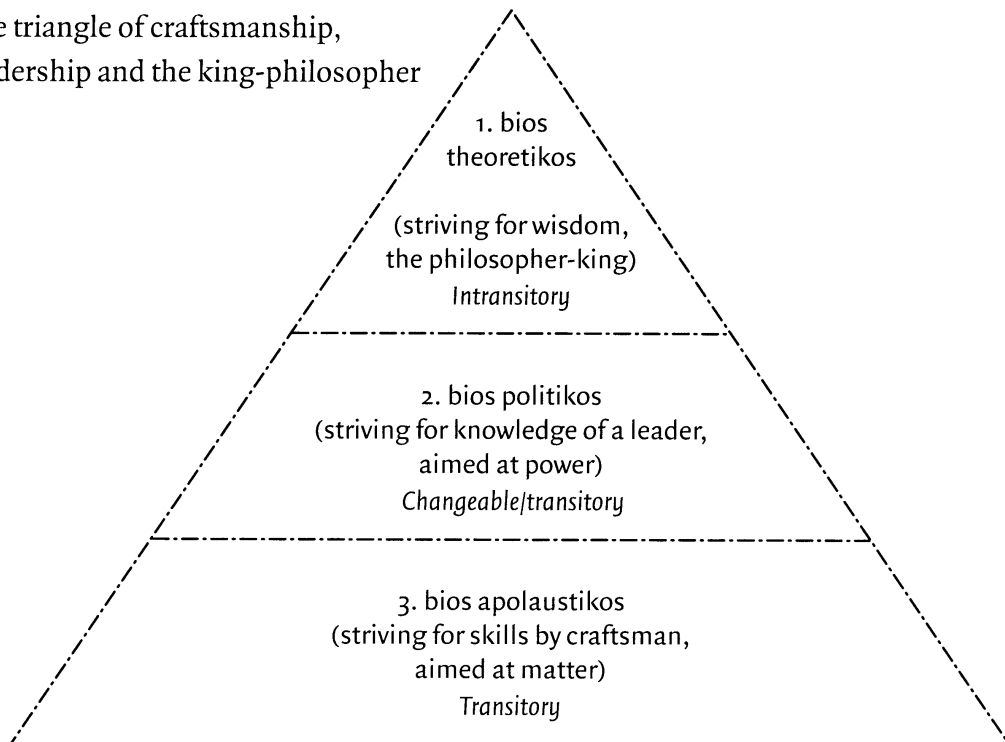


Figure B.  
The triangle of craftsmanship,  
leadership and the king-philosopher





## **Management in times of declining trust: A discussion with three managers from the care industry**

Thijs Jansen

This article reports on a discussion with Geert Blijham, Moniek van Jaarsveld and Jos Lamé, who each head a different care organization – an academic hospital, care facilities and nursing homes for the elderly, and a regional facility for mental health care (a so-called Riagg).

Until January 2009, Geert Blijham served as chairman of the Board of Directors of the Utrecht U M C, and he has been a professor of internal medicine since 1987. In addition, he has chaired the Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centers (N F U) for three years. In 2007 he won the Jubilee Award as “government manager of the year” for exceptional achievements throughout his career. On the day of his formal farewell as chair of the Board of Directors of the Utrecht U M C, Blijham was named Knight in the Order of Oranje-Nassau, a royal honor for his outstanding achievements as an academic and his ten-year chairmanship of a leading university medical center, which is in good shape financially and counts as the best center in the Netherlands in various medical fields. Blijham will continue to be associated with the Utrecht U M C as an advisor for another year, and he will focus on knowledge valorization and internationalization.

Since June 2006, Moniek van Jaarsveld has been chair of the Board of Directors of Warande, a care organization for seniors that runs three care facilities and two nursing homes in Houten, Bilthoven and Zeist. Van Jaarsveld was trained as a lawyer. Earlier she worked as a lawyer and as a policy advisor on labor market issues. From 1998 to 2006, she was a member of the boards of governors of, respectively, A M C/De Meren, a mental health institution, and Palet, an organization for the care and nursing of seniors in the Province of Friesland. In 2006 Van Jaarsveld was one of over a hundred signers of a petition that called on the government to support, rather than punish, nursing homes. She is a member of the editorial board of the monthly magazine *Zorgmarkt*, devoted to privatization efforts in the care sector. Each year this journal organizes the selection of the year’s best business in the care sector.

Jos Lamé is director of Riagg Rijnmond, a regional facility for ambulatory mental health care in Rotterdam. He was trained as a clinical psychologist but early on discovered that management appealed to him more than treating patients. For 14 years he has also been a program leader of Stolte postdoctoral management for managers in the care

industry. In collaboration with Paul Frissen, an expert in public administration at Tilburg, and others, Lamé has organized this curriculum in a way that managers are exposed to a wide array of unorthodox perspectives and ideas. He is known as a self-willed manager who in recent years has increasingly and publicly resisted the growing uniformity and disciplining of professionals in the care sector, which he views as an incorrect development. In a February 2008 issue of *NRC Handelsblad*, he referred to the electronic child record as “megalomaniac and Stalinist.” Further, in late 2008 he resisted the introduction of a uniform reporting code for domestic violence, believing it would turn the Netherlands into a country where problems and responsibilities are merely passed from one actor to the next, eventually resulting in no one acting anymore. The Rotterdam alderman Kriens was so displeased with his uncooperative stance that she threatened to cancel the city’s Riagg funding, and she even considered firing Lamé (Binnenlands Bestuur, 5 December 2008).

The discussion between these three care managers was hosted by Wilma van der Scheer. She is managing director of the Erasmus Center for Management Development in Care, which organizes post-academic curriculums for leaders and managers in the care industry. As an academic researcher, she is active in the broad field of administrative issues and management in the care industry. Her Ph.D. project covers professional management of health care organizations. She was enrolled in a program in Health Care Policy and Management, as well as in a postdoctoral program on change and development in organizations. She started her career as a management consultant in the health care sector.

### **Managers under growing external pressure**

*Health care is a highly dynamic sector. Requests for care are not the only issue subject to constant change; the same applies to treatment options. Moreover, the interference of national politics and policies has been substantial. New guidelines, laws and regulations are formulated all the time, and new players enter the field on a regular basis. What are the implications for the management of care institutions? In what respect does managing a care institution today differ from, say, ten or twenty years ago?*

Van Jaarsveld:

Drastic changes have occurred in the position of patients. In many cases, patients and clients increasingly behave as consumers. There is no automatic trust anymore. They no longer look exclusively at the quality of care, but also at the full package of services provided. This changed behavior has influenced a lot. Homes for the elderly and nursing homes used to be institutions; today they need to be social enterprises. Directors can no longer be stewards who merely manage things; they have to be entrepreneurs. Today’s patients and clients demand accountability in protocols and such. My sector has to deal with widely different consumer behavior. This means that, as managers, we have to look

for a good balance between our everyday work and our accounting for it. Furthermore, as entrepreneurial managers, we have to develop a sense of the changing contexts in which we respond.

Blijham:

I do recognize what you say about patients and clients who behave as consumers. In hospital care, however, such behavior is hardly sensible, particularly regarding the relationship between physicians and patients. In this respect, I distinguish between what can be observed in society and what is a positive development. I continue to feel that the notion of trust in the health sector is crucial when it comes to quality care. For this reason, I refuse to follow the trend of care as a consumer product. Nor should physicians do so. Most patients do not want us to, either. Recently, for instance, I talked to a prominent businessman whose father had prostate cancer. The attending specialist had listed three possible treatments from which the father had to pick one. What to do? The businessman justifiably complained. One should expect a physician to propose what he deems best. Patients should be able to rely on his judgment and expertise. The kind of consumer behavior involved in purchasing a television has no place in health care.

Such consumer behavior, I believe, is less common than many think. There is a sense that patients are growing increasingly more assertive and are more dissatisfied with the quality of care. This is at odds, however, with the general picture. Nationwide, the number of complaints is dropping. Last year the patient service department of the Utrecht UMC received a total of six hundred complaints – a number that is decreasing today. Fourteen of those led to a formal complaint with the complaints commission, a number that is also declining. Keep in mind that we enter into 400,000 contracts each year, with many opportunities for something to go wrong. At the UMC we also study our patients' satisfaction each year. Most of the many patients who respond are very satisfied. This can also be deduced from the fact that patients do not switch very often to other care providers or insurers.

I conclude that mounting distrust and the related consumer behavior do not originate with the patients. The mood of distrust is provoked by politicians at the national level. Although there are good reasons to encourage professionals to work even more efficiently and to account for their work in even more detail, the growing pressure is mainly driven by major political fears that our huge public sector is no longer affordable. The Netherlands has a uniquely large collective sector, funded through taxes and premiums. In many fields, this country barely has a private sector, compared to many other countries. As a result, national politicians and policymakers have nightmares on issues, such as how we will collectively manage to pay for the full package and how we may avoid social bifurcation. Although this is understandable, perhaps, it is an outright illusion that this major financial problem will disappear by increasing the pressure on professionals. After all, costs do not go up because of professionals' behavior, but on account of two autonomous social processes that can barely be influenced, if at all –

technological innovation (responsible for two-thirds of the increase) and aging (responsible for the remaining portion). Hence, the reasons for my mild cynicism. As a manager and professional in the care sector you want to do well, but you will never do well enough, by definition. The risk of huge and incessant political pressure is that care organizations will be put on the defensive more and more. This is the dilemma that most care managers are facing. They need to keep the professionals from complaining about the large, angry outside world which curtails their efforts and lacks confidence in them. But, for the time being, I do not see those in politics offering other choices.

Lamé:

Politicians and insurers have used the fears of patients and clients to secure a position of power regarding care professionals. Today those in youth care are waging a war against family violence by accusing professionals of unprofessional activity. The uncooperative, tacit professional is the main culprit.

This is a simplification. We managers have to try much harder to clarify the dilemmas faced by professionals to the outside world. In particular, we should underline that they do not have solutions for everything. A case such as that of Gèssica, the so-called Maasmeisje [whose murdered body was found in parts in the river near Rotterdam], renders care providers quite vulnerable. In May 2007, there was a report by various inspectors. It concluded that the more than ten Rotterdam agencies involved in providing care to Gèssica did not exchange information about her. In response to the report, Leonard Geluk, the Rotterdam alderman of youth and family affairs and education, called it unacceptable that agencies did not cooperate. He also claimed the lack of comprehensive coordination to be characteristic of the care provided to thousands of children in the same region.

It is my managerial responsibility to stand up for my professionals by opposing such generalizing and incorrect representation. I can mention a number of cases in which I did so. In August and September 2007 the Health Care Inspectorate severely reproached one of the Riagg units in the so-called Maasmeisje case. This Riagg, however, was not involved at all in the girl's case. I immediately undertook legal steps against the Inspectorate, demanding that they rectify their accusation in public. In October 2007 the preliminary injunction court of The Hague ruled that this reporting was unwarranted.

In addition, I have regularly, publicly resisted the various measures aimed at uniformity and disciplining enacted by the government. For example, in February 2008, in *NRC Handelsblad*, I called the electronic child record "megalomaniac and Stalinist." In late 2008, I resisted the introduction of a uniform reporting code for domestic violence in the Rotterdam region. This trend of ever more bureaucratic obligations turns the Netherlands into a country where problems and responsibilities are merely passed from one actor to the next, which does not add to the quality of care provided at all. The result is that eventually no one will act anymore. Politicians' reactions to the criticisms I leveled were exceedingly fierce.

Blijham:

In public opinion, the captain of a passenger airplane often appears as the model professional. But he can hardly be called a professional anymore, because flying an airplane has been fully automated. Flying today involves such complicated procedures that this technological approach has been adopted, even though in the analysis of accidents in this sector the *human factor* keeps recurring as a major element. The airplane captain cannot serve as a model professional to those in the care sector, because care continues to be about high quality and attention to individual patients whose cases are always unique.

I recognize the pressure from outside to have uniform procedures, and I also feel it is quite important to correct publicly misguided representations of our professionals. I prefer, however, an approach that is less provocative than Lamé's. My experience is that when criticized from outside, it is best to blame others as little as possible. Blame will make you quite vulnerable. Publicly attacking the inspectorate, for instance, has a contrary effect. Similarly, it is risky to deal with casuistry. The evidence has to be convincing if this approach is to prove you right.

An example of how I stand up for "my" professionals is the following. At one point the inspectorate told surgeons to remove more tissue when operating breast cancer, because in several cases patients had needed a second operation. The guideline was accompanied by the warning that things should improve after one year, otherwise.... Understandably, surgeons reacted angrily. They felt wrongly accused of poor performance. I informed the inspectorate that I was not pleased with the tone or content of the finding, and that, for the time being, no reply would follow. I also let them know that answering the other questions posed would take up an inordinate amount of our staff's time. Moreover, I pointed out that the letter contained all sorts of inconsistencies. But I also emphatically asked the surgeons who had turned to me to forge a coalition with allies from other hospitals. I suggested that they raise the issue with their colleagues and ask if they wanted to alarm their Board of Directors. In such cases it's of great importance, I feel, to keep the professionals involved in the lead in their anger. The questions in the letter were partly answered later on. Through my stance – and without escalation in public – a clear signal was given to the inspectorate.

### **The interplay of professionals, managers and organization**

*Health care employs a host of different professionals, each with their own specific knowledge and profession-related ethics. How do you manage a large organization of various kinds of professionals?*

Lamé:

Over the past years, mental health care has boomed. In the old days, five sturdy nurses would run an entire ward of alcohol and drug addicts. Later on it was run by sixty such

nurses. Moreover, there has been an explosion of fields and disciplines. This growth has certainly not ended yet, even if it did slow down. These stormy developments are linked, in part, with a general process of emancipation. The mental health sector had, and still has, to prove that its interventions really produce results. The interrelated pressures give rise to constant pioneering and innovations, but also to admitting that there are large differences in schools and paradigms, and that there is sometimes amateurishness and lack of expertise.

Consequently, for years mental health has been solidly marked by more and more uniform procedures aimed at radiating that what we say is beyond dispute, as well as true, useful and proven. This is why this is not the perfect era to sell a poly-paradigmatic organizational structure as the most suitable for knowledge-intensive organizations. And yet, this is the form of organization we have chosen.

Umbrella organizations and ministries favor uniformity because it provides security. All sorts of care need to be integrated, after which particular general types of care are distinguished, which subsequently have to be translated into so-called diagnosis-treatment combinations. In this way, one tries to make the funding system transparent. It is my task as a manager to disrupt this pursuit of uniformity in a pleasant way. After all, work floor realities are much more erratic than that. A Riagg is an organization in which professionals face ambiguous situations daily. Professionals act based on knowledge, but at the same time they have to learn to accept that their judgment is often wrong.

Largely, our work is about meaning – to combine things constructively and creatively to arrive at a sensible story. To do so, professionals need room. If you take that away, you belittle them. The ambiguities involved can never be fully resolved. This explains why professionals will never agree. It is impossible!

As a manager, I always try to be open to new ideas and proposals. I only ignore the weirdest proposals, such as a proposal for “blossom therapy” or something similar. I consider it my responsibility to make sure that patients and clients can trust that the alternatives we offer are useful and well-considered. In addition, it is an art to cluster professionals who agree with each other and to have conflicts evolve as constructively as possible. In this way professionals will continue to enjoy their work.

Blijham:

I very much believe that managing professionals is managing differences. Hospitals, too, are packed with stubborn people. And we should respect them! Was it not Churchill who said that when two people agree, one is superfluous? As a manager, you must cherish professionalism; it is a way of acknowledging differences and turning them into positive factors. It is essential that you realize this in your organization.

Fortunately, we still manage to do this very well at the U M C . Annually, we hold surveys among our staff. More than half of the staff replies, a very good response indeed. Down to the level of small sections and units, we get a good picture of the things people are and are not satisfied with. Many things appear to work out well, but we know, for ex-

ample, that some are dissatisfied with issues tied to the size of our organization – managerial layers and slow decisions. We also benchmark with companies such as KPN, which has shown that our professionals are no less satisfied than those in the business sector.

*What does your view of professionalism mean for the role of managers or directors?*

Lamé:

The examples we discussed are symptoms of the hardening of our work systems. There is less and less room to tell your story and to add nuances. In these hard systems, the manager serves as an advance post of the various control systems. In my view, it is important to put this disciplining ideology of management into perspective. It causes good people to abandon middle management at a high rate. It is impossible, after all, for them to deliver the degree of control and disciplining expected. This means that psychologists in management positions will either return swiftly to their fields or break with their pasts, no longer capable of understanding their colleagues. It doesn't work.

Blijham:

The directors decide on the policies, and the managers implement them. There are all sorts of managers. We hire business managers from outside the care sector mainly. In the past, we have hired managers from consultancy firms, KPN, and MKB. Of course we look for leadership skills, but also fresh insights and creativity. For example, we had a finance director who studied Slavic languages. Creative people who appropriate new skills, I can tell from experience, are good at managing in a professional environment such as that of the UMC. Moreover, one of the three members of our Board of Directors is from outside the care sector.

As regards direct management of professionals, we have eleven, quite autonomous divisions, each headed by a professor. The management philosophy of the Utrecht UMC is “decentral, unless ....” And we always describe our culture with the following slogan. “Have the courage to give trust; have the courage to take responsibility.”

Van Jaarsveld:

Scale increases have led to management models with which people can no longer identify. The arrangement of organizations in transparent units – as in the Utrecht UMC – is applied in very few other places. This is why middle management is increasingly difficult. Although such positions call for an entrepreneurial attitude, complex organizations and unclear authorities often pose obstacles. As a result, those who want to innovate regularly pull out and look for another job.

Warande opted for a management model with five independent centers, with a clearly delineated integral management, characterized by far-reaching decentralized authorities and a facilitating stance at the central level. It is not necessary to have a uniform pol-

icy in all areas; locations themselves determine, for instance, their own service rates.

Another factor is the growing emphasis on safety. There is a strong urge towards risk management. Centers for seniors have specific regulations on storing food in refrigerators, on preventing people from falling and many other aspects. We try to find our own way. Of course there are dilemmas, such as that of minimizing the number of persons who fall versus limiting the freedom of our nursing home residents. We should not let ourselves be reined in by the inspectorate and by the fear that something might happen. Together with our resident or their relatives, we need to consider the best available options for the highest quality of life. As long as I, as manager, can defend a decision to the outside world convincingly, deviations from the rules are certainly possible.

It also takes quite some skill to get the staff really involved in organizational changes. In the past years at Warande, we made a strategic choice to favor a segment of slightly higher educated elderly in the region, and in the years ahead our goal is to realize five attractive homes for this group. This decision was based on trend analysis and consultation with external parties. At first this entrepreneurial mode met resistance among our personnel, because in the old model the basic principle was that our services should be available to everyone! For this reason, it was crucial to create an internal base for this change of direction. From the outset, therefore, we managers involved our employees in brainstorming, such as during special “lunch meetings” for which they could sign up.

*All three of you indicate that middle management has to deal with an increasingly harder set of tasks; managers tend to be caught between two fires. How do you support them in this respect?*

Blijham:

Surely, it is not easy in the care sector to have employees adopt your views or be motivated about changes. But there is a good method. Give people – units and groups – their own budget responsibility in a clear way, and let them keep most of the money they save by working more efficiently and by doing things smarter.

When I started as chair of the Board of Directors of the Utrecht UMC, there were serious shortages. Thirty million euros had to be restructured – some 4% of the total budget. We asked the divisions to act as if each had to cut back 10%. They themselves had to indicate what they felt to be least important. What could they do without? They were not used to such an approach. This is why we gave them room for deliberation. They could determine the cutbacks, but they could also indicate where investments were needed. The effect of this approach was that they started thinking in terms of priorities and posteriorities; they started having discussions on content; the cutbacks became an opportunity to handle things in a smarter way; and they got the opportunity to invest in new things. In this way, a difficult situation was used to bring about a change of culture. This giving and taking creates a new kind of balance. It allows you to work together to help the organization.



Lamé:

As Riagg system, we have rigorously decided to remain small. We have suffered from the wave of mergers, because frequently it caused others to pressure us to merge. Many mergers are also dictated by the idea that it is possible, based on a single vision and leadership, to find paradise – that perfect order that seemed lost forever after eating the apple. Our predilection for multiplicity, pleasantly clashing ideas, rational opacity and random developments deterred many a merger candidate. So far we have never regretted our solitary position.

Van Jaarsveld:

Cooperatives in the care sector provide an alternative to mergers. Cooperatives offer regional entrenchment and advantages associated with a large-scale organization. In October 2007, Warande set up, together with ten fellow care organizations, Zorgcoöperatie Nederland, a nationwide cooperative association, which originated from De Open Ankh. Zorgcoöperatie Nederland acts for and with its members to improve its image and position in the market and to raise its sales. We now comprise as many as eleven independent foundations. The reason for Warande to belong is to be able to continue in its current form as a midsize organization.

### **Competition and collaboration**

*Health care privatization encourages organizations to compete with each other and to differentiate themselves; at the same time, the need to collaborate is emphasized. How do you deal with this?*

Van Jaarsveld:

We do struggle with the double morality urged on us by the government. On one side we have to cooperate in so-called chains, but on the other side we have to be competitive. It is a tricky process to learn where to cooperate and where to compete.

Blijham:

I like competition and also strongly believe in its motivating effect. You even see that in leisure activities, such as sports. It is more fun to compete. I feel it is important to have competition between organizations, if it is achievement-oriented and done with a sense of mutual respect. Competition should not be at the expense of others, nor should any secrets be kept from others. In our organizations, it would be improper to introduce an industrial model of competition, because this would imply that new innovations would have to be withheld for the sake of profits. In a public organization such as the UMC, this is not possible. Therefore, my philosophy has always been, if we discover something today, we will tell it to everyone tomorrow.

This view presumes that the market is seen as a means rather than as a goal. The

Netherlands Competition Authority (Nederlandse Mededingingsautoriteit, NMA) is strongly inclined to consider the market as a goal in its own right. If a merger of two hospitals will benefit the quality of care, the NMA is wrong to prohibit it exclusively from a free-market perspective. A strong example of such competition-as-goal thinking is the commotion that erupted in January 2009 over plans for the Schiedam Vlietland Hospital to be taken over by a cooperative, in which the hospital's personnel, health care insurer DSW, physicians from the region and others would participate. I was really angry at all those who wanted to prohibit this. For instance, a member of parliament from the VVD put forward that the plan posed a threat to patients' choice. Ironically, this local/regional level example involves a unique and creative solution to save a hospital in great trouble; the parties involved take their responsibility and do not leave it up to politicians and government, and still there is lots of criticism from the government. This solution, I feel, is much better than what took place at the IJsselmeerziekenhuizen, where not a single party took action.

Lamé:

I disagree. When you permit insurers to invest in hospitals, you switch to a different system from what we have now. The market system is intended to offer choice to patients through competition between insurers, resulting in lower rates.

Blijham:

As far as I am concerned, the goal should be decentralized, good-quality care. This requires that small-scale levels be made possible by the system. This is not to say that constructs such as cooperative purchase are impossible. From this angle, the system we are heading towards is moving in exactly the wrong direction. The example of the Schiedam hospital fits the direction I favor.

Lamé:

All the changes have increased the uncertainties of professionals and their organizations. At first, only the product was uncertain, but, now, on account of privatization, the market has also been rendered uncertain. Indeed, it is possible to refer to the prevailing view of privatization among politicians as "management for illiterates." Every sense of content has been abandoned. The notion is that all product development in a market is guided by "demand," and this is a major misconception. A market, too, needs content, as well as the development of knowledge.

Blijham:

I couldn't agree more. One realizes that even in a real consumer market, supply is based on knowledge. Even in the real market, consumers do not ask for innovative products. Color TV sets or CD players were not developed based on demand. No, one simply developed new products and also managed to sell them to people.

Lamé:

Also, it is not sufficiently acknowledged that you can only speak of competition when comparable products are involved.

Blijham:

Although one is working towards a market of comparable products, the risk is that it will cause organizations such as hospitals to crumble. Within a free-market perspective, politicians find it quite interesting that there are wards or clinics that routinely supply only one “product.” One example is the so-called “hip streets,” found in specialized orthopedic clinics. I do not object to them, because it is true that some physicians prefer a more process-oriented approach performing routine actions, and this is just fine. In the care sector you need professionals who like to be confronted with unexpected, new patients and you need professionals who would rather work in a routine manner. Here, too, the argument is that the quality of care will benefit. Things will move in the wrong direction, however, if people start believing that all care can be organized into smooth processes, and we can divide all major, comprehensive organizations into separate, “street-like” clinics. This is also discussed in the world of the UMC’s. I doubt whether we should go the direction of “streets,” given the core tasks of UMC’s, but in our own circles, the views on this issue vary.

Lamé:

In my experience, many of my professionals get a kick out of intricate problems. It is professional wisdom that “only after I am done do I know whether something is simple!” I have great concerns about the development of these so-called “streets” for “clients.” They come largely from management aimed at efficiency and economizing.

Blijham :

True, this kind of innovation is certainly not always patient-driven, but originates in financial concerns. This is not a problem, however, if we do not see it as the only way to raise efficiency. Another, and sometimes more rewarding, way of encouraging professionals to adopt smarter operating methods is to motivate them by offering professional challenges as the reward. If the care process for people with cardiovascular diseases is organized more efficiently, the money saved can be used for complex cardiovascular surgeries.

In my view, it does not suit academic hospitals to perform cataract operations one after the other. This is done better in a small hospital. The Diaconessenhuis in Utrecht has a cataract center in Zeist. It can be done there in a quality way, in a transparent environment, small and efficient. This is just fine. You should also remove this from the debate on privatizing health care. In that debate it seems as if all care should be organized that way, but that’s just impossible. Only some interventions facilitate a process-like approach. If it will raise the quality in those cases, it should be advised of course.

### **The characteristics of a good manager**

*Finally, can you briefly indicate today's characteristics of a good manager in the care sector?*

Van Jaarsveld:

In my sector it is very much about having a basic overview of the whole context. And next, based on the diagnosis, it is about moving along with the organization in a concerned fashion, so that the social function is performed as well as possible. This is quite a change from the past, when it was simply a matter of minding the shop. Now it is about being able to change swiftly – about how to go from A to B, thereby determining the optimal pace.

Lamé:

To me it is of great importance as a manager to try and understand who we are, based on insights from management and business administration. What is the soul of the organization? You have an idea of what your club should look like, and within those parameters there should then be much room for negotiation. I believe that peer review and pluralism is of great significance. Further, it is your task to tell stories – from the inside out and from the outside in. Also, you need to be able to be very angry at the right moments, when the system closes down or when it is out of control. In the final analysis, there is also a certain measure of randomness in managing an organization. It is not even of primary importance which choices are made, but that clear choices are made. To make choices in the right way has elements of craftsmanship to it.

Blijham:

I define three main tasks for a manager. First he has to create room, do justice to the multicolored nature of an organization. I once compared my role with that of Hannibal, the leader of the A-Team in the similarly named popular television series from the early eighties. He led a team that went in all directions, but when an assignment succeeded after all, he regularly sighed “I love it when a plan comes together!” This is how it is. I can really gain pleasure from it. And this will only work when you constantly motivate people to their utmost. This is irreconcilable with tight control and uniformity. Second, the manager has to make sure there are specific answers to the question of what the organization stands for. What do we take on, and how do we do that? As a manager you have to be able to articulate the vision and the goal in good sound bites. Third, it is important that you monitor the agreed-upon goals, making sure they remain center-stage and that the agreed-upon products are supplied.

Is it possible to learn all this? It is partly a matter of talent, but it can also be learned. You have to get rid of your fears and have the courage to take on leadership. This also implies that choices are inevitable. If people are unwilling to accept your decisions, you should also have the courage to remove the people. You have to go separate ways. I re-

member ten years ago we took leave of a professor who specialized in the gender problem, the problem of people being born the wrong sex. Very interesting, very specialized, but it did not fit the palette pursued by the U M C. The diversity of an organization's palette has to be defined by the board. Every now and then you should make clear: It may be a nuisance, but ultimately I am the one in charge of this matter.

TRANSLATED BY TON BROUWERS

# **Appeal court judges lead with an “understanding heart”**

## **Interview with Leendert Verheij, president of the Court of Appeal in Amsterdam**

Thijs Jansen

*Since 2000, there has been a strong emphasis on production targets in the judicial system, and this control mentality is still dominant. However, we are increasingly hearing warnings that if we continue down this path, judges will soon be reduced to mere official mouthpieces. The Court of Appeal in Amsterdam has therefore started an experiment with an alternative management philosophy that gives professionals freedom and responsibility. This is described for us by Leendert Verheij, who has been president of the Court of Appeal in Amsterdam since 2008. Before that, he was director of the SSR, which trains members of the judiciary. In 1991, he became vice-president of the district court in The Hague. He became chairman of the criminal division in 1994 and was later active in the civil division.*

At the end of the 1990s, there was a strong feeling that the judiciary was organized in an out-dated way. Society was increasingly critical and people really questioned whether the judicial system was adequately equipped. Society was changing and the judiciary couldn't pretend that everything was still the same. Just to take one example, there were big differences in sentencing between different courts. The internet made it easy to compare the sentences being passed every day in, say, Groningen and Amsterdam, and this made the lack of uniformity in the administration of justice very obvious. Something had to be done, but what exactly? That was the question.

There are always two movements: one strongly advocates judicial independence, the other understands that modernization is necessary. Initially, the first movement had the upper hand but later the conviction began to grow that we had to deal with the problem in a responsible manner. Uniformity in the administration of justice and responsibility had to be pursued more actively.

The Council for the Judiciary came into existence in 2002. It's a link – but even more than that, a buffer – between the Minister of Justice and the courts. The Council's task is to ensure that courts can properly fulfill their role in administering justice. It promotes the external, common interests of the courts, looks after facilities that transcend individual courts, supervises operational management and financial control and, where necessary, it gives general instructions regarding operational management.

“At the same time, integral management was implemented in the courts. There was a strong focus on output and numbers. Since then, we’ve all been focused on process control and increasing productivity in the judicial system. However, for some time now, the voices of dissent have been growing louder, warning that we mustn’t continue too much longer with this one-sided focus on control and production because otherwise judges will be reduced to mere mouthpieces. You hear that from some courts more than others. Critics saw their concerns confirmed in the Deetman Commission’s report, *Rechtspraak is Kwaliteit*, written in 2006, which evaluated the modernization of the organization. One of the Commission’s findings was that the organizational side of things was running smoothly now. The Commission advised that in the coming years, the challenge facing the judicial system would be to develop its management strategy from one of control to one of management. It also advised that more attention should be paid to professionalism again.

When I took up my post as president of the Court of Appeal in Amsterdam, I noticed a very strong feeling that, since the establishment of the Council for the Judiciary, far too much attention was being paid to production targets and too little attention was being paid to content. Therefore, when I gave my inaugural speech shortly after my arrival, I outlined my vision of leadership. I referred to Solomon’s words in the biblical Book of Kings: when Solomon had just become king, he made an offering; the God of Israel then appeared to him in a dream and asked him what he desired, upon which Solomon replied, “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad...” I think that’s a beautiful image: An “understanding heart.” It’s something that everyone in a leadership role should have. The expression “an understanding heart” encompasses much more than just a listening ear. It requires openness and deliberation from within, and that requires courage or, even better, guts – *lef* in Dutch, and *leb* is the Hebrew word for heart. Deurloo, the theologian, noted in his exegesis of this passage that the administration of justice involves the talent to see through the words used by witnesses and parties. And I should add that managers with an understanding heart score high in the competences of “organizational sensitivity” and “awareness of one’s surroundings,” to put it in modern jargon. But it’s even more than that: they have an antenna for what makes people tick and they know how to motivate people and inspire them. At the same time, a manager must also be able to act decisively.

The Court of Appeal has a permanent advisory committee, consisting of appeal court judges and court officials. This committee can write reports both on its own initiative and when requested to do so. In 2008, for instance, it wrote a report on the relationship between managers and professionals. This report was very balanced: Not, “Just let them do as they like and it will all come right in the end.” Instead, it issued a warning that we must really be on our guard now, that action must be taken now. This spontaneous report was exactly what was needed, coming just after my inaugural speech. We then looked for a way to open up the subject for discussion. Just after the summer holidays,

members of the committee, the works council, court officials and the management discussed the matters contained in the report under the guidance of an outsider. That went well: there was openness, and the discussion also succeeded in raising awareness. Shortly afterwards, we, as members of the management, attended a retreat in order to formulate policy. Charlotte Keijzer of Prisma, an internal management consultancy firm, led this retreat. At first, we were focused on what the organizational structure should look like, but it quickly became obvious that a number of preliminary questions had to be answered first. An important factor here was the desire to abandon the style of management and administration then in place: The industrial paradigm, with its strong emphasis on production and control. We wanted to make the transition to a “commitment model.”

When this had been agreed on, the next question was how to implement that model. The management made clear that they wanted to do their best to stop the trend of judges being turned into mouthpieces from continuing. We communicated this outcome in our newsletter, and in the Court of Appeal meeting with the appeal court judges. Everyone seemed to be positive but reserved, in the sense of “seeing is believing...”

When implementing that new model, we had to be careful not to fall into the trap of letting professionals be tempted to evade their own responsibilities. The challenge was to see how we could permanently ensure that they, for the most part, shaped their own roles and that they wouldn’t shift responsibility for difficult matters onto the management.

How do you go about that? This Court of Appeal deals with cases on appeal, so the art is to let the appeal court judges and the (legal) staff carry out their duties. The chairpersons of the different divisions stimulate their members to come up with their own solutions to certain problems. For example, the following problem arose: the civil division had been understaffed for eight years, partly because of a shortage of money and partly because too few suitable appeal court judges could be found for that division. This resulted in backlogs and long waiting lists. This was all undeniably true, but the appeal court judges also wrote many brilliant decisions, although they were handed down far too late. I received complaints about this. So, as president I saw it as my duty to stimulate the division to find a solution that steered a middle course between two extremes. It wasn’t enough for us to say, on the one hand, “We have a staff shortage but we can’t do anything about it.” We could have asked the Council for the Judiciary for more money, but clearly that wouldn’t solve anything if suitable people couldn’t be found. On the other hand, it also wasn’t enough for us as the management to tell the division, “We don’t care how you do it, but you solve the problem.”

“Now we’re experimenting in an effort to find a solution while at the same time maintaining standards and taking into account the professionals’ professionalism. This has required a complete change: until now, the civil division normally dealt with every case on appeal fully in written form. All cases that were lodged on appeal ended up on a big pile, and that slowed things down considerably. A new approach means that you



first look at what sort of case it is: if it seems likely that a court session whose aim is to achieve more clarity or a mutually satisfactory settlement will succeed, then the parties are immediately asked to appear in court. This way, the wheat can quickly be separated from the chaff. This new method is easier to apply to cases in a lower court than to cases on appeal, where there are often further complications. However, we're also experimenting with this approach for cases on appeal now; we have to wait and see whether it's feasible. Other appeal courts are also experimenting with this approach. Oral conciliation really is an art, and talented people are given a chance to try it. If this form of conciliation works, the outcome for the parties is very advantageous and it gives the professionals a great sense of satisfaction.

What's special about this form of innovative thinking is that the management does not say, "This is how we're going to do it!" because that wouldn't work. But what we can do is "challenge" and stimulate.

Besides the waiting lists and backlogs, there's another issue: The uniform application of the law. Big differences between the sentences handed down by the courts of appeal are unacceptable. Achieving harmony is a growth process that takes a long time. First, the sentences handed down by a court of appeal have to be harmonized. It's therefore important that there be a growing awareness that big differences between comparable cases are not acceptable. In the 1990s, national guidelines were developed for a number of criminal offences. In the case of "murder," for instance, there had previously been enormous differences. The courts had a margin of six to ten years, not even taking into account the special circumstances of a case. Now, the differences are much smaller. There aren't any protocols because the independence of the judge or appeal court judge always plays a role. After all, we mustn't forget the other side of the coin: Appeal court judges must have the freedom to say, "We are going to diverge from the agreed and usual sentence in this specific case because its application would be unjust." Two interests have to be weighed against each other here: The appeal court judge's own responsibility for the way the law develops on the one hand, and the importance of a uniform application of the law on the other hand.

The whole operation to achieve more uniformity in the administration of justice has shown that judges – and I don't mean specifically here at the Court of Appeal in Amsterdam – often have difficulty finding the right balance. Some use the guidelines as a sort of protocol, creating the danger that they will – to exaggerate slightly – become mere mouthpieces. Others place themselves at the other extreme: They don't want to have anything to do with such guidelines. The art is to get all professionals to the point where they use the guidelines without losing their own judgment in individual cases.

A third issue is the enormous resistance to the use of the "market" language that's part and parcel of the production mentality. At my own Court of Appeal there's a deep-seated antipathy towards such terminology. That language is indeed inadequate. The comparison with "clients" is of limited use: a "suspect" in a criminal case is not, of course, a

“client.” So I can imagine that there’s some resistance to such language. Yet it’s important not to dismiss this way of thinking entirely because there actually is some sense in it. For example, we carry out client satisfaction surveys; if they show that, say, 90% of the court sessions start too late, then attention should be drawn to this. There’s always a chance that a court session will exceed the allocated time because of unforeseen circumstances – that’s inherent in this work. However, if it turns out that the first session of the day starts too late then there is every reason to take steps to solve the problem. In that sense, a judge does to a certain extent deal with “clients.” It’s important that decent “invitations” are sent on time and that, as far as possible, the court session starts at the agreed time. Besides this, it’s possible to carry out periodic surveys, asking lawyers whether our decisions are adequately worded. In certain cases, they might prefer to have everything written more tersely and clearly but in other cases – and that has usually been in criminal cases – they might actually want the reasoning to be explained in more detail. It is of great importance to know all this.

The management philosophy of the commitment model I’ve outlined isn’t really commonplace in the judicial system. When we explain how we want to proceed in a concrete way, people react reticently and they never fail to mention that they still have to ensure they reach their production targets. And the Council for the Judiciary certainly doesn’t take the lead. Culturally, the judicial system is still dominated by a control mentality. Some professionals therefore perceive the Council mainly as a body that issues missives. Fortunately, many others, and certainly we as managers, take a subtler view of the Council. It’s very unhealthy if a hostile mentality prevails, and it isn’t necessary, either. If you put your case well, you really can get things done by the Council. And you can be assured that the Council also considers quality and professionalism to be central. Besides, it wouldn’t be sensible for a manager to start fueling that hostile mentality.

Nevertheless, the perception that judges and appeal court judges have of the Council is still very much determined by the setting of production targets. This perception of a one-sided emphasis on productivity has certainly led to lapses here and there. The Council’s and court managers’ perceived emphasis on production was experienced as so compelling that the professionals felt there was no understanding if they didn’t do what was asked. This resulted in some cases being rushed through, which was certainly never the aim of those targets! When I was division chairperson, I was always of the opinion that issues of cost should never be decisive. It’s impossible to suddenly spend an hour on a case that would normally take a day. However, it is important to be able to justify the investment of time and money.

Of course there were reasons for the initial aim of increasing productivity. There were certainly cases where professionals made inefficient use of time, but there have been far fewer instances of this recently. We have to be careful not to go to extremes when it comes to productivity pressure. It’s important to say again that this isn’t the only important issue, because it’s posing a threat to quality. For example, over the last five years,

staff have been stretched to the limit and the pressure of work has been so great that the judges and appeal court judges have attended fewer and fewer courses. That was a detrimental development and managers have, wrongly, been passive for too long about this. This was because, in the past, the decision on whether to attend training was largely left to the judges' discretion. There was no question at all about a structural norm. That has changed. From 2010 on, a norm will require judges to attend refresher courses and further professional training for thirty hours a year. We'll gradually work towards that norm over a three-year period, although it's already being met in 90% of cases.

In order to provide a counter-weight to the tendency to think too much in terms of control and production, it's very good that fellow judges still fulfill leadership roles in the administration of justice. This has had a protective effect in recent years. Division chairpersons still sit in court. When I was chairperson of the criminal division in The Hague, I still spent 25% of my time in court, sometimes dealing with controversial cases in order to set an example for the judges. It's also important for managers like me to accumulate managerial experience gradually. In the lower court I had more to do with younger professionals whereas here at the Court of Appeal it's more about leading with authority and about your powers of persuasion. It's crucial to have practiced the profession yourself, and the division chairpersons here still do that. At the bigger courts that's often no longer the case; there, they often only manage. If the increase in scale currently being considered goes ahead, it will mean that managers participate even less in the primary process. Then there will be a danger that the management will become detached from the work itself.

Effectively transferring the culture from the older generation to the younger generation can also be a protective factor. The ideal of autonomy isn't as alive among the younger generation as it used to be, and this worries me. They're less alert in assuming their responsibility. Before I took up my present function I was director of the SSR institute, which provides training for trainee judges. We set out a course to reinforce their professional attitudes. These sorts of issues arose there, and we tried to make them especially receptive to them. The intention was to do the same for sitting judges but that hasn't been realized yet. However, it's a sign of the times that nowadays this has to be consciously organized. The old master-companion relationship was much better: It was good for younger judges to spend a long time with older colleagues, something that's becoming increasingly rare. Role models are very important in a professional environment, but in the last fifteen to twenty years there has been such enormous growth that there's hardly any time to work with someone more experienced. The young are given enormous responsibilities very quickly.

I take a qualified view of professional pride. Of course intrinsic motivation is very important. I think "pride" sounds a bit obstinate. Intrinsic motivation can also be wrongly directed, for instance, if someone is a workaholic and has, above all, an insatiable thirst

for recognition and wants to draw attention to himself. That's undesirable. You must also try to be open to signs from your surroundings and to innovative thinking. This is essential.

Are judges proud of their work? People still really enjoy their work and there isn't much sick leave although their self-confidence has taken a few knocks – think of the Schiedammer Park murder case. There have been lots of cases that have caused an outcry in society. And whereas the professional might be proud of his work, society might take quite a different view! Think of this Court of Appeal's decision that proceedings must be brought against Geert Wilders for making anti-Islamic statements. The Appeal Court judges were then portrayed as scoundrels, lefties, hypocrites and stupid fools. And that's just a selection of the more civilized abuse. I expressed my concern at the ferocity of reactions in society and in Parliament to the Court's decision. It really has an impact on the people who do the work, and they must then stand firm. In the end, the test is: can you look yourself in the mirror every morning, and can you explain your decision clearly?

Pride is also related to the question of whether you can communicate things clearly. Can you explain things? Can you justify what you've done? This involves an absolute condition: You have to be certain that you've done everything as professionally and as well as possible. This isn't always the case, as the following example shows. In an important criminal case that was heard on appeal by this Court, the victim's next of kin found the sentence too lenient, although a good reason for the sentence had been given. What happened next, at the Supreme Court? The sentence was reduced by a further six months because the Court of Appeal had exceeded the so-called reasonable time. If you want to be proud of your work and you strive to retain society's recognition, then you must at all costs ensure fiascos like that don't happen. You can do something about this yourself: You need to be extra alert in these sorts of cases.

I see it as a positive development that judges are taking the public side of this work into account more. There's a growing awareness that beautifully crafted decisions aren't enough. It's also a requirement of quality that decisions are reached on time and that complete information is made available immediately to journalists. If these requirements aren't met, then don't be surprised if all sorts of stories based on unreliable information start doing the rounds. The appeal court's written decision and a good press statement must be ready on the day the decision is made public. If you're sure you've done everything you should have done, you can be proud.

*What is a Court of Appeal?*

A Court of Appeal is a court of second instance. It is usually possible to appeal to a Court of Appeal against the decision of a lower court. A Court of Appeal deals with the facts of a case for the second time. The Netherlands has five Courts of Appeal.

*Second consideration of the facts*

A Court of Appeal deals with criminal, civil and taxation cases. The procedures followed by a Court of Appeal generally resemble those of the lower court. Both parties are given another opportunity to present their side of the case. When dealing with the case, a Court of Appeal considers all the facts anew and reaches its own decision. A Court of Appeal can acquit someone who has been convicted in a criminal case by a lower court, but the Court can also impose a more severe sentence.

*No appeal to a Court of Appeal*

It is not possible to file a case on appeal to a Court of Appeal in two instances:

- If the case concerns a sum of money less than 1750 euros. In such cases, it is not possible to appeal.
- Certain cases do not come under the jurisdiction of a Court of Appeal but under the jurisdiction of another specialized tribunal, for example, the Central Appeals Tribunal, the Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State, or the Trade and Industry Appeals Tribunal.

*Court of Appeal judges and decisions*

The judges at a Court of Appeal are called Court of Appeal judges, or *Raadsheren* in Dutch. A full Court of Appeal consists of three appeal court judges, and their decision is called an *arrest*. The Court of Appeal in Amsterdam has four divisions: the civil division, the family division, the taxation division and the criminal division.



## **In search of new pathways**



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*Yvonne Telenga, born in Amsterdam in 1943, completed her law degree and then worked as a lawyer in Amsterdam for fifteen years before working for four years as judge's assistant at the Supreme Court. In 1996, she took a course in mediation and has been a judge at the district court of Zwolle-Lelystad since 1999. Yvonne Telenga is married and has two children. (Photo: Alexandra Gabrielli)*



## **The professional pride of Yvonne Telenga, judge and mediator**

*Alexandra Gabrielli*

Yvonne Telenga (1943) has been a judge for twenty years and handles civil law cases relating to citizens and organizations. Since 1999, she has been working at the district court of Zwolle-Lelystad. Since 1996, in addition to being a judge, Yvonne has also been a mediator, a professional intermediary who helps intervene in conflicts. She would like to see mediation given a higher profile and is calling for implementation of mediation in the legal system. As far as she is concerned, the time is ripe to start solving disputes in different ways within this system, as an alternative to taking legal action.

The Ministry of Justice was responsible for setting up a mediation project in a number of regions in 2002, with the aim of establishing the role that mediation could play in the legal system. Despite initial opposition, people are now beginning to realize that many court cases could be better served by mediation than by following the usual path to the court room.

Mediation currently takes place outside the court but is carried out by selected, certified mediators at the judge's recommendation. If mediation is unsuccessful, the case comes back to the judge for a court ruling. A mediator talks to both parties separately in the event of a dispute, which is something that a judge cannot do.

The term mediator should not be confused with "intermediary," another term which already exists in law. An intermediary is authorized to make a decision in the same way as a judge, whereas the mediator chairs the discussions but leaves the decision-making to the parties involved. Sometimes an intermediary is officially appointed to solve conflicts, but organizations can also appoint an intermediary.

Telenga would like to see two trends in law: one focusing on the legal element and one on the mediation element. This means there would be one option for judges who have affinity with the law – the scholarly, remote types – and one for judges who have affinity with people. Special skills are required in dealing with people, in getting them to talk and negotiate. These skills can be acquired during legal training, and judges can also take mediation courses.

Telenga feels that the law is actually bad for people. "What I mean is, taking legal action requires an enormous amount of time and emotion, and is a last resort to settling a dispute. If you have a disagreement with someone which you cannot solve together, you

usually go to a lawyer. This is because we have not learned how to reconcile disagreements effectively ourselves. We have learned to fight, just as children do in the playground. It is then a case of the strongest wins, which is also true of verbal disagreements. We should adopt a more flexible attitude – not always have to have the last word at any price, and consider what was important between us and the other party. If you still want to maintain some kind of relationship with them, it is better to not have physically or verbally knocked them out. There is something more important than winning the dispute, but often people do not think of that. You become angry, emotions take over and you forget what your real reasons are.

“If judges try to settle a dispute, they do so on a legal basis using evidence. If two of us discuss something while someone else is sitting next to you but no one is sitting next to me, then you can prove what has been said but I cannot. Winning, therefore, depends on being able to prove something. On the basis of this, justice is administered, but sometimes the rules do not lead to a fair decision. A judgment is made where one is the winner and the other the loser. Such a legal answer does not actually solve a dispute. For example, if you claim that someone owes you money but you cannot prove this because you have nothing in writing, you cannot expect a judge to make a fair decision, as the rules do not permit this. There is a legal problem, but it is a different problem from the problem the parties had. People very seldom realize this.

“In some situations being right is actually disadvantageous, so you have to ask yourself what is actually really important. For example; If you sell a product for which there are very few clients and one with a large order fails to pay on time, you can start legal proceedings, but you will then lose this client for good. In such cases it is better to find another way to solve the problem. It is more important to keep this client, than to be right from a legal perspective. Negotiating on the basis of what is important is a core element of mediation.”

Applying mediation can be an excellent way of ending long, drawn-out cases. Telenga: “Recently I had someone who had been involved in legal proceedings for 15 years. At a certain point, one party was due to receive 20,000 euros, but I noticed that the party would have preferred the case just come to an end. I asked the other party, which was still intent on pressing the case, if they would be willing to stop, if the opposing party waived their right to the sum of money and neither side was deemed to have won the case. He had to think about it, because he found it very difficult, but in the end, the parties made a deal.”

“Using mediation is a question of becoming accustomed to it,” according to Telenga. As mediation gains a higher profile, more use will be made of this new way of solving conflicts. “If you want to protect your own interests, do not go running too quickly to solicitors and judges. We can start teaching children how to settle disputes while they are still at school. Teach them not to look at everything just from their own point of view. Step into someone else’s shoes and see how that feels. Do not immediately go on the of-

fensive, forcing the other person to become defensive. Parents can teach this too, of course, but if they don't do it, then children should be taught it at school."

A nice example from Telenega's practice illustrates how her mediation skills came in handy for her as a judge and how she stopped studying a case from the legal perspective and started to look at it from a more human angle: "There were two brothers and there was a piece of land with a mobile home on it. The brothers were afraid that their recently deceased father's girlfriend would take over the piece of land. The summons stated that they had emotional ties to the piece of land and that their father had married the woman only a year before he died. The brothers, in their mid forties, and the woman, who was around sixty, came into the court and sat on opposite sides. The woman's son was also in court. The woman walked into court with hunched shoulders, looking sad. The brothers looked a little tense. The documents showed that the father had become ill before he died and had gone to a solicitor friend to ask him to draw up a will. The solicitor had asked him if his sons got along well with the woman, to which he had responded that they did. The solicitor had then said that, if that was the case, a will was not necessary. After both lawyers involved in the case had said their piece, I said, "If I interpret this correctly, this situation is not what your father would have wanted. He assumed everything would be alright."

It then became completely quiet. It also transpired that the brothers had not been on the piece of land for 15 years and that the woman had been with their father for more than 20 years. I did not break the silence for quite some time. From the discussion that followed, it appeared that the men did not actually want the piece of land at all, they just wanted a reasonable price for it. I responded by saying that the land had been valued. The brothers replied that the valuation had been carried out by the woman's surveyor, which I acknowledged, but I added that a surveyor cannot just make up a valuation – surveyors also have reputations to uphold. This was all I actually said. The brothers then went outside to talk. When they came back the case was sorted out. The man's widow did not have to leave the piece of land, the parties agreed on the surveyor's sum and the woman left the court with her head high. After this was over, the son of the woman came up to me and thanked me for my wisdom. This is an example of using mediation skills in law. There was no judgment. The parties worked it out themselves."

TRANSLATED BY SARAH HAMMOND



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Jan Mengde was born in Eindhoven in 1949. He studied cognitive developmental psychology in Leuven and Utrecht. He was a staff member, advisor and project manager in various healthcare institutions (youth care, addict care, forensic care). His specialty is achieving cooperation in the borderline areas between different sectors and work cultures and managing, supervising and coaching professionals in terms of vision and attitude.

In 2001, he set up the Center for Autism. In 2003 he developed a project that reduced waiting time in youth care and enabled institutions to help 40% more people with only 10% more money. Another of his projects concerned the cooperation between mental healthcare (GGZ) and youth care and focused on special psychiatric help within youth care. Since 2005, Mengde has worked as an independent advisor and project manager (Jan Mengde Advies) in Roermond. He also works on a program run by bureau "De Limes," which implements the so-called Rhineland model for management, which, in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon model, incorporates values other than shareholder value. Jan Mengde is married and has two children. (Photo: Alexandra Gabrielli)

# **The professional pride of Jan Mengde: Advising people by listening and bringing them together**

*Alexandra Gabrielli*

Jan Mengde (1949) develops things. He creates something new by bringing together things that already exist – people from various disciplines and with various opinions and visions. Through letting them communicate with each other, a new situation develops and new opportunities present themselves. Mengde is a psychologist, and until 2005 he worked in institutions caring for addicts and in youth care in Limburg, first as office manager and later as project leader. He has been advisor and independent project manager for new policy in healthcare for the last two years.

A project from 1987 illustrates the way Mengde works. The issue at that time was how alcoholics could be encouraged to seek help more quickly. Mengde: “It is well-known that alcoholics wait a very long time before they seek help. As a result, their problem gets more serious, so it is important that family doctors draw attention to drinking problems at as early a stage as possible. I invited two experienced staff members, the most open people in the addiction care team, to visit a number of family doctors to ask what they needed to encourage drinkers to seek help. Finally, through conversations at discussion evenings for doctors and through contact with the regional family doctors’ association, a wealth of useful suggestions emerged to ensure better support for family doctors in caring for addicts. Two years later, the number of referrals by family doctors for addiction treatment had risen significantly. This was a small-scale project – nothing spectacular, but it was important. It was not supervised from above, nor was it evidence-based.”

Mengde does not like evidence-based models’ applied randomly in the wrong areas. “Last week I heard of a very extreme example in youth care, a sector from which professionalism is increasingly disappearing. The organizations that provide the subsidies – the municipalities or the provinces – are increasingly telling us how we should do our work. This is so extreme that if you treat a client according to method a or b – methods that have at some stage proved effective in the U.S. – the full fee will be reimbursed. If you do not use these methods, only 75% of the fee will be reimbursed. This means that you are forced to go against your own discretion in carrying out your work. Your personal and professional input is bypassed as are your instincts, which are all vital elements in youth care. After all, each family requires a different approach, as no two families are the same.

“This limits risk but doesn’t stimulate the confidence of professionals to excel even more in their work. Every profession has its own individual features. Just as it is vital for someone in the medical profession to keep abreast of the newest research and not be stuck in a rut practicing what he learned years before, very different issues apply to the youth-care worker. For example, how should he address his own values? He must be able to assess whether children are underprivileged by his own standards – as a middle-class youth-care worker – or if they really are underprivileged. He must be able to confront without losing contact, and he must be able to ask the right questions and work in a way that is based on his own professionalism. These are essential aspects of youth care, in addition, of course, to discussion techniques and other methods.

“People involved in caring for addicts have to be able to manage excuses, keep people motivated and remain on their feet amongst addicts who challenge them to the point of exhaustion. That is typical for this sort of care. Professionalism varies by sector, and it is disastrous to take a model from one area and implement it elsewhere.

“Within mental healthcare (*Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg* or GGZ) people now work with diagnosis treatment combinations (DTCs) which remove a considerable amount of freedom from professionals. Try to imagine: it has taken you 45 minutes to make contact with an autistic immigrant boy, but such an interview is not permitted to last longer than 45 minutes, so when you have finally made contact you have to stop the interview. Otherwise you will not be paid. Unfortunately an illusion exists among politicians, policymakers and managers that complex and subtle processes can be reduced to simple models. They force professionals, who are supervised more and more closely, to work as if they are on an assembly line. Having to justify everything to non-professionals takes the sparkle out of our profession and detracts from the original objectives.”

A striking example of personal, professional input in a sector is Mengde’s 2001 autism project. “There was considerable dissatisfaction about care for autistic patients in Limburg. The province’s representative, who is responsible for youth care, received letters from parents who wrote that they had to scrape together money to pay for care for their autistic child completely on their own, and that they had to look for care all over again when their child turned eighteen and no longer qualified for youth care. Children were shunted back and forth between mental healthcare, youth care and special education: What could be done to improve this?

“I invited a number of parents of autistic children and young-adult autistic patients to a forum in a hall. There were also separate areas in this hall for representatives of mental healthcare, youth care, care for the handicapped, special education and the social-pedagogic service. The professionals had to make proposals to the forum of parents and patients. How could cooperation be improved? Could the forum express itself on this issue and prioritize things? I assumed that the links between the various providers was the major problem, but the forum said that the lack of sufficient information was the main issue. People wanted to know more about autism and about the available treatment.

“This is how the Autism Info Center began, manned exclusively by parents. They are the experts. They have wrestled with all sorts of problems for years. The idea for such a center came from the people who are actually involved. By creating a forum we discovered what people felt they needed most. I am proud of the fact that there are now seventeen such centers in the Netherlands and a few abroad.”

Mengde has demonstrated that a platform, or forum, where people can say what they think, is an excellent way to solve the real issues. It enables implicit knowledge to be mobilized, through meetings and dialog, and allows professionals to hear what is actually going on across the entire spectrum. In fact three-quarters of the improvements that people are aiming for have already been achieved. At the forum, professionals and clients, family doctors and social workers, prevention workers and drug tourists (people who travel to procure narcotics) all meet each other. In practice, far more knowledge is present than a professional could obtain from books or watered-down stories of clients. Professionals learn from each other, but you need a dialog with clients to really see which areas can be improved.

What a contrast this is to the “rolled-out improvement processes” that come from on high, as these are known in jargon. Mengde: “By gathering what people already know, you get proposals that fit within your own organization, not improvements thought up elsewhere which you are forced to adopt and drum up support for. I detest this idea of “drumming up support,” a passive concept of trying to influence someone to support something, rather than actively asking what they think and how you can help them carry out their work more effectively. If you talk to a lot of people about how things can be improved, you are way beyond drumming up support – you already have supporters, in fact.”

TRANSLATED BY SARAH HAMMOND

## **Buurtzorg [Neighborhood care]: The answer to the malaise in homecare**

*Bart Kiers*

Within two years, he has turned homecare in The Netherlands completely upside down. With Buurtzorg Nederland [Netherlands Neighbor-care], Jos de Blok has reintroduced the work of the district nurse [nurses who visit sick people at home]. “I saw that the profession was dying a slow death and that is what I wanted to prevent.” Jos de Blok, 48, was originally a district nurse and, until 2006, worked for the regular homecare organization Carint and, previous to that, for Sensire. He also had management functions in those organizations. “I entered the healthcare sector out of passion and compassion. I very much wanted to add something to the lives of others. District nurses don’t have a job, they *are* their job. Over the past few years, that has seemed to disappear. Providing care had become something entirely different. It was suddenly all about production, protocols and administration. It was heading in the wrong direction.”

### *Personal responsibility*

De Blok made an agreement with himself that he would not be content until the profession of district nurse had regained its explicit social value. He then decided to start organizing that care himself. It started out on a small scale, but his organization, Buurtzorg Nederland, quickly expanded to the current one-hundred independent teams throughout the entire country.

Buurtzorg Nederland is an organization in which district nurses and district healthcare workers work in self-steering teams. “Every team is responsible for its own clientele and is in close contact with family doctors and families. The teams are also responsible for their own financial results. The supporting office in Almelo is just that – supporting.” For Buurtzorg, there are no fancy locations or luxurious offices. The supporting office operates from the extension of De Blok’s private home and is run by his partner, Gonnie Kronenberg. The Buurtzorg teams throughout the country also work from simple locations.

By acting “normal,” the initiator is denouncing the system that has led to the over-paid managers of traditional and commercial homecare organizations. “These days, it is incomprehensible why all these middle managers are necessary. And that does not even be-



gin to explain the huge compensation that these people are given for taking part in the ‘meeting circuit.’ I feel that it is unethical that top management in healthcare earns so much money. I think that even the ‘Balkenende-norm’ [civil service salary cap equal to the salary of the prime minister] is too high. What you must do, is to ensure that the people providing care to the clients are well paid. That is an important pillar of our organisation.”

*Many awards already*

Jos de Blok’s star is rising quickly. For example, over the past months, he has spoken regularly with under-secretary Jet Bussemaker and Health Minister Klink and, in early April 2009, he was even invited to talk to Prime Minister Balkenende. “I am delighted to be able to say my piece at various think-tanks and committees. These are excellent opportunities to say what I think. I also think it is wonderful when Ms. Bussemaker expresses her appreciation for our approach on her weblog, as long as she presses on and turns that appreciation into concrete measures,” says De Blok pragmatically.

De Blok’s organization has already won various prizes: Case of the Year, the Nima Marketing Prize, the Best Practice Award, and the Spider Award. In early 2009, a comparative study done by Nivel showed that clients valued the homecare by Buurtzorg Nederland most of all.

The lightning-speed success in no way presents problems for the native of Zeeland who now lives in Twente. However, behind his down-to-earth attitude can be found an all-consuming passion. He seems almost prepared for the success. “If you do something precisely the way it is meant to be done, it can, I believe, hardly fail. District nurses and healthcare workers apply to us spontaneously. We have never had to do any active marketing. That certainly says something. Strangely enough, I had sort of expected this kind of success. I had heard from so many colleagues that they had had enough. This new approach with the re-establishment of the old-fashioned and universal care values could almost not fail.”

*Counter at one-hundred*

As early as September 2007, Jos de Blok announced that he was striving to achieve national coverage with Buurtzorg Nederland within three years. In February 2006, after ten years’ experience in management functions, he quit his permanent job with the Twente healthcare organization Carint and established Buurtzorg Nederland. With a business plan, he was able to secure a loan of 250,000 euros from a bank. He also put in some of his own money. Wasn’t that risky? “I have always believed in this. But the risk lay, of course, entirely on my shoulders. If it were to fail, I would have had it. For the first six months, I did not take any salary.”

But it did not fail. After the first team in Enschede, a second team quickly followed in Utrecht. By the end of 2008, there were 40 teams and, by April 2009, Buurtzorg Neder-

land was supplying homecare to 10,000 clients with 1,000 staff members divided over 100 teams. “We like round numbers,” says De Blok. “By the way, the overhead has not increased: six staff members at the head office in Almelo and four coaches who each manage 25 teams. The annual turnover is also growing. For 2009, it is moving in the direction of 40 million euros. Last year, the annual volume was 11 million euros and, in 2007, 1 million.”

#### *Transfer of homecare teams*

The spectacular growth can be attributed to the fact that entire teams from other homecare organizations transfer to Buurtzorg Nederland. The growth is occurring in, among other places: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Eindhoven, Maastricht, Groningen, Gouda, and Gorinchem. De Blok: “For example, 15 teams in the Achterhoek have already transferred to us. We have also recently set up four teams in Zeeland.”

For some time now, De Blok has been negotiating with dozens of regular homecare organizations for more intensive collaboration. De Blok certainly does understand that restructuring an existing homecare organization is much more difficult than starting a new one, just as he started Buurtzorg Nederland. They will have to dismantle a major part of their overhead, and that costs time. In the Buurtzorg formula, there is no place for schedule planners, coordinators and mid-level managers. “That restructuring takes years. We will probably start with a few teams that work according to the Buurtzorg Nederland method. In that way, an organization can gain experience and see if it suits them.”

They must then work according to the Buurtzorg method. Thus far, the negotiations have gotten stuck on the costs of laying off the supporting staff. In the Buurtzorg concept, there is hardly any room for schedule planners and coordinating managers because the teams do that work, for the most part, themselves. The negotiations with, in particular, Thuiszorg Groningen, a subsidiary of the disentangled Meavita Nederland, were in an advanced stage. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports [vws] was prepared to finance the retraining. The costs for the social plan were to be coughed up by Thuiszorg Groningen itself. That, however, turned out to be an insurmountable hurdle. And that was even without paying one penny for recruitment. “The motivation of the staff is the motor behind the growth,” says De Blok.

#### *AWBZ [Exceptional Medical Expenses Act] can be simpler*

The system has been made much too complicated, De Blok told under-secretary Bussemaker, talking about the vws recently at a gathering at the Ministry. He wrote down all of the AWBZ-functions for the homecare sector on a piece of scrap paper: Personal care, special nursing, etc. “That system leads, in homecare organizations, to a dynamic all its own. Every week, nurses are busy for three to four days with Excel lists on which they

must keep track of how much of each function they are supplying. It no longer has anything to do with the reality of the situation. In practice, you only have two main tasks: Nursing and care. Why don't you simply discontinue all those functions and make two rates?"

The special needs indication would also be much simpler, if it were up to De Blok. "Place the determination of the indication – as much as possible – with the suitably certified nurses who have the initial contact with the clients. Of course, you must supervise this via spot-checks. They must show that they are doing it correctly." And, homecare organizations must simplify their internal organization. "Managers need to go and stand next to the professional to see what it is that he/she actually needs in order to be able to do his/her work effectively. An organization like this is built from the ground up."

### *Alienation*

It is not surprising that the nurses are so happy at Buurtzorg Nederland. At many homecare organizations, they are becoming alienated from their profession. They have become imprisoned in administrative tasks. Their skill and expertise are barely called upon anymore. "In the HBO-v [Nursing College] there is barely any enthusiasm for public health and district nursing. That is now dangling at the bottom of the list, while it used to be the highest possible achievement. As a district nurse, you no longer have a position of status alongside of the family doctor in the neighborhood. You are only busy managing caregivers. District nurses are seeing their profession crumble."

At Buurtzorg Nederland, there is a completely different story. They are the pillars of the organization. Teams of highly trained nurses manage a whole range of things themselves. "Often, administrators do not understand that the commitment of highly trained personnel is much more effective and yields better care, as a result of which organizations can operate up to 30% more cheaply. Every district nurse understands this immediately."

### *Subdividing: a disastrous path*

The cause of the malaise is, according to De Blok, the product-oriented approach that first appeared around ten years ago in the homecare sector and is, by now, widespread. In this vision, care is seen as a product that you can chop up into various activities. Then you try to carry out these activities as cheaply as possible. The entire fundamental process of registration, intake, planning and supply has been divided up. These activities are all done by different people. The idea behind this is that, if you subdivide the processes, it is more efficient and, therefore, cheaper per hour.

However, according to De Blok, that is precisely wrong. The subdividing leads to all sorts of coordination requirements. Homecare organizations have, therefore, hired coordinators for this who must make sure that everyone works well together. Above them,

there is then a manager who is responsible for the success of the entire process. And, thus, an enormous overhead system is created that can only be maintained by greater volume. "If the financial pressure increases, there is the tendency to subdivide the process further and, increasingly, to hire people who have an even lower level of training: the indication (the level of help as allowed by the insurance) becomes the leading factor for the professional level of people organizations send. You have people who have reached the level of administering pills and giving injections, others are allowed to do bandaging and some are even allowed to do specialized tasks, such as connecting morphine pumps. That is crippling for the motivation of the nurses and the quality of the care and, moreover, it costs society barrels of money."

#### *Low overhead*

The product-oriented approach leads to homecare organizations wanting to increase production as much as possible. The central focus is on the execution of tasks, such as washing and putting on stockings. That is diametrically opposed to Buurtzorg Nederland's vision of care. "The focus of district nursing must be the relationship with the client and the solving of problems. Patients are insecure and must be given self-confidence after an illness or if the body is starting to deteriorate. That process is of vital importance. You must be able to anticipate how the client perceives his illness, how he is dealing with his environment, how the interaction is playing out and how you can help as much as possible so that the client feels secure. In this way, you create a restful atmosphere. That increases the capacity of the patient to take care of himself again. The question is how to find other solutions within that process. That demands nursing expertise. The tasks that the nurse carries out here are of secondary importance."

How is it possible that Buurtzorg can indeed hire expensive nurses while regular homecare organizations say that they hardly have any money for them? "Our average salary costs are, of course, somewhat higher," acknowledges De Blok, "but I have removed all of the extra coordinating time. We do not subdivide the care. The nurse who comes to the home of a client does everything: intake session, personal care, dressing wounds, medical-technical activities. The advantage of having one person do everything is that the average contact time increases. If you send four people, then each of them must travel there, be busy a short time and also gear their activities to one another," says De Blok with a smile.

Furthermore, Buurtzorg has computerized the entire work process as much as possible. The employees do not have to do their own administration. That all works via an intranet system where they enter data, starting with the intake session. The indications [measurements of levels of need], planning, scheduling and their own data are all there. Timekeeping is, for example, not necessary. It is sufficient to correct any deviations in the planning. The employees do have a workstation and much more time for consultation than in other organizations.

Finally, the lines of communication at Buurtzorg are short because there are no managers “Teams may operate according to their own judgment. That is also the way we used to do it in home nursing.”

#### No bonus

The Buurtzorg Nederland work method leads to remarkable results. Not only are employees and clients extremely satisfied, the organization has also measured how the care supplied compares to the indication. People under Buurtzorg’s care actually use, on average, only 45% of the care that is indicated.

You might expect that an organization that works so effectively would get a bonus, but that is not what the AWBZ is all about. The current AWBZ only rewards you for the number of hours that you work. Strange, De Blok feels. “The healthcare office does not ask what a healthcare provider does during those hours. This is curious if you think about the amount of money involved. For many patients, we are talking about 3,500 euros per week. That can run to a couple hundred thousand per year. You would actually expect that a healthcare office would want to know what the optimum care is for that group of patients and what the fastest possible lead time [care delivery time] is.”

But no, the AWBZ does not invite organizations to think about the best way to remove their clients from care more quickly. If you supply less care, you burn your own fingers because that means less income. Isn’t Buurtzorg Nederland affected by this?

“We could achieve more turnover of patients,” De Blok admits. “However, I am not motivated by turnover, but by the best solution. And that does not have to be at the expense of the net result. Our employees supply more hours of care than they would elsewhere, because the effectiveness is greater. A great deal of their time is spent on client care. That is the time that we can charge.”

In the current AWBZ, the ineffectiveness of the regular homecare sector can do little harm. But what happens if a portion of the homecare sector goes to the healthcare insurers, as the SER [Social Economic Council] advises for the recovery-oriented homecare sector? Health care insurers are not interested in costs that are as low as possible per hour of care provided. Insurers want the best price-quality ratio per client. “If I can provide better quality of care in half the time to, for example, clients with dementia, then wouldn’t the insurer rather do business with me than with someone who needs twice the number of hours? I estimate that the AWBZ can certainly be 30% cheaper.”

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This article is, with permission, based on a number of articles from *Zorgvisie* [Care Vision]. For up-to-date news on Buurtzorg and other developments in the healthcare sector, see [www.zorgvisie.nl](http://www.zorgvisie.nl).

# **Always adding a little extra does not help, searching for new pathways does On judicial professionalism and leadership**

Charlotte Keijzer

*It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Dutch judiciary has undergone spectacular growth and maturation over the past decades. In the year 2009, the judiciary is a modern organization that has matters ordered well enough and wants for almost nothing. Nonetheless, dissatisfaction is rampant. Professionals and managers appear to be losing each other.*

*How is that possible? This comes as a great surprise. The vast majority of the leadership is, after all, made up of professional colleagues. For a very long time, that was considered a guarantee against alienation between management and professionals, but that does not now appear to be the case.*

*This article will delve into the judiciary's search for a balance between quality and quantity and what principles of organization are used. It will shed light on how these principles relate to the professional orientation of judges and what society demands of the judiciary. It will also explore innovation of the judiciary.*

## **Efficiency and quality as the basis for the judiciary's role in society**

Once, at an annual gathering of judges of the District Court of Amsterdam, I heard Paul Kuypers, then director of political and cultural debating centre De Balie in Amsterdam, say that, in status hierarchies<sup>1</sup>, such as the judiciary, innovation occurs “along the periphery.” He meant that it always begins from secondary, supportive processes. And, indeed, this is precisely what has happened within the judiciary. More than two decades ago, the Ministry of Justice took the initiative to improve operational processes. The Council for the Judiciary continued these efforts after its creation in 2002. Over time, it became possible to control these processes more and more effectively, and, ultimately, this control also directly affected the substantive work of the judges. They are, generally speaking, not extremely enthusiastic about this. To illustrate, here is a quote from a vice-president of a larger district court: “I, too, know that we simply must produce results and I have no objection to being steered in that direction, but I have, as it were, lost my inspiration.”

In the judicial system, cases are assigned a specific amount of time (measured in minutes) and funded accordingly. The number of cases determines the amount of funding. The funding system is based on a business economics ideology, with the efficiency and productivity of the judiciary to be increased as much as possible. This has repercussions in the Council for the Judiciary's triennial price negotiations with the Ministry of Justice which increasingly attempts to lower the cost of the product. This has resulted in increasingly rigid performance specifications and the feeling among professionals that they must work harder and harder with decreasing satisfaction.

Things are running, but there is a price to pay. At a fast pace, thinking of efficiency first leads to repressing expertise. In the long run, professional values are also repressed. Quality is, therefore, completely in the spotlight. Recently, "time for quality" has been standardized by establishing a minimum number of training hours per year, by designating percentages of cases that must be settled by three judges instead of one, and by determining how extensively judgments must be motivated and the associated extra costs. But even this standardization does not escape the pursuit of efficiency, though it has ensured that discussion on quality is now being explicitly conducted. Nonetheless, the tension between quantity and quality is increasing rather than decreasing. A recent study showed that, in 2008, nearly 60% of professionals felt that their work pressure was high to extremely high.<sup>2</sup> Studies done in the period from 2003 through 2005 showed that 24% of the judges felt that they had to work too hard.<sup>3</sup>

In the final analysis, on the work floor at the moment, every discussion on improvement and change is governed by the necessity to find a balance between quality and quantity.

#### **Management repertory and the orientation of managers and professionals<sup>4</sup>**

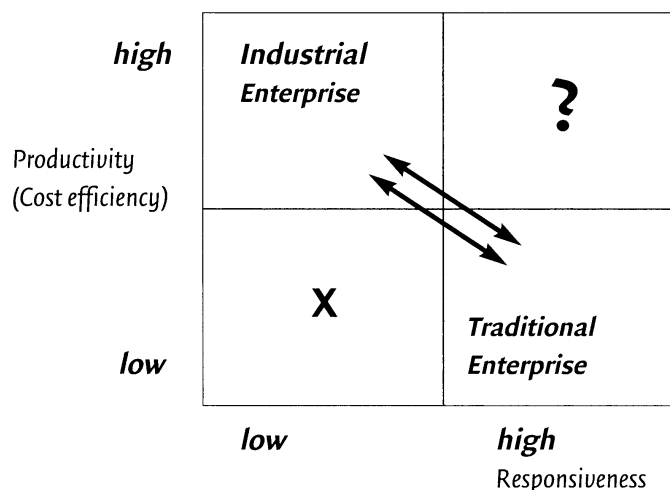
By adopting the business economics ideology and developing the ability to control operational processes, the Council for the Judiciary introduced modern management. Initially, that met with a great deal of resistance, but it has now become generally accepted, including by professionals. The underlying principles can be traced to the industrial revolution and focus on producing standard products inexpensively. They have brought enormous improvements in productivity to trade and industry. These principles include a functional organization with a pyramidal structure, specialization of activities, unity of leadership and control of information and communication streams. Something there is also, as the American organization psychologist Chris Argyris puts it, *control modus*, a specific management mindset about operations:<sup>5</sup>

- Determine your goal, make sure that you are in control, make others obedient; everything must serve "getting the job done."

- Pursue maximum profit and minimum loss; mutual competition is the rule, although you cannot openly discuss this.
- Avoid negative feelings among people or difficult, painful situations arise; avert loss of face.
- Be as rational as possible; prove yourself right with convincing arguments and by selling your position, if necessary, with the use of threats and coercion.

It is surprising how quickly most judges who join management become familiar with this mental map. Management operating according to the control modus creates dependent employees and, therefore, makes them ineffective in the long run. This eventually leads to decreased initiative and decreased personal responsibility for the whole. This development has, to a certain degree, occurred among professionals in the judiciary.

Industrial thinking pits the mass product that can be produced at low cost against the old-fashioned, traditional product that specifically meets the wishes of the client. With the old-fashioned product, there is low productivity and reuse of knowledge and investments. Costs, therefore, are high. The following figure, derived from Van Asseldonk, diagrams this.



### Tailor-made without additional costs

Modern society demands, however, a high level of service, comparable with a traditional relationship, at the cost of mass production. Van Asseldonk calls that mass-individualization – tailor-made without additional costs



This also happens to the judiciary. Judges must satisfy the demands of a complex social system and answer to the changing relationships of players among the judiciary and those seeking justice. They must react to innumerable, continually changing variations in the supply and disposal of cases – from criminal trial sessions taking a year to referrals to mediation in civil and family cases. All together, the work is unpredictable, yet needs to be tailor-made. All of this must be done under increasing pressure for efficiency. Van Asseldonk calls the ability to find an answer to this unpredictable variegation, this heterogeneity, responsiveness. The need to combine efficiency and responsiveness appears to be an autonomous development that, therefore, must also be responded to within the judiciary.

The solution is partially found in case differentiation. Some cases lend themselves to efficient, routine disposal, others certainly do not. Between them lies a grey area, in which one chiefly searches for more opportunities for routine disposal. The risk is that those seeking justice won't find an ear in the end, even with the judge – who is supposed to be their last resort. With innovative approaches, there are opportunities for more satisfactory solutions in this grey area. Moreover, they need not cost more. Van Asseldonk's figure shows that this approach requires a combination of highly professional work methods and intelligent organization.

This task must go hand in hand with a specific organizational program that allows for creative interactions. Knowledge must be developed and made available quickly. Along with this, it is crucial that professionals show initiative and take responsibility. The industrial concept does not offer solutions, because it is based on top-down controlling and optimization. Simplified, fixed production processes don't allow for variegation. They conflict with the demands of the organization, as well as the professional's natural inclination to respond to the special circumstances of every case. The pursuit of cost-efficient production leads to continually increasing pressure on the professional. The consequence is tension and damage to internal relationships – a “rift” between management and professionals, with frustration and paralysis in the latter. This happens to the judiciary, too. The profession is becoming more bureaucratic, and the skills involved are in danger of declining.

The issue is all the more weighty because the judiciary does not focus on alternative organizational principles and, therefore, is not familiar with methods for turning the bureaucratization process around. What happens if you do not apply this pressure? What could be the alternative? Professionals, including judges, need space to be able to respond. Responsiveness is part of their professionalism and, therefore, is of vital importance. Should responsiveness be eliminated from their jobs, they would lose their inspiration.

The problem can be redefined from, “the professionals are being pushed into a corner, whether or not by management” to “the political and social demands that are placed on the judiciary require them to combine efficiency and responsiveness.” It is not a ques-

### **Example**

“The Judge is becoming a bureaucrat,” says a court management board, referring to, among other things, “time-clocking” by the judges and their growing inclination to be docile. “We see that as a response to the continual emphasis on production and the feeling that there is no space for quality. We should actually be pleased that there are still judges who are fighting this pressure. In ten years, or perhaps even much sooner, that will be over. They will have deteriorated into bureaucrats; then it will be too late. We see the need for new zeal, less drawing board work and less organizing.”

tion of either efficiency or tailor-made work, but both at the same time. That creates tension, a tension that will never be completely resolved. The trick is to discover how the judiciary can manage the tension to reduce it to an acceptable level.

### **The authority and the social role of the judiciary.**

At the moment, the so-called *Enquiries on the Future of the Judiciary* are being made within the judiciary.<sup>6</sup> The leading question in these enquiries is what society expects from the judiciary in the coming years. As a result of the investigations, seven topics have been put on the agenda. The topics put high demands on expertise and effective sharing of knowledge, ask for flexible responses to the wishes of society and force the judiciary to manage tailor-made work and tempo.

An interesting outcome of the investigation is that the role of judge, over the course of time, has been severely limited. Because of, among other things, the sentencing powers of the Public Prosecution Service and a broad expansion of the authority of governmental services to administer sanctions such as administrative fines, street bans, exclusion or restraining orders, the judge is no longer called in for these measures (which are sometimes drastic.) Mediation, supervision and other forms of dispute settlement are winning ground. The judge is seeing his domain shrink, and the end of this movement is not yet in sight.

These developments can be interpreted in various ways. The often-used argument that the judiciary must occupy itself with more important things is not convincing, because the powers at issue touch on fundamental rights which are pre-eminently the domain of judges. More likely, the loss of terrain stems from a lack of feeling for diverse political and social wishes. Government reactions to undesirable behavior are increasingly differentiated – from fast and uniform in out-of-court settlements by the Public Prosecution Service, for example, to tailor-made and multidisciplinary, as in community work. The judiciary is going along, but in a manner that is very costly and much too

slow. Therefore, solutions are being found outside of the judiciary. Aside from the question of whether those are effective solutions, they are eroding the significance of the judge as a settler of disputes and protector of fundamental principles. In the long run, that will affect the authority of the judiciary. Therefore, responsiveness reaches much further than the case differentiation described above. The question is how, in the complex political/social field, the judge can best give content to his role. The judiciary can no longer limit itself to the question of how a case must be dealt with, but must also ask what a case actually is, which aspects are involved in that question, which answers are advisable and with whom we should collaborate in order to realize them. It should be noted that the space for variants differs per jurisdiction, being most limited when dealing with criminal cases. The next example is a response to these questions. It originates from the world of legal assistance but interferes with the work method of the judge.

### Example

A large group of 150 stakeholders worked, under the guidance of Prof. J.M. Barendrecht, LL.M. on an interactive project on the advice “Van duur naar duurzaam” [From expensive to sustainable]. This advice from the Steering Group for durable and accessible legal assistance was presented to the Parliamentary undersecretary of State on June 30, 2008.

The advice is more or less in line with the concept of mass individualization that was discussed above. Very briefly summarized, it says:

- Idea:** see the task to cut 50,000,000 euros from the budget as an opportunity to innovate.
- Motto:** “from justice seeker to problem owner.”
- Essence:** personal responsibility of the justice seeker, the judge is only needed at crucial moments and should be available right at those moments,
- as the supervisor of the process;
  - to resolve an issue;
  - as the only person who can restore balance of power.

The proposal means that, in principle, the judge leaves the responsibility for resolving conflict to the parties involved and only takes over if there is no other solution. That requires – apart from a different construction and timing of the process – a different attitude by the judge and other skills demonstrated.

In a conversation I had with Barendrecht on this subject, he really struck me by stating, “These are developments requiring a great deal of elaboration, creativity and practical feeling. This type of project is a process that you will ruin if you think that you’ll get it done in the classical manner.”

I believe that he is intuitively referring to the control modus and has determined that it is not going to work. What is necessary here is creativity, space for experimentation,

entrepreneurial spirit and the courage to take responsibility for the whole, in order to achieve cooperation that crosses a myriad of borders.

Such an approach can be retraced in four pilot programs starting in various district courts under the denominator *Conflictoplossing op maat* [Tailor-made Conflict Resolution]. The objective is to investigate the possibility of coming to a fast, definitive solution to a dispute shortly after the beginning of a procedure. The pilots are taking place in the sectors of sub-district law, administrative law, family and juvenile law and civil law. Shortly after the registration of a case, a session is held by a judge and a mediator. The judicial aspects and other interests are investigated. The involved parties, together with their lawyers, the judge and the mediator, search for solutions that are satisfactory to everyone. They themselves help diagnose the conflict and help find solutions.

### The organizational design of innovation

**Jacques Wallage, Chairman of the Council for Public  
Administration, recently, in the monthly *Overheidsmanagement*  
[Governmental Management]<sup>7</sup>**

“We live in a horizontal society (...) but many administrators are still thinking vertically.”

“Administrators should change their attitude and focus more quickly on activating other people’s responsibility.”

“Statements that begin “I think” should be replaced with “I would like to know.”

The Enquiries on the Future of the Judiciary show that the Council for the Judiciary recognizes the need for innovation as a strategic assignment. Innovation and strengthening professional quality are challenges the judiciary faces.

Here are a few characteristics of an organization designed to respond to those challenges and the conditions under which they develop.

In general, expertise and experience are the most important capital of a knowledge-intensive organization. The key to this capital is – besides discipline, of course – that professionals have the freedom to negotiate and act.<sup>8</sup> Leadership creates conditions in which professionals dare to take full advantage of that freedom. Argyris calls this *commitment modus*, in contrast to the previously mentioned control modus. Commitment modus can only develop if people feel safe, if they have inner freedom to choose, and if reflection on daily practice is customary. But is this only up to management? Isn’t it also up to the professionals to take initiative, accept responsibility and seek collaborators?

The answer is yes, and yet, it creates a paradox. It takes authority to develop these favorable conditions. In other words, democratic space is created undemocratically!<sup>9</sup> The designated person is the most powerful – the person in charge.

In order to know how those conditions must be created, it is necessary to have a vision of what administrators actually administrate. Examining the judiciary as an organization reveals a network of units (both individual and organizational) having a large degree of professional autonomy which, however, must work together. That entity of autonomy and collaboration forms the independent judicial authority. Autonomy represents strength, desire for improvement and mutual competition. Professional autonomy is all about “me” and is necessary to develop quality. Collaboration, cooperation, is all about “we” – togetherness and general interest – and is the primary orientation of management. The relationship between the units is characterized by competition vs. the need to work together. That mixed character is difficult to accept and to manage. The trick is to allow a balance to develop. In order to achieve that, relationships must be central in Administration. Administration then becomes *the regulation of the relationships in the network*.

With this, the administrators consciously focus their attention on the most important source of vitality in the organization: The professionals. In this way, they ensure that relationships between important groupings, such as between judges and legal support staff, become huge sources of energy and of efficiency because there is actual interaction.

Operational management doesn’t suddenly lose importance. However, significant profit is no longer expected there.

A main condition is that administrators and managers organize their own relationships with the professionals on the basis of equality. Through regular dialog, professionals are invited to join thinking and decision-making processes. The participants should feel a sufficient degree of security and have the courage to share their thoughts, beyond the censorship of perfection. Only then can the issue of high professionalism and intelligent organizing be brought to the table in all its aspects. It demands courage from all the participants, especially the managers, to operate as equals, relinquishing power arguments and considerations about loss of face. It means recognizing and admitting one’s own doubts and being truly open to what others have to say, without smothering contributions in judgments and prejudices.

With this, managers and professionals agree implicitly to a new psychological contract with the central premise that they will exchange and share how their parts of the job are done. This also means, however, that they will not shy away from confrontation and will take on a high degree of personal responsibility. It is only within that reciprocity that what really matters can develop. A manager who, on a regular basis, provides for such meetings, satisfies the condition for creating space. That need not take any more time than is currently spent in meetings.

This is a methodical intervention to start innovating with the professionals. The process does its work. That is what management should be aiming for.

The avoidance of interaction and influence between judges and management appears to be, according to a study by Bijlsma-Frankema, an “instigator of distrust.”<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, regular exchanges about matters that occupy your mind leads to trust. In other words, if you talk to each other often, you will start to love each other a bit.

Swaying one another and the judiciary do not, traditionally, go together very well. In the judicial organization, managers and professionals have never, in fact, actually *wanted* to influence each other, based on the historic situation that supporting services and operational management fell directly under the Ministry of Justice. They represented a different state power, the Executive, that kept its distance from the judge. The judge, in turn, had to keep his distance from the Executive. This situation changed with the implementation of the highest authority, the Council for the Judiciary, in 2002. The managers themselves are now part of the third Power of State, the judicial organization. Nonetheless, the above-named sentiment is still a thorn in the side of the judiciary. It hinders opening new pathways in which new forms of dealing with the partners in the chain and with those seeking justice can be centrally important. It is not the old tradition and new efficiency that are the problem, but the inability to find variations on these themes. It demands a continuing creative process to find a direction that does justice to both aspects to a sufficient degree, with continual adjustments for circumstances. In that process, manager and professional need each other, on the basis of respect and trust. This trust can grow if the parties no longer try to avoid influencing each other.

How can this increasing trust be mobilized? In a single court, this is done through management embracing new organizational principles and instituting a process – through discussions and working conferences – to restore connections among professionals. In other places, this is done by introducing – within existing consultative structures – new discussion methods such as dialog and nonviolent communication. This could be continued by experimenting in a number of places – for example, in a small, middle-sized and large district court and in a court of appeal – to yield various experiences that could be shared with each other.

But that alone will not be sufficient. The support of the highest authority is essential. The initiators in the district courts should be left some elbow room to act. The Council for the Judiciary should create these conditions. Only conscious action by the Council will lead to cohesiveness in the creative process of seeking new ways to make the tension between efficiency and responsiveness acceptable. A vision for management as sketched above can be helpful.

## Conclusion

The tension between efficiency and responsiveness cannot be eradicated but can be brought to an acceptable level. To do that, management needs to create the space to search – with professionals, on an equal basis – for new pathways, using a creative process. The Council for the Judiciary should embrace the vision that managing means regulating relationships in a network characterized by this tension.

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TRANSLATED BY SANDY REINHART

# **Work like any other?**

## **A business essay on the productivity of professionals in the public service sector**

*Klaas ten Have*

*The public service sector is faced with an enormous task that is still hardly being taken seriously – the combination of increasing demand for services, increasing shortage of personnel and little growth in productivity. The continuation of Taylorization in this sector not only undermines professionalism and craftsmanship, but also decreases chances for innovation in the future. What is needed is not the freezing of work processes and objectives, but, conversely, defrosting them. The professionals should be given the leading role here by showing – better than others – how good, efficient, effective public service can be provided.*

This book on professional pride is the sequel to the successful Dutch book *Beroepszeer, waarom Nederland niet goed werkt* (*Professional Pain. Why the Netherlands does not work well*) (2005), compiled by Gabriël van den Brink, Thijs Jansen and Dorien Pessers. The latter can be read as an indictment against how professionals are managed. The Dutch philosopher Ad Verbrugge writes, for example in his article in the book, “Objective standards of good workmanship are, to an increasing degree, being replaced by the dictates of market and management, presented as rational thinking. This not only violates the inner meaning of the profession, of professional ethics, but also robs the professional of his inspiration” (p. 108). A bit further on is “Even management can degenerate into senseless violence” (p. 121).

This accusation reminds me of about a hundred years ago when, under the intellectual and practical leadership of Frederick Winslow Taylor, production work was vigorously rationalized and stripped of the romanticism that poets had always attributed to traditional work. What Taylor did was a classic example of Schumpeter’s “creative destruction,” in which “traditional work” disappeared – sometimes violently – and was replaced with “production work.” This innovation also led, however, to the enormous productivity of the last century which created our current level of affluence.

The transformation from traditional work to production work went hand in hand with profit and loss. Lost were the “objective standards of good craftsmanship” which



preserved production norms and led to, among other things, lower wages. They were replaced with product innovations and improved production processes, which led to increased productivity. The “inner meaning” of much production work seemed remote, but how much inspiration can you muster if you don’t have a cent to your name?

Taylorism led to a new way of organizing work, in particular by dividing implementation and regulation. In the past, (groups of) craftsmen determined standards, based on reasonable production expectations, how work was performed and how proceeds were divided. Production work, on the other hand, consists of implementing a series of constantly analyzed actions. Analyzing became the pre-eminent task of management. The division between thinking and doing, between managing and producing, is the essential characteristic of Taylorism. The first battle concerning productivity was won by Taylor’s *Scientific Management*, and we are inclined to say “how fortunate.”

In recent decades, it has become the professionals’ turn, especially within public service, for Taylorization of their work. The growing demand for social services (healthcare, education, safety) and, therefore, their rising cost, in combination with continually increasing public, media and political scrutiny of “quality,” caused administrators to take over. They established performance contracts, (half-hearted) free market systems and performance protocols to control the organizations and work of social service professionals. Professionals became passive implementors of objectives that were determined elsewhere, to be achieved by means of procedures that were also determined elsewhere – a prime example of Taylorism.

According to Van den Brink, Jansen and Pessers (2005), a renaissance of professional honor and pride is necessary. A halt must be called to the expansion of the arsenal of tools for disciplining professionals, and the professionals must be given full opportunity to connect once again with their profession and their expertise so that they will be able to work “in good faith.” That will lead to better quality and higher productivity. Investing in professional honor is the proposed answer to professional pain.

I believe this position resembles – all too much – that of early artisans and does not do justice to the current problems of professional work. Just as administrators and managers in public service are involved in a rearguard action (the Taylorizing of work which does not lend itself to being Taylorized), the professional honor movement is running the risk of returning to the past of the “autonomous” professional. Some people have beautiful memories of that time, but for many the memories are bad.

In the meantime, it is increasingly clear that public service must contend with a great productivity problem. Thus far, this has presented as a labor market problem (labor scarcity, staff shortages) and as a funding problem (deficits, waiting lists), but the heart of the problem is that the productivity of professional services, in general, and public services, in particular, has barely increased for decades. In the coming decades, this will lead to unacceptable claims by these services on national incomes and on the labor market. Something has to turn this ship around, and if professionals do not do it themselves, administrators and managers will do it for them.

Threatening ‘rearguard action’ promises little good for the future of public service. The battle should be about productivity and innovation, the outcome of the Taylorism revolution, but Taylor did not supply the right prescriptions for this when it comes to professional work. The improvement of productivity and the innovation of services and processes is a task for the professionals themselves. Management is much too important to leave to managers.

In the debate that followed the publication of *Beroepszeer*, various initiatives can be found for avoiding a rearguard action. The mission statement of the Professional Honor Foundation (Stichting Beroepseer) for example, states “When employees learn to manage with their talents, are allowed to air their ideas in an environment in which they are listened to attentively, high ambitions are set free. They will then also want to be involved in the realization of those ambitions, and that creates synergy.” Also, “Let us talk with each other about what we can do better and differently, what we wish for, and let us stimulate each other to achieve it.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, top officials in organizations in the public service sector regularly tell us that they are critical or even dismissive of the “measuring and settling” culture. The results of professional work are only measurable to a very limited degree. They must not be *counted*; they must be *recounted*.

In this article, we intend to support this and to contribute to the conceptualization of the task within the public service sector and a more prominent role for professionals in solving this problem. The work in the public service sector deserves an advance-guard engagement.

### **Work like any other?**

What is the situation, comparatively speaking, concerning the quality of work in the public service sector? Smulders (2008) has analyzed global development over the past decades and reaches the conclusion that autonomy in the private workplace in the Netherlands has increased and worker satisfaction is stable and at a high level, while conditions in the public service sector are average. This is not such a disturbing picture. This empirical perspective is important because it emphasizes that major gaps can develop between reality and our perception of reality. Reality is always more varied, more variable and more contradictory than our assumptions.

In this vein, for example, Taylorism has never been the massive, overpowering paradigm, not even in the free-market sector. Moreover, in the last decades, there have also been opposing movements that are part “anti-Taylorism” and part “enlightened Taylorism.” Around fifty years ago, the insight burst through that there is no “one best way” to organize, but that the design and management of organizations varied according to circumstances. Taylorism aided lowest-cost mass production, but companies also compete on quality, flexibility and innovativeness, which call for different forms of organization. Charlie Chaplin’s film *Modern Times* is still a symbol of industrial processes with

man as a cog in a large machine, but meanwhile many factories and offices seem more like consultancies where professionals work in continually changing teams on projects for internal and external clients.

It helps the public service sector that the quality of work has not been destroyed everywhere by the “growing crust” of pompous figures who pointlessly burden our businesses, schools and other organizations, who freeload off profit, and who make our lives – we, the executors – increasingly difficult. These new “big-wigs” are the arrogant ruling class of our time’ as the Dutch journalist and author Geert Mak<sup>2</sup> said so beautifully in the book on professional pain *Beroepszeer*.<sup>3</sup>

It could be expected that the quality of labor would have declined in the public service sector as a consequence of controlling processes and people, by Taylorizing this work. In other sectors, de-Taylorizing as a consequence of changing competition should be expected, and that it will lead to better quality labor. Let us see what the figures say (Table 1).

The first indicator, worker satisfaction, is both the most used and the least meaningful. After all, the degree of satisfaction mainly measures the degree to which employees adjust to the situations in which they work (De Sitter et.al. 1998). Experience has taught us that the score is nearly always, everywhere, around 80%. The problem is, of course that not everyone judges satisfaction on the basis of the same norms. It is, therefore, surprising that the figures show such great differences. In education, healthcare and public administration – including justice and law enforcement – there was an increase in satisfaction between 2000 and 2007, just as there was in business services. In other sectors, satisfaction is average and stable. In the public service sector, satisfaction – or the degree of adjustment – has increased slightly and is now somewhat above average. There does not appear to be a wide gap between actual work and desired work in the eyes of the employees in these sectors.

It goes without saying that professional work demands creativity. We see a decrease in creativity during the period 2000–2007 in the hotel and catering, trade and transportation, financial services and public administration sectors. Creativity scores in the education sector are above average and stable, and average and stable in healthcare. There is no clear pattern to the differentiation between the public service sector and the rest.

“Self-determination about one’s own work” did not show meaningful change between 2005 and 2007. Education and public administration sector scores are above average, and the healthcare sector is a bit lower than average.

“Thinking up solutions oneself” decreased in both education and the healthcare sector between 2005 and 2007 but is still above average.

Table 1: A few indicators for quality of labor in the various sectors (%)

	Industry, construction, agriculture, public utilities	Hotel, and catering, trade, transportation	Financial services	Business services	Education	Health, culture, welfare	Justice, police, public administration	other	Total	year
To what degree, taking everything into account, are you satisfied with your work? (% very satisfied)	76	77	82	65	75	68	76	70	74	2000
	76	74	79	80	81	80	80	77	78	2007
Does your work require creativity? (% always, often)	64	57	62	70	80	65	70	61	64	2000
	60	48	55	68	83	63	63	55	60	2007
Can you decide how to do your work yourself? (% yes, generally)	67	59	71	77	74	63	74	62	66	2005
	69	58	70	80	71	60	74	64	66	2007
Must you come up with solutions for how to do certain things in your work yourself? (% yes, generally)	67	58	72	81	81	68	76	62	68	2005
	66	57	72	79	76	62	75	63	66	2007

Source : TNO Arbeidssituatie [Labor Situation] Survey<sup>4</sup> (TAS) 2000 & Nationale Enquête Arbeidsomstandigheden<sup>5</sup> [National Survey on Labor Conditions] (NEA) 2005, 2007.

The dominant impression the figures present is that work in the public service sector is chiefly experienced the same as any other work, including understandable and not understandable deviations from the average. Is nothing in particular going on in these sectors? Shouldn't the professional honor movement target the "mechanization" of work in general? Is all the concern not simply a consequence of this type of work keeping the autonomous worker going the longest? Work in the public service sector is partly the same as any other work, but, on crucial issues, it is truly different. I will first discuss the areas in which there are similarities, and in the following paragraph, differences.

The complexity of labor and organization is best understood if we assume that within organizations there are always two forces, or visions, in a strained relationship with each other. These polar opposites are the organization as "machine" versus the organization as "organism" (Scott 1987, Beer and Nohria 2000).

At the one pole – the organization as machine – the organization is an instrument in the hands of its owners or administrators. A machine works best if it has no will of its own. The goals of the owners determine, without concessions, the design and management of the organization (*outside-in.*) Decision-making within the organization is based purely on the interests of top management (*top-down.*) Behavior is determined by the organization (*informal behavior experienced as troublesome*), and the past plays no role in the development of the organization (*future-pull.*) The organization as machine will be, for many administrators and managers, not only the ideal type in a Weberian sense, but a truly ideal picture. This ideal is, however, based on a grandiose overestimation of one's own abilities and one's own insight. After all, most organizations function in such complex environments that only a form of "distributed intelligence" can maintain itself.

At the other pole – the organization as organism – the organization is an autonomous system that, while searching, clears a path towards the future. The organization is a group of people who strive to achieve common goals. The organization itself chooses its objectives (*inside-out*) and functions on the basis of interactions between the employees and the environment (*bottom-up.*) It is the total sum of the behavior of its members (*informal behavior is a source of desired variation*), and development of the organization is pathway-dependent (*past-push.*) For many administrators and managers, this pole is the antithesis of ideal, but they recognize the restiveness and intractability of organizations according to this picture.

With the machine pole, the organization generates work and searches for the people to do that work. With the organism pole, the people work and, because of that, need organization. The professional honor movement opposes the machine view within the public service sector and supports the organism view.

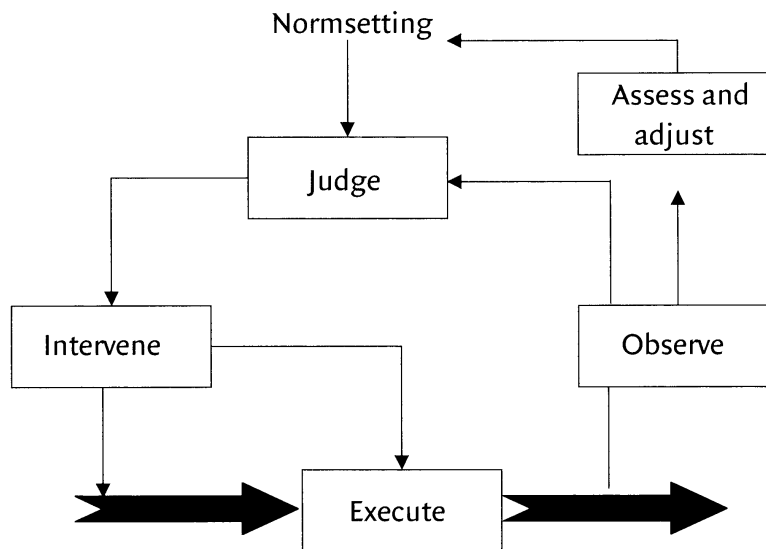
This dichotomy appears regularly in the professional honor debate – in the antithesis between *low-trust* and *high-trust* organizations, between the Rhineland and Anglo-Saxon management models and between control on the basis of regulations and bureaucracy and control on the basis of vision and trust. If we view this dichotomy as a strained relationship between two poles and each organization as a specific "solution" to this ten-

sion, then organizations and work within the public service sector obviously do not occupy a special position in the direction of the machine pole or the organism pole. It is the same as any other work.

### The deserved decline of the isolated professional

Every goal-oriented activity, including those of professionals, can be portrayed as a control cycle:

Figure 1. The control loop of the professional



Work is the continuous passage through this loop: Implementing an activity; observing the subsequent result; comparing the result with the norm (assessment) and, if unsatisfactory: Performing an intervention, therefore, changing the activity. By repeatedly moving through this loop, it becomes possible to intervene more accurately, based on learning, and meet the norms more consistently. This learning process can only function if the control loops are closed, short and integrated:

- closed: Implementing (executing), observing, assessing and intervening are together;
- short: Close to each other in time and place;
- integrated: All aspects of the control (for example, costs, quality, flexibility) are to be taken together.

Anyone who has learned to ride a bike knows the consequence of a control loop which is not closed, is too long and/or is not integrated. You will fall.<sup>6</sup>

The work of a professional can also be described this way. The teacher, for example, teaches (implementation), sees how the learning process is going (observation), judges

if it is going well (checking and assessing) and, if it is, continues in the same way. If it is not, he changes his approach (intervention.) After moving through this loop many times, he learns how the controlled system (the students) works and reacts to his actions.

The figure describes a second loop, the so-called evaluative control loop. This becomes operative if the professional is repeatedly unsuccessful in getting results to satisfy the norms or if the objectives are sharpened. In that case, the norms must be adjusted, which can also mean that other intervention possibilities must be implemented or that the implementation (execution) must be structurally altered. A “true” professional (Maister 2000) and a “true” craftsman (Sennett 2008) are continually busy highlighting objectives and working on higher norms. A professional or a craftsman is someone who (always) wants to improve on what he is doing.<sup>7</sup>

Using this simple model, something can be said about the development of work in the public service sector. Around forty years ago, the teacher, the family doctor and the policeman were in charge of their classroom, office or village. The control loop was closed, short and integrated and these professionals had a great deal of autonomy to carry out their activities as they saw fit. The same teacher, family doctor and policeman were also in charge of the evaluation of the control loop. If it was impossible to satisfy the norms, the norms or the work method were adjusted accordingly. In this situation, a great variety of professional qualities could develop. Whether the person involved changed how he carried out his activities depended upon his understanding of professional norms and quality of craftsmanship. Some teachers, family doctors and policemen could do this well and others could not. The majority could not.

In this vein, we all know the teacher who keeps explaining the same thing over and over in the same incomprehensible way, but with more emphasis; and we all know the family doctor who, yet again, writes out a prescription; or the policeman who prefers to look the other way. There is no maintenance of professional norms via the evaluation of the control loop, and it is solely the individual professional himself who determines the results. This isolated professional cannot serve as an ideal of professional work because there is no counter force.<sup>8</sup> Calling upon and stimulating professional honor will not be successful, because there is no social structure to adjust.

Meanwhile, this form of professional autonomy has become the exception. In education, safety and healthcare, forms of fraternal cooperation and assessment develop, such that the evaluative control loop is closed by fellow professionals. This leads to a decrease of autonomy but the maintenance and further development of professional norms benefit. This first infringement on professional autonomy is extremely good for professionalism.

The second infringement comes from the controlled system itself – the student, patient and citizen. The controlled system talked back and had its own opinions about what must be observed, how it must be assessed and how to intervene. Moreover, students, patients and citizens organized themselves to exert influence on the norms. And

because everybody is a citizen, the media and politics were also brought in to influence the norms. This violation of the professional autonomy progresses, horizontally – along the relationship between professional and client – and bears on norms measuring the quality of the process of professional service and, sometimes, on the quality of the content of professional service.

The third infringement on professional autonomy is vertical and financial and originates with managers and administrators. This infringement has always existed; public services have always had financial limits. These norms have certainly been sharpened, so that cost/quality considerations bear closely on the professional.

Because of these infringements, the professional is confronted with opposing demands precisely in the heart of his work – considerations of quality and costs. Professionals tend to value quality the most and see cost as a troublesome, limiting factor. Also, these infringements affect budgets, quality control, process control, achievement contracts, output rewards and protocols.

Professional work in the public sector once belonged to the professional and now belongs to everyone. A battle has developed over who is the boss of the evaluative control loop for professional work. Professional norms must compete with client norms and administrative/organizational norms. The professional seems to fare the worst. He has gone from being an isolated professional to a heteronomous professional, controlled by a number of outside actors and factors. It is only within the shelter of the classroom and the office that he can be a bit professional and operate as he sees fit, albeit within strict boundaries. He has become a co-worker, just like everyone else, and that hurts.

Professional norms being continually “disturbed” by client and organization norms is, for most workers, completely normal. Most carpenters, R&D employees, mechanics, plumbers, organizational advisors, architects and ICT developers do not see this as a real problem, even if it is a bit troublesome now and then.

The public service sector is a special case, first because of the cherished ideal image of the isolated professional and, second, because of the identification of professionals with the social importance of good education, good healthcare and safety. Lastly, achievement measuring systems being applied in the public sector were tried long ago in other sectors and found wanting.

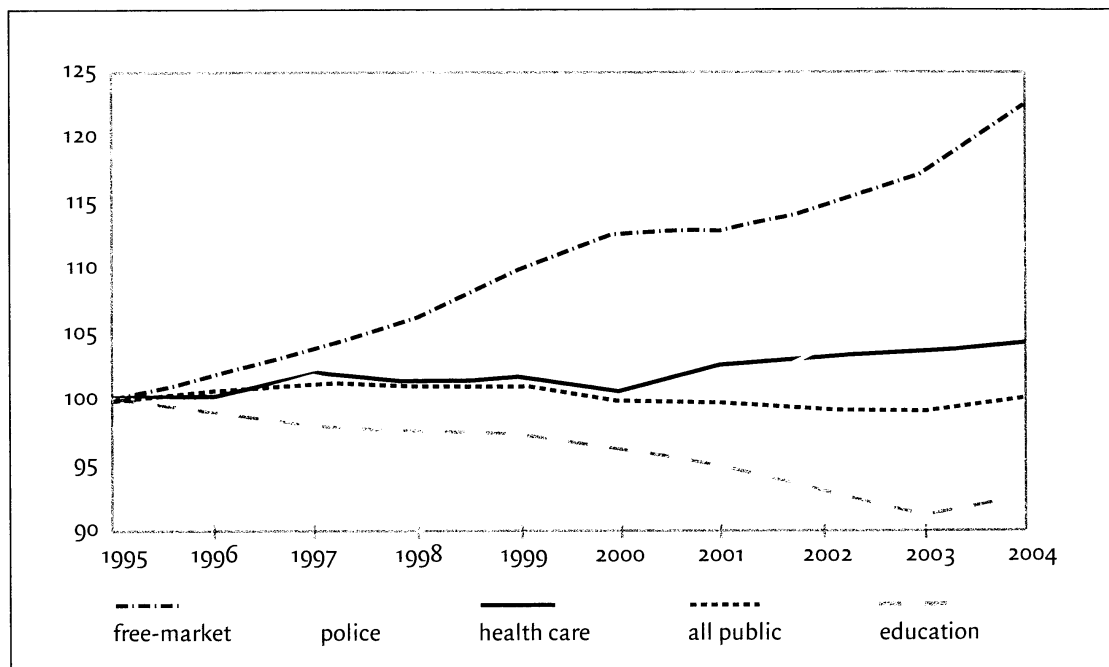
Robbing professionals (and craftsmen) of a voice in the evaluative control loop – thus, in the objectives of their work – is lethal for the development of professionalism. The professional honor movement has affiliated itself with the dissatisfaction and frustration that this theft summons by pleading for a renaissance of professional honor. This answer is not sufficient. The movement must also affiliate itself with the core of professionalism – the desire to do the work (increasingly) better and to remove obstacles that stand in the way. The new autonomous professional must learn to deal with diverse competing – but legitimate – sets of norms.



### The professional productivity shortage as the most important task

The public service sector is faced with an enormous task that has been noticed but is hardly being taken seriously: The combination of increasing demand for services, increasing shortage of personnel and little growth in productivity. In a recent report to the Dutch government of the so-called Commissie-Bakker, impressive personnel shortages are anticipated in the near future, in particular in the public service sector.<sup>9</sup> And, from the graph below, it is clear that, in the quaternary sector, those shortages will barely be offset by productivity growth.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 2. Labor productivity in the public service sector and the free-market sector, 1995-2004 (in index figures, 1995 = 100)



Source: *Public achievements in perspective. Memorandum quaternary sector 2006-2011*, The Hague: SCP 2007, pg. 46.

This combination creates a non-sustainable situation that will “resolve” itself sooner or later, with or without the influence of professionals. If the policy remains unchanged, the public service sector’s claim on national income and on professionals will reach unacceptable levels and lead to stagnant development.

Management guru Peter Drucker placed knowledge workers’ productivity on the agenda (Drucker 1999). The need to increase productivity among this group of workers requires, according to him, an approach that is the opposite of Taylor’s a century ago. He bunched his first move into six core points:

- Ask, "What is the task?" Only the professionals themselves can answer this question and, subsequently, eliminate from their job descriptions everything that does not belong to the task.
- Place responsibility for productivity with the knowledge workers themselves. Knowledge workers manage themselves and need autonomy to do so.
- Continuous innovation is part of the task and the responsibility of every knowledge worker.
- Knowledge work requires continuous learning and continuous teaching.
- Knowledge work is about the quality of output, not quantity.
- A knowledge worker is an asset, not a liability, which means, among other things, that a knowledge worker must want to affiliate himself with the organization above all other alternatives.

These six factors together form an explosive mixture when reflecting on the future of professional work, including within the public service sector. At first glance, every professional will say "yes" wholeheartedly to these factors, but, on second thought, the isolated and heteronomous professional's distance from the previous paragraph is enormous. An unheard-of and alarming responsibility is being pushed on professionals here.

A few factors speak for themselves, but others require further explanation. The question, "What is the task?" in combination with the relevance of quality instead of quantity, is razor-sharp. Among professionals, this question will always lead to an extensive and heated debate. Just try, "The task of the teacher is to teach!" "The task of the surgeon is to prevent medical mistakes!" "The task of the educational system is to prevent students from dropping out of school!"

The primary objective of this question is to strip knowledge work of superfluous ballast, but it goes further than that. Ultimately, it puts the function of the task up for discussion. After all, the task of the teacher is not to teach, but to further the learning process of the students. One might wonder if teaching is the appropriate means for this! The increasingly better response to this question could be called "functional innovation" (see Ten Have 2009).

Being about quality, not quantity, is, of course, straightforward criticism of the "easy-way-out," target-and-ranking culture that has developed. It is often presented as the end point in an assessment, while it could be the starting point of reflection on the achievements of a sector, organization or professional. The assessment of quality demands a debate among professionals, including the question of how professionals justify themselves to financiers and clients. The need to innovate and the primacy of quality demand a non-Taylor style of management.

In a lecture on professional organizations which I give to evening class students from all sectors of work, I always ask who has developed and implemented a *Business Balanced*

*Scorecard* (BBS) in the past period. A BBS is a management tool to quantify targets for financial results, client results, work process results and developmental results that are derived from organizational objectives. This hype – as it can be called – started with the work of Robert Kaplan and David Norton (1996) and was intended to combat one-sided control of short-term financial results. The vast majority of students say their company has developed such a system. The next question is which companies actually still work with the system, and the answer is always none. The students also indicate that the development of such a system, which demands reflection of factors and processes that determine results, is always a useful and enjoyable exercise, but that everyone feels it is pointless as a set of targets. What is going on here?

Analyzing factors that influence the success of an organization leads to better insight into the behavior of a controlled system as a limited set of targets. This set is, however, always much too limiting. Organizations and their environments are too complex and variable. The “mechanical” set of targets is, therefore, quickly replaced by a form of control that is more iterative and interactive – iterative, because, again and again, other factors become relevant and old factors lose their value; interactive, because employees themselves are often best able to identify and quantify these factors. This form of control involves objectives, not targets, an important difference.<sup>11</sup>

Even if it were possible to direct the focus towards targets, if situations were simple and stable, it is not smart. Imposed targets limit; shared objectives challenge. Targets lead, at best, to “satisfying” behavior, while objectives can lead to “maximizing” behavior.

Drucker’s factors – innovating, learning, teaching – are not self-evident, as Mintzberg (1993) established. One type of organization distinguished in Mintzberg’s classic work is the “professional bureaucracy” – schools, hospitals, police districts. He describes professional bureaucracies as organizations in which the standardization of skills via education, training and indoctrination is the central method for coordinating work processes. Standardization is established outside the organization in training institutes and professional groups. Professionals work relatively independently of their colleagues but interact intensively with clients. Professional routines are implemented centrally where a great deal of *fine-tuning* takes place. The power of expertise is of primary importance.

A flaw of this type of organization is that while one is able to innovate within the boundaries of one’s own professional domain, cooperation beyond professional boundaries is barely possible and not aspired to, though that is often where true innovation takes place. In Mintzberg’s terms, convergent deductive thinking is paramount, where specific cases are accommodated in the familiar general categories the profession knows. Innovation, however, demands divergent inductive thinking which cherishes and strives to develop the unique and the not-yet-classified. Mintzberg sees, in the dominance of the convergent deductive thinking, an explanation for the conservative charac-

ter of these types of organizations. “So it should come as no surprise that professional bureaucracies and the professional associations that control their procedures tend to be conservative bodies. Everybody, not only a few managers or professional representatives, must agree on the change. So change comes slowly and painfully.” (Mintzberg 1993, 210).

Mintzberg’s perspective leads to two conclusions. First, he makes clear that coordination via standardization of output and/or of work processes, such as is now the case, is alien to professional bureaucracy. Applying these forms of control to this type of work meets a great deal of resistance. Second, and more important, if in-depth ongoing innovation of this work must be achieved (which we think is necessary), the professional organization as we know it is not suited to the task. Mintzberg: “But dynamic conditions call for change – new skills, new ways to slot them, and creative, cooperative efforts on the part of multidisciplinary teams of professionals” (Mintzberg 1993, 210). In that case, Mintzberg feels, a different type of organization is necessary, one that he has christened “adhocracy.” Here, one abandons every form of standardization and continually searches for unique solutions to unique problems, unhindered by the standards and norms of organizations and professions. However, hospitals, schools and police districts need both forms of control, unfortunately – standard programs for standard cases and innovation programs for unique cases.

Highlighting the inevitability of (functional) innovation and productivity growth in the public service sector thus offers a different perspective to the question of who must have authority over the evaluating control loop of professional work. Far-reaching Taylorizing leads not only to the undermining of professionalism and craftsmanship, but also to decreases in chances for innovation in the future. Tayloristic organizations are no more equipped for innovation than current professional organizations. What is needed is not freezing work processes and objectives, but, conversely, defrosting them.

Drucker provides an alternative route with the essential characteristic of the worker having primacy in determining the function of his professional tasks, productivity, mutual professional learning and innovation processes. Drucker gives professionals the leading role in the evaluative control loop. The claims of others in the control loop, which we previously labeled as legitimate, are not denied but must compete with the professional’s claims. Professionals, better than others, can dominate by making it clear how good, efficient, effective public service can be delivered. If managers can measure performance better than others, then professionals can recognize it better than others.

### **Conclusion: The new battle for productivity**

The practice and the debate of controlling the public service sector can lead to a rear-guard action. On one hand, there are administrators and managers who, propelled by public opinion, try to control the public service sector with Tayloristic methods. On the other hand, there are professionals in search of lost autonomy and lost prestige which, in part, never existed and, in part, had more disadvantages than advantages. The vicious circle of mistrust that develops because of this conflict must be broken. The target image is the new autonomous professional who strives for a dominant position in the evaluative control loop surrounding professional work. This will not happen without a struggle. A new battle for productivity is necessary.

Workers in the public service sector do not differentiate themselves from others in terms of autonomy and challenges in their work. They occupy a mid-position, and there are no signs of a drastic worsening of level. They see their work as having become the same as any other work.

The professional in the public service sector has lost his isolated position, fortunately. In its place he experiences heteronomous control by administrators, managers, clients and their representatives, which is intolerable because it undermines professionalism and innovation. The autonomy of the professional must be rediscovered.

The need for increased productivity in the public service sector has been recognized but not yet tackled. The autonomous professional will need to seek a leading role here. He will have to learn to think and observe differently. The (innovative) questions *what* and *why* are central, not the (conservative) question *how*. With this approach, professionals can again get a grip on the evaluating control loop.

The image of professionalism must, therefore, be broadened considerably, not by going back to the isolated professional and not by pushing further the heteronomous professional, but by strengthening the autonomous professional. This new autonomous professional plays the game with regard to the sets of norms of other stakeholders in his terrain.

True professionals always strive to do their work better; they are obsessed with quality. This obsession is externally focused; it is about the *what* and *why*, the results that work provides to the company. The *how* – the content professional tasks – is a continually changing derivation of this.

This is at odds with the dominant view of professionalism derived from the image of the isolated professional who clings to once-learned routines. To recapture the autonomy of the professional in the public service sector, professionals and their organizations must learn to think and act functionally and structurally.<sup>12</sup> This broadened image of professionalism makes it possible to deal differently with the legitimate claims of other stakeholders, namely by being one step ahead of them.

The strengthening of autonomy of the professional in the public service sector also demands a strengthening of relationships within the profession – among professional

themselves and between professionals and their organizations. It is striking that labor unions seem to be the most remote from the content of work in the public service sector and the strategic challenges of domains. It is equally striking that professional organizations focus strongly on professionals' budgets. Conquering the evaluative control loop demands these players focus on the content of the work and on the future of the respective social domains.

Professional organizations are poorly equipped to shape the demands of innovation and increases in productivity, though they play, of course, an important role in the intended change. They provide a scene of action surrounding innovation and productivity and an experimental space for other forms of achievement, work, organization and management.<sup>13</sup> They will have to learn to strengthen the autonomy of the professional by steering softly towards hard, quantitative targets and steering firmly towards soft, qualitative objectives. Steering towards targets has fundamental limitations. They may initially appear hard as nails but, on further consideration in light of objectives, are often soft as butter. Working with targets is, in itself, not a problem, as long as its relativity is clear to everyone, but that is often not the case. We advocate never talking about targets without talking about objectives;<sup>14</sup> it is precisely the continuous reevaluating and reassessing of targets that leads to a renewed discussion of objectives. In this discussion, the what and the why are being given their due. In such a new control culture, attention can be focused on the function of the work and the organization and on the structural improvement of achievements of organizations in the public service sector.

Bonding to the profession – the core of all professionalism and craftsmanship – has become difficult in the past decades, and not only within the public service sector. The concept of “commitment” has been nearly stripped of content and reduced to a warm feeling that closely resembles “satisfaction.” Because modernization and innovation stem from dissatisfaction combined with involvement, don't expect much interest in the message. But, in a world and labor market with wide choices, where, as Drucker calls it, workers are *assets*, the criterion that you can truly commit to will increase in importance: you become a teacher if you want to educate, a doctor if you have a passion for health and a policeman if injustice infuriates you.

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**Professional Pride as a program**  
**Onward to a different administrative philosophy**



# **Professional pride as a program**

## **The case for a neo-republican administrative philosophy**

*Gabriël van den Brink, Thijs Jansen, Jos Kole*

*In this view of a free society, both its liberties and its servitudes are determined by its striving for self-improvement, which in its turn is determined by the intimations of truths yet to be revealed, calling on men to reveal them. In the pursuit of excellence it accepts a condition of society in which the public interest is known only fragmentarily and is left to be achieved as the outcome of individual initiatives aiming at fragmentary problems.*

Michael Polanyi, "The Republic of Science: Its Political and Economic Theory"<sup>1</sup>

### **I Introduction**

How should professionals and other parties behave and organize in order to optimize the quality of public services? How must that "powerful force" of professional pride be directed so that professionals' expertise can be restored to a place of honor and the public interest can best be served? In our view, these are the leading questions in this book, and all the preceding articles and interviews contribute in their own way to formulating the answers. Together, they form the material for our "alternative administrative philosophy," that is, an alternative to the way of thinking that is often implicitly at work in the minds and attitudes of administrators, governments and professionals themselves. The developments that make such a philosophy necessary have already been discussed at the beginning of this book. Here, we present the principal building blocks for a different approach.

We are looking for an "alternative" administrative philosophy, because the current way of thinking is no longer adequate. As used here, the term "philosophy" does not so much refer to the abstract concepts that have been developed by professional philosophers or other thinkers in the academic world. Instead, we are concerned with a more or less coherent, often implicit, way of thinking related to the way professionals are directed and managed which has been embodied in innumerable practical handbooks or courses and has been at work in the minds of administrators or managers over the last few decades. That "administrative philosophy" can be traced in policy documents, newspaper articles and annual reports. Presuppositions, often implicit, are made which

can have far-reaching consequences in practice. In contrast to what one would expect regarding a philosophy, such presuppositions are hardly subject to critical examination. A well-known assumption is the idea that organizations in the (semi-)public sector should be seen as “companies,” that the services they provide are “products” and that “efficiency” is the most important value for everyone. Another presupposition is that professionals are not motivated enough to work hard and effectively, and that they therefore need extra stimulation from outside. We argue that these ideas are not the only vision – or the most adequate – of how to regulate professional practice. An alternative way of thinking is essential.

The alternative we have in mind has several characteristics and meets a number of criteria. As far as substance is concerned, our vision demonstrates a correspondence with a “neo-republican” political philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Such a philosophy answers the question of how best to regulate society and govern a state.<sup>3</sup> A so-called neo-republican vision is characterized by the assumption that each member of society will be intensively involved in public affairs (the *res publica*, from which we derive the word “republican”.) Let us be clear, “republican” as used here has nothing to do with a rejection of monarchy; it means a self-conscious involvement in the common good we citizens share in society. It is crucial that citizens themselves determine what should be understood by “the common good,” “the general public interest” or “public affairs.” In that sense, republicanism does imply a form of self-government. By governing themselves, citizens free themselves from the arbitrary exercise of power by others, and this freedom characterizes republicanism perfectly. We are of the opinion that the rise of professional pride in the Netherlands can be directed constructively by incorporating it into a modern version of republicanism. Our case for professional self-regulation corresponds closely with the republican emphasis on self-respect, self-government, committing oneself to public affairs and the active participation of everyone in “administrative processes.”

We also think that an alternative vision of management of and by professionals must meet a number of criteria, the most important being that it dovetail with the most recent scientific insights. That is partly why a wide variety of academics appear in this book. They do not all tell the same story, and they even disagree with each other on certain issues. However, that is not unusual or undesirable when it comes to scientific research. It is even, to a certain extent, unavoidable because there are no absolute truths in science, and an increase in knowledge is based on bringing together specific insights and specific phenomena.

Our concepts and proposals also link up with what is actually going on in the (semi-) public sector. It makes no sense whatsoever to develop one’s own philosophy – a system, model or method that is then imposed on professionals from outside. The fact that this happens so often is precisely one of the main causes of professionals’ problems. We therefore try to be as realistic as possible and take into account the practical experiences that have been gained in the (semi-) public sector in recent years.

Finally, an alternative administrative philosophy must fit into the political and histor-

ical context of Dutch society. As Christopher Pollitt says, one of the greatest mistakes is when an administrative way of thinking is taken out of the context in which it developed and transplanted to an environment it is not suited to. We therefore take into account the forces that have been at work in Dutch reality for some time when developing our vision.

Although the various contributions to this book sometimes cover a wide range of activities, our emphasis is really on the professionals who work in the (semi-) public sector. We address the following questions: What has happened in the last few decades in Dutch schools, hospitals, local councils, courts, corporations, social services, police forces, care organizations, transport companies or community centers? What should be changed? At the same time, we acknowledge that the approach we have chosen does have certain limitations.

We do not address questions about systems or organizational models, for example. We concentrate on the practices and processes that are *de facto* at work in the (semi-) public services and that are not always determined by an institutional framework or an organizational structure. We pay particular attention to the socio-cultural aspects of management and its associated mindset. However, it is clear that a complete consideration of this subject also requires an analysis of the structural, legal and financial aspects.

Furthermore, the behavior of the *professional* is central. We do not address the roles that should be played by clients, financiers or inspectors. The roles played by the manager or executive are also seen in this context. This naturally leads to a slightly one-sided picture, and it is quite right that others do consider the specific questions that are related to these roles. Based on the commission that led to the writing of this book, we consider it justifiable that we have primarily integrated the viewpoint of the practicing professionals in our approach.

Finally, it will be clear that we cannot consider all the consequences of our alternative vision in this concluding overview. We concentrate on a few important factors and develop them in outline only. The first factor concerns a specific idea about what drives professionals – that their self-respect and intrinsic motivation must again become the driving forces in achieving good work. Assumptions about lazy, unmotivated professionals who have to be stimulated must not be allowed to hold sway.

Secondly, we think that when determining the form that (collaborative) work is to take, there should be more emphasis on dialogue, balance and variety. It is therefore necessary, despite the fact that our starting point is the professionals' perspective, to address the behavior and attitude of managers. After all, it is clear that public services cannot exist without managers. Consequently, the question is not if, but how, we can best shape the *combined action* of managers and professionals.

Finally, we indicate how and why the approach we advocate fits the political and historical characteristics of Dutch society. We argue that we still have a "Rhineland heart"<sup>4</sup> in the Netherlands and that we should proceed recognizing that historically, citizenship and skill have traditionally been closely intertwined in the Netherlands, and we need to

take into account the long time span that is necessary to achieve professionalism again. Following the Rhineland model is our best path to restoring professional pride.

## **2 Starting point: working with self-respect**

More and more people want to be considered “professionals.” Peter Hupe mentioned in his contribution that the meaning of the term “professional” is becoming wider and wider. Earlier, it was mainly occupations like law, medicine and architecture that were considered professions. Doctors are the classic example as, since time immemorial, they have had their own training, their own professional associations and their own professional ethics. The definition of professional is influenced by professional groups which have a considerable degree of social autonomy, not only because of their specific insights but also because of “external” matters like a professional association or legal arrangements. Under certain circumstances, they can even have formidable power. Some authors, therefore, describe professions as occupations whose conditions and work methods are determined by the practitioners themselves.

That classic concept of “professional” has slowly but surely been extended over the last few decades. In the past, occupational groups like teachers, police officers and nurses would have been described as semi-professionals. That extension might not be wholly justified, because in matters like knowledge and training there are considerable differences with the “traditional” professions. There are also differences in the extent of their organization, power and social recognition. However, these employees have emphatically started considering themselves to be professionals. They, too, have learned a profession, and they find it a matter of honor to practice that profession as well as possible. Over a period of years, they develop expertise that cannot be found in other occupational groups and they are prepared to account for their actions in a specific way. This is why teachers, police officers and nurses began to be referred to using the umbrella term “public service professionals.” In short, we can see that many people working in the (semi-) public sector are becoming more ambitious. They increasingly want to be recognized as real professionals. That also means they can be held accountable in the pursuit of continuous quality improvement in their services.

Although the work of professionals has become more complex and demanding over recent decades, this is not really the problem. In principle, professionals are easily up to the task because the practice of their profession has also evolved, and because they themselves have usually been trained well. In fact, they really want to perform more complex tasks to use their talents and contribute to society. However, this requires a certain space or autonomy, the very factors which have eroded over time.

In fact, the situation now is the opposite of what it was at the end of the 1970s. Then, professionals had plenty of time and sufficient money at their disposal, while their authority was hardly challenged. Now, they hardly receive any respect for their authority

and are constantly short of time and money. In the words of Wouter de Been, they currently have responsibility, but not its associated power, whereas previously they had power and authority, but they often failed to assume the responsibility associated with these.

*The driving forces for a real professional: professional pride and self-respect*

According to Richard Sennett, motivation is more important than talent in attaining professionalism. In his book *The Craftsman*<sup>5</sup>, he argues that the modern world has had two recipes to stimulate working hard and working well. The first is strong governmental direction, as happened in the Soviet Union, based on the slogan, “Work well for your country.” This hierarchical management philosophy has led to indifference and demoralization on the ground, and it has, therefore, also resulted in bad work. The communist system has collapsed, but in the West we still hear daily appeals for the hierarchic management of professionals in the name of the public interest. The second recipe, still widely used, is competition. This assumes that competing against others stimulates the desire to achieve, and there is a belief in individual rewards. Sennett reaches the conclusion that both recipes have failed.

In our neo-republican philosophy we assume that the best and most powerful driving force for professionals is their self-respect. That self-respect has three different “layers” – self-esteem, professional pride and professional honor. It can be pictured as a path from the inner world to the outer world, from the individual to society, from the self to others.<sup>6</sup>

*Self-esteem and quality improvement*

The actual core of professional life is the striving to keep getting better at what you do so that you produce something that also gets better with time. The textbook example of this is the craftsman who wants his work to meet the highest possible quality standards. Management guru William Edwards Deming<sup>7</sup>, mentioned by Richard Sennett in this book yet all but forgotten in Europe, attached great value to this prototype. He emphasized that craftsmen traditionally perceived the question of quality as a matter of honor. Not a single, self-respecting craftsman wanted to produce inferior work; his products had to meet the highest quality standards. Deming believed this example was still relevant to our era. In the interview Sennett gave for this book, he appears to agree with Deming. He sees Deming’s enormous influence on post-war Japanese industry as an interesting renaissance of the guild idea, in which the craftsman and his striving to meet the highest possible standards were central. For this book we also interviewed Wim van de Merwe, who teaches metal work at a pre-vocational secondary school (VMBO) in the Netherlands. He could be considered a Dutch heir to Deming. His efforts to encourage students to join in an annual secondary school competition for pupils with metal

and electrical talent, the *Junior Vakkanjer Wedstrijden*, fits in seamlessly with Deming's ideas.

Where does the urge to improve quality originate? The famous legal philosopher John Rawls explained this as a type of human motivation he called "the Aristotelian principle." This means that humans enjoy developing their innate or acquired abilities, and their enjoyment increases according to the extent to which those abilities are challenged. The underlying idea here is that when presented with two activities that they can do equally well, people will choose the activity that they find most challenging. According to Rawls, this is probably because difficult, complex activities result in more enjoyment because they satisfy the desire for variety or new experiences and provide opportunities for creativity. It is characteristic of the Aristotelian principle that humans are not exclusively viewed as being driven by bodily needs. Humans are equally driven by the desire to do things that are of intrinsic worth, at least when we can be sure that our primary needs will be met.<sup>8</sup>

The pursuit of quality requires self-discipline (because it takes a long time to master the relevant skills), an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and the ability to continually look at yourself critically. This renunciation, investment and sharpness are not motivated by external forces. An important "reward" is the increased self-esteem that you get if things work out, if your plan succeeds. According to Sennett, craftsmanship – learning a complex skill – gives you a feeling of self-esteem that does not depend on recognition by others.<sup>9</sup> That is apparent from his definition of craftsmanship – doing something well as an end in itself.<sup>10</sup> The reward does not lie outside the work (like earnings or respect) but is inherent in the work itself. "Pride in one's work lies at the heart of craftsmanship as the reward for skill and commitment. ...Craftsmen take pride most in skills that mature."<sup>11</sup>

#### *From self-esteem to honor*

The insights of Rawls and Sennett into the permanent pursuit of quality improvement as the foundation for self-esteem point to one of the important driving forces of the craftsman or professional – wanting to keep getting better at a complex skill. However, that driving force is often forgotten when the professional is not the only one determining the quality standards which have to be met for work to be considered good. When, for example, he wants to earn money through his product or service, the professional inevitably has to deal with others. His standards of quality will then have to be recognized by those others. This transition from the inner world of self-esteem to the outer world of "market value" involves all sorts of other motives having to do with recognition of professionals and their output by others.

The process of recognition by others can be described as a movement from the inner world to the outer world, and it has two steps. The first step takes the professional to an area between the inner world and the outside world. Being openly proud of his work



places him in that in-between area. Pride, as defined in the introduction to this book, is the conscious, open acknowledgement of an achievement or quality of your own, or of something or someone that you include as part of your “self,”<sup>12</sup> because you think its value deserves wider recognition. In doing this, you want others to at least respect or, even more, share that value.

Next, honor plays a role when the individual professional moves even further into the outside world and he enters the reality of society. The big difference between pride and honor becomes clear when you think about the source of each – you can have pride (not honor), you can acquire honor (not pride). Honor focuses strongly on recognition by others. “Honor” is applicable if an “I” places high demands on his own behavior to count for something in his own and other people’s eyes. In contrast to pride, the pursuit of honor requires effort. Here, too, there is a close link between self-respect and (others’) respect. It often involves meeting high standards that have been declared the norm by yourself or your group.

Fellow practitioners of a profession are the first reference group. In order to acquire and retain recognition, different sorts of doctors have reached mutual agreements on the quality standards they must adhere to. This is expressed in requirements for training and mandatory registration. In this case, the expert is not only an individual; he is also part of a social practice in which continuous attempts are made to reach agreement on ideals, aims and standards. The high demands that doctors make on each other are, in the end, aimed at ensuring that the esteem in which the profession is held remains high.

Possessing self-esteem, being proud and acquiring society’s respect – those are three important driving forces for good work. Together they form “the motor of good work,” as it were. This could also be described as “an active pursuit of self-respect.” Our republican philosophy is directed towards this in a positive sense.

### **3 What we must not do**

We have to abandon a number of common practices if we want to restore the professional pride of professionals, to strengthen their intrinsic motivation and to make the most of their drive to improve quality in providing good public service. We have to stop the one-sided application of three management tools which are still popular.

#### *No management based on rewards and punishments*

Many economists think of the professional as a calculating actor who is motivated by advantages and disadvantages. Partly because of this, they think it makes sense to apply external pressure to force the professional to follow precise rules in his activities. The current theories assume that it is sensible to limit professionals’ room for maneuvering. In principle, professional freedom can be limited in three ways: firstly, via the customer, that is, through demand; secondly, via the government, through the law; and thirdly, via the management, through management. It has been established that demand leads to

good results in the private sector, and many economists therefore assume that this method can also be used for the (semi-) public sector. As soon as market forces come into play, the customer can direct the quality of all sorts of services.

But in reality, many professionals are directed via a manager who has a full arsenal of means at his disposal to influence the behavior of service providers, including performance-related pay (and other financial incentives), promotion and dismissal. Another means is restricting a professional's decisions. The teacher, for example, is no longer permitted to choose which teaching method to use, because his department head now makes that decision. Yet another means is the development of a system for internal control and accountability. The specialist, for example, must keep meticulous records of which treatments have been carried out and which diagnosis led to those treatments. Compared with other countries, the Netherlands is apparently fairly restrained in the use of performance-related incentives in the (semi-) public sector. Instead, Dutch administrators and managers prefer two other methods: increasing control and limiting professionals' freedom to make decisions.

Looked at like this, current economic theories do seem to apply to public professionals. Yet they also raise questions. Modern economics literature emphatically shows that professionals' freedom of movement must not be limited too much, because intrinsic motivation might suffer. Legislators or managers might, in this way, send out the message that professionals are not really to be trusted, resulting in them being less motivated to work well. Monitoring can also erode intrinsic motivation, especially when it is done frequently or permanently. Comparable effects can be seen when performance is financially rewarded. Thus, modern economists distance themselves from the current idea among economists that professionals are primarily motivated by self-interest. This creates space for the idea that professionals are mainly motivated when they can do their work well or serve society's good.

There is already plenty of research into professionals' experiences of the classic management methods, and the conclusions are overwhelmingly clear. Most professionals working in the (semi-) public service find increasing controls and limitations on their freedom of movement to be a disaster. Financial motivation methods, such as performance-related rewards or customer demand, elicit, at the very least, ambivalent feelings.

#### *No management through output or targets*

The second management tool we should use much less is aiming to make professionals work harder and better by measuring output. True, many managers like to use quantifying measures, but professionals also use them themselves. A clear example of this are the methods used to assess academic research. Think of the lists that are compiled to keep track of how often a researcher's work is quoted in academic journals, or for an inspection visit by external experts who inspect research institutes to ascertain whether

they meet the current quality requirements. At first sight, there does not seem to be anything wrong with this way of guaranteeing quality and stimulating professionals to be as productive as possible. Moreover, the assessment is not imposed on researchers from above; it is the researchers themselves who express a view on their colleagues' work. And yet this sort of management needs to be questioned, both on practical grounds and reasons of principle.

That, in any case, is the view that Bruno Frey has defended in numerous books and articles. He does that again with Margit Osterloh in the article that we have included in this book. They draw attention to the hidden costs and the unintended, but detrimental, consequences of the evaluation of professional researchers. Researchers adjust their behavior to fit evaluation practices, and they develop a counter-strategy when problems loom. They do this by publishing several versions of one article, for example, or by naming several authors when only one person actually wrote the article. These sorts of tricks are a way for researchers to try to influence their own positions in league tables. One disadvantage of such league tables is that they do not give a full picture of the relevance or quality of research. It is precisely the most original or productive insights that, therefore, run the risk of disappearing from view. Finally, this evaluation method can erode researchers' intrinsic motivation. They are no longer led by curiosity or criticism of existing concepts but by ensuring that they climb higher up the league table which is rewarded with both points and money, which leads to the chance to employ new staff or to do more research.

However dubious these forms of "quality control" might be, they are still widely applied. One wonders whether there are alternatives. Klaas ten Have writes in his contribution that real professionals are constantly looking for new ways to achieve higher goals and raise standards. In the past, this process took place in the privacy of the professional group but nowadays it is the subject of argument and public opinion. There are professional standards, but they have to compete with the standards of management, the standards applied by clients, government standards, or media standards. In view of this struggle, it is easier to work with concrete targets, indicators and target figures, in hopes that everyone will then know the basis on which they can hold professionals to account. And yet those sorts of methods are counter-productive. They fail to adequately take into account the enormous variety and complexity that is often involved in professional work, and they easily result in a form of capital destruction. Ten Have, therefore, also argues that professionals should take their productivity much more seriously than they do now. He even talks of an "unprecedented and frightening responsibility." Following the ideas developed by Mintzberg about this, he thinks we should abandon all forms of standardization. Real professionals often have to deal with unique problems which they have to solve in unique ways. The standards of existing organizations or professions are often more hindrance than help in this regard.

*Do not manage on the basis of fear and distrust*

The third management tool, which we prefer to get rid of altogether, is playing on feelings of fear and distrust. At first sight, it looks like a trivial matter because people often think that everyone is asking for more trust. But we must not underestimate the use of fear and distrust in managing professionals. It is no coincidence that Deming, when analyzing and evaluating the ways in which quality improvement is pursued, often referred to “management by fear” and the disastrous consequences this has for an organization. Everyone knows that companies have competent and less competent employees and that it makes sense to stimulate the latter group, but implementing performance-related pay, rankings and other forms of “bribery” have never made less competent employees work better. They only lead to a bad atmosphere. Deming made a passionate plea for an “enterprise without fear.” He said that fear is the opposite of enjoying work. People will not do their best if they do not feel safe. Getting rid of fear is, therefore, an absolute condition, and it must be completed before other improvements are introduced. Actually, he proposed a reversal of the burden of proof. He thought many managers cling to targets, slogans and measurable results, because they harbor deep suspicions about their own employees. They do not realize that most employees are proud of their work and are only too keen to work well.

We hear an echo of this diagnosis in the interview with Sennett. He observes that contemporary capitalism rests on a prejudice, namely, the assumption that most employees are unmotivated, lazy and only interested in money. That is actually an elitist idea, because it assumes that only a tiny elite understands dedication to work. But how realistic is that assumption? Sennett himself proceeds from the assumption that every person needs self-respect and wants to be of use in some way. For most adults, work is the place where they seek that self-respect. This is more than a moral concept; it is also important analytically. We understand the world of work better if we assume that employees find not one but two things important. They want to survive and therefore they want to earn an income, but they also want to have the feeling that, having worked for forty years, it was worthwhile. Yet most organizations are not based on this two-fold perspective. For the last two or three decades, capitalism seems to have proceeded from the assumption that you need a lot of control, inequities in earnings and other sanctions in order to ensure that people do their work properly.

This distrust does not only exist in the private sector. It also plays a role in how governments supervise professional practice. That is partly associated with the phenomenon described by Wibren van der Burg. Practicing professionals and government inspectors have asymmetrical perspectives. A lack of symmetry doesn't cause problems in itself, as long as government and professionals keep an appropriate distance from each other and each do their own work. But it is a different matter if that distance is reduced and the call for state control grows louder. Then a difference of perspective can easily lead to conflict, with professionals accusing inspectors of having no idea about the

practical side of things and inspectors accusing the professionals of not wanting to account for their acts. This can easily escalate and spiral downward. The government then implements stricter controls which the professionals view as a sign of distrust. They react by behaving evasively, which provokes the government into tightening rules and increasing controls. The result is that neither party moves closer to the other; instead, they head for a confrontation.

Although this chain of thought sounds theoretical, it is very topical. There are indications that the downward spiral just described is becoming a reality in different sectors. It is evident in the discussion with three executives in the healthcare sector in this book. Geert Blijham, for example, contests the idea that patients are increasingly dissatisfied and behaving more like consumers. There is currently little trust in the healthcare sector, but not because patients are more prepared to speak their minds. It comes straight from politics, with patients being particularly stirred up by national politicians. The politicians lose sleep about things like the size of collectively financed health insurance, so they put pressure on the healthcare industry. But it is an illusion to think you can solve financial problems by limiting the freedom of professionals. According to Blijham, the increasing costs are the result of autonomous developments, such as an aging population and technological innovation. Meanwhile, care organizations have been driven to adopt a defensive stance because of the constant political pressure. Many executives find themselves in a dilemma. It will be a real challenge to prevent a culture of complaint from developing among professionals whereby they turn on the evil outside world and blame government exclusively.

#### **4 Management through dialog and debate**

The professional has found himself in a completely new situation compared to a few decades ago. Now, he or she is held accountable in myriad different ways, involving diverging values. There is even a looming threat of normative fragmentation. The quality of the professional's work has become the subject of a public, and to a certain extent, political debate. The professional must account for himself using a great variety of norms, not only because a large number of authorities and parties concern themselves with the practice of his profession, but also because all those voices have their own moral and cognitive stories.

*Diversity of values comes to the fore*

It is appropriate to structure those stories into four groups.

First are stories that originate mainly from clients, such as pupils' and parents' expectations of a primary school, residents complaints to a housing corporation, cares

that a patient and/or his family entrust to a specialist, an unemployed person's experience of requesting an unemployment benefit or a neighborhood resident's experience of telephoning the police. All these people are happy if the professional meets their needs and will undoubtedly bring some pressure to bear on him, if necessary. Some even form organizations, because there is strength in numbers. In that case, the client's story will be told through the parents' association, the residents' committee, the patients' organization or the neighborhood committee. But that does not mean that all these people are only consumers who are out to get what they can. That picture, firmly based on economics, falls very far short of explaining the normative stance of all these "clients." Many people do not expect to be served hand and foot or to always get their own way. But they do expect a professional to respect them, to give them the opportunity to tell their story, to treat them decently, to do his best for them and that procedures will not be unnecessarily complicated.<sup>13</sup>

Second are stories that originate from the funding organization. Its demands and expectations are, of course, completely different from those of the client. Empirically, this involves different phenomena. Think of project developers who want to contribute to urban renewal, of insurers who provide a hospital with financial means, of local councils setting aside money for community work, of the department that pays the salaries of police officers and teachers, of the foundation that commissions research to be carried out or of the company that hires a consulting firm for advice. Many of these organizations will take into account the importance to society of the activities they support, and they will generally also pay attention to the quality of the service concerned. Ultimately, however, they will be concerned with their returns or at least with a balanced budget. Normatively, their story is most concerned with controlling costs, with effectiveness or efficiency, and with making good use of scarce commodities.

The third group of values is government regulations, legal requirements that apply to providing medical services, that regulate the procedures of criminal law, that guarantee freedom of education, that give citizens a voice in governance, that protect suspects against the arbitrary exercise of power by the police, and that ensure sufficient competition between service providers. Naturally, such laws, and especially the many specific regulations, resolutions or directives that are derived from them, do not make professional life any simpler. And there are many departmental, inspectorate or town hall officials who, rulebook in hand, hinder the efficient provision of services. But in fact the laws represent moral and legal principles which we would not want to relinquish, such as equality before the law, democratic decision-making, social justice and human dignity. The "big stories" from which they originate will not arise in the operating room, in the classroom, at the social services office, at the police station or on public transport every day. But they are, in the final analysis, unavoidable when professionals have to account for themselves in public.

The fourth group of values relates to the specific nature of the practice of a profession, questions about: The advantages and disadvantages of a course of medical treat-

ment; how public order should be maintained in a neighborhood; which teaching system best suits certain pupils; how to interpret certain legal clauses; what can be done to lower the risk of burnout; the environmental effects of a transport system; how to reorganize a local council service. At issue in such matters are all sorts of professional standards that are usually shared within the profession. There is often a professional association that develops or safeguards these standards and that plays a role in the training and continuing education of the professionals concerned. Moreover, standards deal not only with the technical aspects of the practice of a profession, but also with matters such as professional ethics or professional habits.

In this way, it is possible to make some sense of the normative chaos of today's professional life. It is possible to distinguish four groups of values: *professional*, *legal*, *commercial*, and *humane principles*. These principles are important to all parties involved in providing (semi-) public services. Nevertheless, it is striking that, in practice, a particular party will act as spokesman for one principle. *Financiers* draw attention to commercial principles, whereas legal principles are protected by *government officials*. *Professionals* are naturally most familiar with the specific standards of professional practice, while *clients and those dear to them* draw attention to the humane aspect. The parties often draw attention to these values in their own idiom, frequently applying their own logic. Nevertheless, they are constantly involved in discussions with other parties. In the worst case, this leads to a confusion of tongues, because all parties see the situation from their own perspective and apply their own priorities. However, it can also lead to a fruitful dialog that does justice to all the different stories. That partly answers what should be understood by "quality." Every concept of quality that recognizes only one perspective is unconvincing. Those who proceed exclusively from commercial criteria to determine the quality of a particular service have not understood what modern professional practice is about. That is, of course, equally true of attempts to determine quality exclusively on the basis of professional, legal or humane principles. Nowadays, quality is unavoidably a complex matter that involves a number of "layers" about which *several stories* can be told, therefore requiring the attention of several parties.

#### *Importance of checks and balances*

That several values come to the fore in professional life, that these values often have their own logic, that there are often specific actors who represent particular values – all these issues have been emphatically recognized by various contributions to this volume. Therefore, it is not surprising that several authors make a case for organizing a dialogue among all the players. This is actually the only way to do justice to the variety and complexity of professional practices. It may be a long, difficult path that seems inefficient. Yet it is the appropriate path in a situation where several incongruent values play a role, as often occurs in professional organizations. It is, moreover, a path that fits the Dutch tradition of compromise and consultation very well.

Wibren van der Burg is one of the authors who argues the case for dialog. This is related to his conviction that the perspective of a government regulator and the perspective of the practicing professional diverge in many ways. In theory, you can try to develop a framework that includes the two different perspectives, but that quickly becomes an abstract exercise with little meaning to the conflicting parties. We have learned from experience that there is no neutral space where the argument is really won. It is therefore more realistic to accept that there are two irreconcilable perspectives and then try to continuously move back and forth between them. What we need is a discussion that explores the idiosyncrasies of both sides, makes a serious effort to understand what the other party wants and that reduces tension.

Wouter de Been reaches the same conclusion via a slightly different argument. Although he recognizes that there are a number of specific forms of management each with its own logic, he is prepared to choose one administrative philosophy and then see to what extent it can be combined with elements from other administrative philosophies. He chooses the professional perspective, in which the practicing professional is not directed primarily by financial incentives or legal regulations, but by the will to carry out his work as well as possible, as defined by his professional conscience. But a similar “choice” does not resolve all difficulties, because even the most convinced professional will sooner or later be confronted with the consequences of certain commercial aspects and with the consequences of certain policy measures. What does professional self-regulation mean? How should professional, moral, economic or legal matters be balanced? To this end, De Been, following Braithwaite, proposes that the system of “checks and balances” which protects us at a national level against certain excesses can also be applied at the level of private and public organizations. This means that at hospitals, for example, medical specialists are not given all the power; other parties like patients and/or their families, hospital executives and insurers are also given a voice. They consult regularly in a process that is set up in such a way that each party can make its concerns or interests known. A dialogue like this means that no one party can dominate, and it ensures that all actors take their social responsibilities seriously.

#### *A few examples from reality*

Such an approach might seem unrealistic. However, it is remarkable that in the Netherlands there are different organizations that have developed just such an approach in practice. We refer to Charlotte Keijzer’s contribution about professionals at the law courts. She describes how the Dutch judicial system has undergone a spectacular development in the last twenty years. A very conscious effort has been made to streamline operational processes so that “generating output” has become completely normal for most employees. In this sense, today’s courts do indeed resemble commercial enterprises. There is tight control based on case numbers and results, with the aim of achieving maximum efficiency and productivity. At the same time, many employees are dissatis-



fied. Some complain about a lack of quality, others find the pressure of work too great and yet others say that they lose their inspiration as a result of “generating output.” It seems that professionals and managers are losing touch with each other. That is remarkable, because the managers concerned have mostly been recruited from the ranks of their own profession. Even this does not seem to have prevented the development of two incompatible viewpoints – one professional, the other commercial – which scrape against each other in an unproductive way.

It is therefore not surprising that many discussions at the law courts are about the need to find a balance between quantity and quality. Keijzer shows that this problem cannot be solved in an “industrial” way. A solution will only be found when both parties (practitioners and management) realize the need to react better to the demands that are placed on them from society. The question is not whether the administration of justice provides high-value, customized work or whether it is carried out efficiently. The question is how to combine efficiency and customized work. This can only be answered when unequal values are recognized by all concerned. They have to search for a balance that does justice to both professional independence and to co-operation. Blaming the conflict between traditional craftsmanship and modern efficiency is tempting, but it does not provide a solution to the problem. The manager and the professional have to find each other in order to discover, through dialog, which values each favors and where they overlap.

Apart from dialogue, there are also other ways to reach a balance. Within an organization, negotiations or “arguments” about different sorts of values can take place. Balancing different values sometimes occurs in a more business-like manner. That seems to be the case at the University Medical Center Utrecht (UMCU). This medical center is divided into eleven departments, each with considerable autonomy and each led by a professor. The administrative philosophy at the UMCU can be described as “decentralize unless...” This situation sometimes makes it difficult to introduce particular changes. Staff members can be obstructive, if they want to be. According to Geert Blijham, the solution has been to make all departments responsible for their own budgets and to give them a say about the money that is left over. That way, the departments concerned are forced to hold internal discussions about their real priorities. The success of this approach became clear when Blijham had to carry out budget cuts amounting to thirty million euros. All departments were asked to reduce spending by 10%. They themselves were allowed to indicate what the least important aspect of their department was. Which things could they, if necessary, do without? This approach meant that meaningful discussions could be held about the priorities of the profession. The budget cuts were seized on as an opportunity to organize a number of things more efficiently and to develop innovative ideas.

Thus, there are several ways to involve professionals in the process of finding a balance between heterogeneous values. Intellectual means can be used, and a discussion can be held regarding diverging viewpoints, their underlying values and the conse-

quences of a particular decision. It is also possible to bring pressure to bear on professionals by making significant budget cuts while still leaving enough space for internal deliberations. The parties will then reach agreement, without giving personal interests or preferences more weight. The different values and viewpoints of professional life confront each other by means of argument, negotiation or dialogue so that a mix of norms results, whether balanced or not. An important question also concerns the level at which this process is organized and the real actors seeking a balance. With regard to these questions, a distinction must be made between the micro-, mid- and macro-levels. We explain this below, indicating for each level the conditions that must be met so various values can be properly balanced.

### **5 The role of professionals at the micro-level**

Let us start at the level where the individual professional makes decisions. Individual professionals must balance several heterogeneous viewpoints in their minds (and hearts.) That is actually quite normal and, to a certain extent, already the reality. We know of general practitioners, for instance, who take the technical and medical aspects of treatment very seriously yet do not prescribe the most expensive treatment for every patient. Many general practitioners do think seriously about costs and do take into consideration the humane values we referred to earlier. Doctors are accustomed to questions about treatments, social circumstances, attitudes of family members and religious beliefs. This is also true for the legal requirements that affect their profession and for the policy targets set by, for example, local authorities. In other words, a conscientious doctor has been carrying out the sorts of processes that we are now considering for a long time already and, if asked, is able to explain his decisions to third parties.

It is unlikely that the ability to carry out a similar internal dialog is as strongly developed for all professions. We know of certain professionals who do, indeed, balance diverging values, but there will also be times when priority is unthinkingly given to the story of their own professional group. A crucial question is whether this changes. Within the administrative philosophy that we develop here, deliberations which are too one-sided should be unacceptable. Formulated more normatively, we must ensure that all professionals are trained to look further than their own professional noses. We expect them to take different values seriously because otherwise they will not be able to satisfy the requirements placed on them in contemporary professional life. However, that is more easily said than done. Let us therefore name a few conditions which are important in the framework of our neo-republican administrative philosophy.

### *Importance of training and formation*

The first condition is that the individual professional must be properly “formed.” This is primarily a matter of training and practice. Richard Sennett is disturbed by the emphasis that is sometimes placed on talent and innate ability in relation to skill. Although he concedes that there are always innate differences between people, he thinks that these differences are given an exaggerated importance. The vast majority of tasks can be done by ordinary employees, although this does require the necessary effort and practice. Actually, the West has strange prejudices in this regard. High achievement is emphasized so strongly that the greatest investment is in the one most-talented employee while others are left to their lot. In this way you set the scene for the rule of mediocrity in the workplace and in education. The Chinese example shows that it is possible to do things differently. In China, a sizeable class of educated employees has been created in a relatively short time. There was a conscious investment in the pursuit of higher standards for the mass of the population. The result is that literacy rose by forty percent in ten years. The same has happened in South Korea.

The importance of sustained practice was also understood in the past. That can be seen from the way guilds organized their training, for example. Contemporary historians are adjusting their previous view of guilds as somewhat sleepy organizations. It was precisely these organizations that were so important for the transfer of the tacit knowledge developed by craftsmen while they were working. The guilds did not only provide training; they also controlled the quality of the masters’ work by, among other things, exchanging knowledge and skills. The seventeenth-century schools of artists that copied art from each other in all sorts of ways are an example of this. The existence of these guilds was one of the circumstances that made the remarkable flowering of the Dutch Golden Age possible.

Coming from a completely different angle, the researchers on the GoodWork Project also draw attention to the importance of training. They discovered that examples play a vital role in the transfer of professional norms from one generation to the next. Virtually every professional group can point to “exemplary professionals” who point their many students or followers in the right direction so that certain “lines of descent” come into existence. Sometimes this is literally the case, as when widely respected professionals found their own schools where they train new generations. At other times, this is figuratively the case, as when young professionals mirror the behavior of their examples. There are also bad examples, namely those professionals who everyone knows do things wrong and whom younger colleagues are determined not to emulate. The forming of a real professional always involves more than the transfer of technical skills. Professional ideals cannot be reduced to rules for behavior or professional codes. They also involve character and habit. Professional identity requires that rules, judgments, qualities and experiences be internalized.

That is why rituals play such a prominent role; the young professional is initiated and will be part of future history. Stories, images of dramatic cases and memories of how dilemmas were solved in the past are all part of this. Wouter de Been touches a sensitive spot when he says that these sorts of things cannot exist in a large-scale or anonymous environment. They require a certain familiarity or even intimacy. The greater that familiarity, the better the professionals will be able to uphold their shared ideals and reach independent judgments. That creates the true foundation for flexible professional practice. However, it involves a different sort of flexibility from that envisioned by many books on management. According to the republican thinker Machiavelli, the prince had to develop virtues like endurance and courage in order to withstand the vicissitudes of fortune. He derived his flexibility from the fact that he knew his roots and was part of a tradition. Contemporary advocates of more flexibility do not believe in the meaning of tradition or roots, nor do they believe that a professional must possess firm convictions or virtues like perseverance and courage. According to them, the professional must, above all, be innovative, mobile, “footloose” even. According to De Been, though dominant, that is an inadequate concept. In reality, dedication, engagement, and investment in the long term are required.

*Focusing attention on innovation and productivity*

A second condition is that the ability to learn should keep being developed. Just how important curiosity is for quality improvement is explained in detail by Klaas ten Have in his article. Quality improvement is only possible when a professional undergoes a learning cycle in his work: Certain activities are carried out, the result is observed, the result is compared with an existing standard and, if the result does not meet the required standard, a change is made to the activities. A learning process is only possible when the nature of that cycle is integral, closed and short. “Integral” means that all facets relevant to that process come together. “Closed” means that the execution, perception, evaluation and, if necessary, intervention link up with each other. “Short” means that these parts of the cycle take place close to each other in time and space.

Ten Have gives the example of a teacher. His professionalism is not limited to teaching (execution); he also has to establish what the pupil learns (perception) and determine whether that learning process is progressing quickly enough (evaluation) or, if necessary, to change his own approach (intervention). Further, there is a second important cycle of changing the standard itself, which is activated if the required standard is repeatedly not met or if the final goals are set higher. In that case, a professional must adjust his standards to ensure that he still reaches the goals being aimed for. Real craftsmen or professionals are continuously looking for new ways to achieve higher goals and raise standards; they are professionals who want to keep improving.

Ten Have is also of the opinion that claims by others in the control circuit must not be denied but argued. Professionals become more dominant by making it clear how good,

efficient, effective public service can be realized. He warns that the debate on management in the public services sector can lead to a rearguard action in which managers and professionals confront each other in an unproductive way. On the one side are the CEOs and managers who, driven by public opinion, try to manage the public service sector using old, Tayloristic methods, and on the other side are the professionals who long for their lost autonomy, respect and status, although these actually had more disadvantages than advantages. This results in a vicious circle of distrust that needs to be broken. The example to follow here is the new autonomous professional who strives to reach a dominant position in the evaluative control circuit concerning professional work.

This is also of particular relevance to “knowledge workers”. According to Peter Drucker, every knowledge worker should pursue innovation. His work should be evaluated not for quantity but for quality and productivity. However, this is only possible if teaching and learning processes are given a central role within a work organization.

#### *Recognition of the conscientious professional*

A third condition for balancing diverging values is that there must be enough room for the conscientious professional. Currently, the professional often silences his own voice of conscience. On this point, we refer to Gabriël Anthonio’s poetically and convincingly argued case. He starts his story by describing a CEO who carries out his work in an instrumental way. Although he is hard at work, he does most things on automatic pilot. He was originally motivated to work in the care sector because he loved working with people but somehow or other lost his internal connection to his motivation. This is odd because the care organization that he manages should actually stand for the things that really matter in life. It should be concerned with the issues that are of real value in the lives of its clients and employees and in society.

Those goals cannot be achieved by just working harder and harder. In fact, it was precisely by working harder that this CEO avoided the real questions. This dawns on him when while vacationing in Greece, he mysteriously finds himself in conversation with Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. They force him to think about the question of what is the most important thing in his life. This involves not only several philosophical considerations, but the CEO also thinks back to his student days when he was dedicated to human involvement and social action. He also recalls the pastor from his youth, the only person who ever asked him about the state of his soul. This all leads to the CEO’s rediscovery of his deepest ideals; he is again connected to real life and he – possibly for the first time – understands what it means to be the leader of a care organization.

## 6 The role of managers at mid-level

The above could be seen as an individual form of self-regulation. However, self-regulation and discussion about diverging norms must also take place on a second level – within the organization. This is happening more and more because the phenomenon of the professional working alone is becoming quite rare. In schools, hospitals, courts, town halls, regional police offices, departments, research institutes, rest homes and social services settings, professionals increasingly have to work together. Therefore, they need to talk about the different matters which play a role in what they do. Moreover, they also need to talk to non-professionals within their organizations, or at least to people who view things differently from themselves, so they learn, for example, what the CEO considers crucial and how the financier measures things. They have to consider new laws or policy measures imposed on them by the government. Last but not least, they need to be continuously in talks with clients and their loved ones who have been entrusted to their care. In other words, the four sorts of values that seemed relevant to us are introduced automatically at the organizational level. That means that some form of dialogue, negotiation or argument is almost unavoidable.

And we again observe that this is already taking place on a large scale in practice. We know of schools, for example, where parents, teachers, management, and local authority representatives work together to find a balance that addresses the many functions a school fulfils in contemporary urban life. At issue are, indeed, diverging values. Naturally, a good education is assumed, and teachers will not hesitate to make clear what they understand by that. But social or religious preferences will also be voiced by parents. People will want to exchange ideas about thorny issues like the wearing of headscarves by young Muslim women. Unavoidably, there will also be discussions about money and how scarce commodities should be distributed. And finally, the local council or the police might raise issues that are specifically related to local council policy on safety. It is quite easy to imagine how a dialogue like this might proceed and, in fact, it is already happening in many schools.

Comparable scenes are taking place at district police offices, district councils, housing corporations, doctors' offices, football clubs, churches and community centers. This is partly why we think the administrative philosophy we advocate is quite realistic. The point is not that we have to develop a new form of administration in relation to professionals, it is that we have to allow the administrative implications of existing practices to penetrate our thinking and to assimilate them into modern professional practice. Then we will see that today's professionals are already intensively involved in, and contributing to, the search for balance. However, this does not mean that this process is easy or that professionals can do this under their own steam. We assign a prominent role to managers and CEOs in precisely this matter.

First of all, let us make clear that professionals and managers cannot do without each other. It might be possible to reduce the influence of managers under certain cir-

cumstances but, in general, they are an indispensable part of the professional organization. In this respect, we concur with the view taken by Hans de Bruijn.<sup>14</sup> He thinks it is wrong to simply put the blame for all the problems that arise in the (semi-) public sector on managers. To be sure, there is some over-management, but at the same time there are many examples which prove that management is useful and even necessary.

At the same time, we must confirm that the power of managers has become greater over recent decades. This is due to two tendencies. Firstly, from the 1980s onwards, a form of self-administration or privatization was implemented in various parts of the public sector. Organizations that had long functioned as part of or directly for the government were turned into self-administering state bodies and placed at a distance from the government. Well-known examples of this are the housing corporations, the Kadaster (Dutch Land Registry Office) and pilotage (Dutch Pilots' Corporation). Secondly, there was a switch to new forms of management that were usually inspired by the ideology of the New Public Management. Both developments meant that the balance of power between practicing professionals and managers shifted in favor of the latter.

Another consequence was that the classic problem of agent and principal was doubled. The government started to act as a principal who wanted to manage the managers of schools, hospitals or corporations by means of legislation and regulation, while the manager in turn started to act as a principal who managed the practicing professionals. The aim was, naturally, to improve the effectiveness of those organizations and that may have happened in a number of cases. However, less desirable effects also appeared, like these managers' tendency to promote their own interests in the form of luxurious offices, high salaries or chauffeur-driven limousines. Furthermore, some managers were tempted to present a rosier picture of their organization's results than was really the case, for example, by allowing a relatively large number of school pupils to move to a higher level in the hierarchy of secondary school education or by imposing a large number of fines towards the end of the year. It is not easy for government to tackle this, because information about everything that occurs within an organization is almost completely in the hands of management.

In order to combat these sorts of lapses, a different role for administrators is desired. In our administrative philosophy, the main question is what value managers add to the process on the ground. Managers can serve several purposes. For example, CEOs and managers can act as buffers against the outside world, while internally focusing on quality. They can contribute towards ensuring that professionals work better together, pursue innovation, set out a collective strategy or evaluate their work. That requires an atmosphere of trust and security as well as the awareness of a common goal. Without trust, there is no room for dialog, and that has a negative effect on quality. This is the reason Deming considered the freedom to express opinions within an organization so important. If it is not possible to speak freely about (problems with) quality, then quality cannot be optimized, and eventually it will deteriorate. More specifically, managers have a three-fold task in our administrative philosophy.

*First task: mediating between inner and outer worlds*

How managers use their power in relation to professionals is particularly important. They are in the area of tension between two perspectives that, according to Wibren van der Burg, are never congruent. On one hand is the perspective of the actual practice of a profession, which involves professional ideals, practical processes, qualitative evaluations and a specific context; on the other hand is the perspective of government inspectors, which involves specific rules and regulations, concrete results, measurable details and generally applicable knowledge. One way to reduce that tension is to have a separate layer of CEOs or managers whose task is to provide the actual leadership of the organization. Van der Burg illustrates this with the image of a transformer connecting two electrical circuits. A transformer can “translate” what happens in one circuit for the other circuit, and vice versa. In the same way, managers can mediate between the two perspectives in their organizations. They speak two languages, as it were, and they continuously move back and forth between practitioners and inspectors.

But this role also has risks. Managers can transmit the pressure that is placed on an organization from outside directly to the professionals, acting as the mouthpiece that turns the expectations of the outside world into specific targets that professionals then have to meet. The risk that such a situation will arise is even greater if the balance of power between manager and professional shifts in favor of the manager. That is exactly what has happened in recent decades. As a result, we increasingly see managers, acting on the basis of their responsibility for the organization as a whole, take the expectations of governments, customers, the media, financiers or inspectors particularly seriously and bring pressure to bear on professionals to meet those expectations. However understandable this perception of their task might be, it results in managers becoming part of the problem. That is even truer if governments, financiers and other external parties are strongly focused on cost efficiency and hold the managers accountable. In that case, there is a real chance that managers will pass on these expectations internally, thus limiting professionals’ room to maneuver.

Yet this book does include stories showing that a completely different approach is possible. A manager can decide to protect his employees against the continuous pressure from outside. The advocates of this approach include Jos Lamé. He recounts the political reactions following the revelation that serious mistakes had been made by social services in the case of a girl named Géssica. Leonard Geluk, the Rotterdam “wethouder” (alderman) with responsibility for youth, family and education said it was unacceptable that bodies responsible for social services did not exchange information and did not collaborate. Lamé finds that a complete misrepresentation, and he considers it his duty to stick up for his employees. He often publicly dismisses disciplinary measures emanating from politics. For example, he did not hesitate to describe the introduction of the electronic child dossier as a “megalomaniac and Stalinist” intention in the newspaper.



He also resists the imposition on professionals of a uniform “meldcode”, a plan to coordinate professionals’ observations in an attempt to address domestic violence in the Rotterdam region. He puts his case strongly. In mental health care, very ambiguous situations arise day in day out. Although the professionals have a great deal of experience and many skills at their disposal, they often have to accept that difficulties are not resolved. Their work is often about meaning. In order to ensure that there is again a meaningful story, considerable freedom and creativity are required. One of the main tasks for a CEO is to understand what the soul of his or her own organization is, and to ensure that this freedom is not limited unnecessarily.

Other writers also draw attention to a similar approach. Mirko Noordegraaf and Jasper Sterrenburg point out that managers can be more selective; they must not unthinkingly pass on everything that comes in from outside and they should not bother their professionals so much with quality models and measurement scores.

*Second task: setting goals and providing leadership*

Next, the manager can also contribute to the quality of the primary process by providing leadership and articulating a common goal. That is in line with Gabriël Anthonio’s contribution, in which he draws attention to spiritual values, virtues and ideals. He thinks that providing leadership in an organization involves much more than just attending to activities which are visible. You cannot lead a care organization if you only think of products, production or production processes. Leading is about life, and the meaning of life. Someone in a leadership role must immerse himself in philosophical or theological traditions in which certain forms of wisdom are articulated. Leaders must learn to think about the meaning of love, friendship or beauty. They must refer in word and deed to the world of the divine or the eternal, and that is only possible when they have cleansed their own souls of turmoil.

One need not share this high-minded concept of leadership to be able to recognize that questions about aims and meaningfulness play an important role in every professional organization. The researchers on the GoodWork Project also proceed from the assumption that most employees want more than just a sufficient income. They want to do something they can be proud of and that makes them meaningful to others. Part of the reason that there is currently so much dissatisfaction is that many employees cannot fulfill their original aspirations. They miss the feeling that they are doing something that really counts. This is partly why Deming thought it was very important for a company to adhere to its goals for a longer period of time. The formulation of those goals is one of a leader’s most important tasks. Without a clear mission, professionals cannot do their work properly.

*Third task: shaping the internal dialog*

Finally, a manager or executive can contribute in yet another way to the proper functioning of a professional organization. This mainly concerns the question of how the discussion or dialog within an organization takes shape. As we have already argued above, this is an essential aspect of the administrative philosophy proposed here. Given the presence of diverging values and that they are often articulated by different parties, everything depends on how a balance is pursued. In our view, this should be one of the main tasks of an executive. This assumes, however, that an executive understands different worlds and their associated core values. It also assumes that he or she is able to connect those worlds and ensure that a meaningful dialogue comes about. This is one of the qualities that makes a leader believable. Knowing that there is, inevitably, a diversity of values within an organization, a real leader will ensure that there is at least a partial overlap.

A few authors in this book express views similar to this. In Anthonio's view, leaders are characterized by understanding a great diversity of worlds and communicating in a way that connects those worlds. We saw, however, that the targeted dialog can be advanced in different ways, ranging from a "hard" method to a "soft" one.

The Blijham method at the UMCU in Utrecht, which used a clever combination of budget cuts and investment, is a "hard" method. One can easily imagine the intensive arguments and/or dialogue that took place about how to achieve a balance between diverging goals, following the executive board's financial rearrangements.

However, we have also seen an example of a softer method. With regard to the law courts, Keijzer indicates that the parties involved started a dialogue on the basis of equality, trust and respect. That is not easy because individual independence in the world of the law is highly prized and people are not used to exercising influence over each other. Initiating this process is mainly a task for the manager. They have to ensure there is a balance that does justice to diverging values like collaboration and autonomy – dialogue between administrators and professionals in which the latter are invited to join in thinking about and deciding how to structure the whole. The president of the Court of Appeal in Amsterdam, Leendert Verheij, explains the approach he takes in this book.

Organizing an internal dialogue is also a perfect means for an organization to develop its own identity. It is clear, for instance, that the four sorts of values which were referred to earlier are applicable to every hospital. A hospital will never focus completely on technological innovation or exclusively on efficiency. In practice, there is always a mix of professional, legal, commercial and humane principles. However, it is precisely this mixed character that gives hospitals the opportunity to specialize in one of those four values and, thus, develop its own identity. One hospital might pride itself on its medical and technical expertise while another presents its pleasant, informal atmosphere. A third might proudly advertise its quick, effective treatments, while a fourth distinguishes itself based on religious identity. By choosing a specific direction and giving

the discussion about values its own emphasis within the organization, the manager can ensure there is more variety within the healthcare sector. On the basis of the neo-republican philosophy, this variety could be viewed not as a problem but as a source of power and wealth. Contributing to this can also be seen as a task for the manager.

This describes the role of managers in our administrative philosophy. They are a middle layer which regulates the unavoidable tensions between the world of practicing professionals and the expectations of the outside world. Naturally, they must attend to those expectations, but not to the extent that they only pay attention to movements which start outside and move in. Also, they must certainly refrain from putting great pressure on their own professionals in the name of that outside world. It seems to us that their actual task is to look for the right balance between the expectations or requirements of inspectors, financiers, consumers, government, the media and other external parties, and what the professionals can, or are willing, to do. Besides this, they have an important, three-part internal task: first, to create a space where professionals can carry out their work properly; second, to formulate and promote the essential goals of the organization; third, to shape a dialogue that balances diverging values.

One wonders whether there are many managers in the Netherlands who currently meet these requirements. Jetty Becking cites research showing various points of friction between professionals and their immediate managers. According to this research, managers often do not possess enough skills, such as how to chair work meetings, resolve conflicts and hold performance appraisal talks with employees. Employees also find their style of leadership uninspiring. Fifteen percent of managers only exercise control, fourteen percent only carry out orders from higher up, twenty percent are only occupied with increasing production, twenty two percent take a coaching attitude, and thirty percent do not provide any leadership at all. Finally, managers cannot accept criticism. The fact that this research was commissioned by the FNV (the Federation Dutch Labour Movement) might have played a role in this negative picture. However, if even only half of these critical findings are correct, there is every reason to prepare managers better for their tasks.

## **7 The role of professional organizations at the macro-level**

Until now, we have placed great emphasis on balancing diverging values, which could easily create the impression that in our administrative philosophy, argumentation and/or holding a dialogue are ends in themselves. However, nothing could be further from the truth. These issues are of particular importance if one wants to improve the quality of services in the public sector. A fundamental premise in our neo-republican vision is that the active participation of professionals and other parties is necessary to be able to answer two questions: First, what we mean by “good providing of services” and, second, how to organize sufficiently broad and lasting support for improving quality. It

is on precisely these points that we also distinguish ourselves from a business economics approach, which answers those questions by pursuing rationalization and market forces.

*The government's powerlessness*

Nevertheless, one wonders whether there are other ways of achieving a certain level of professional quality. For example, an appeal could be made to the state. Quality control or the inspection of efficiency could be government functions. Wibren van der Burg's contribution is particularly instructive in this regard. He investigates the relationship between the professionals' and the inspectors' perspectives. He concentrates on the most elementary case in which the thinking of inspectors proceeds from the state, while the professionals are primarily occupied with practicing their professions. In itself, government interference with the behavior of professionals is completely legitimate, if only because of the large sums of money that are spent on the (semi-) public sector or because the state sets certain public priorities. Some government control is therefore unavoidable. The difficulty, however, is that governmental direction or control is always carried out in a specific way. In order to regulate, the state has to simplify, standardize, make things measurable and establish a certain level of aggregation, whereas this is precisely the sort of treatment to which professional practice is not suited. As a consequence, the relationship between the state and professionals is characterized by a fundamental asymmetry, which Van der Burg illustrates with four points of difference.

First, the state proceeds from a number of legal or other rules, whereas professionals are primarily driven by values or ideals, not only in their continuous pursuit of quality improvement but also in how they are socialized during their training and professional life. Within the professional group there are always stories, images and expectations about the difference between the good and bad practice of a profession. The state is an outsider to this professional life and therefore cannot discern these expectations. It considers the appeal to values or ideals unrealistic nonsense and wants to pin down quality, preferably using rules.

Second, the state is interested in concrete products or results, whereas professionals are primarily concerned with the practicalities of everyday life. They spend their days with citizens, pupils, patients or neighborhood residents, and they try to carry out their work as well as possible. They are less concerned with the question of what the output will be, if they even consider it relevant at all to practical reality. It is particularly difficult to establish what a police officer, a doctor or a judge actually "produces." The state does not have insight into the fine details of professional practice and has to be satisfied with counting or evaluating output.

Third, the state prefers to collect quantitative details, whereas professionals work with qualitative judgments. Naturally, professionals are also continually occupied with measurements or numbers, but these are intended to help them evaluate the quality of

their work. Their evaluation involves not only numbers, but also a variety of experiences and tacit knowledge which the practitioners of a profession share. Government proceeds from the exact opposite perspective. It only considers quality and professional judgments relevant when they can be turned into indicators.

Fourth, the state pursues knowledge that can be applied generally, whereas the knowledge of professionals ties to local contexts. The practical knowledge that a police officer has about the situation in his district cannot simply be elevated on a theoretical level. The experiences of a teacher with specific groups of pupils cannot simply be turned into a generalized method that can be applied elsewhere. In fact, legislators and government inspectors live in a different world from practicing professionals. Government assumes that professionals will take its rules seriously, but to the professionals the state is a distant institution that interferes ineptly in their affairs. They give priority to the urgent questions of parents, the unemployed, patients or suspects; they do not lie awake worrying about a civil servant who has thought up a few new rules. It is worth noting that they do take very seriously rules made by their own colleagues. Professionals will not ignore a hospital's prescribed hygiene rules for an operation, or the safety checks of an airplane before a flight. Those rules are, after all, aimed at the quality of their work.

In view of these arguments, we reject the idea that the inspection of professional quality is a matter for government. For society as a whole, there is certainly a need for a process of guaranteeing quality, but it seems to us that professional associations should devise these processes, not government. Professional associations could ensure that the pursuit of "checks and balances" is given shape at all levels: Individual professional (micro-level); professional organization (mid-level); society as a whole (macro-level). Unfortunately, we must conclude that this has hardly happened. Some professions have organized themselves very well and, if it suits, also contribute their share. But a lot of professions do not have such organizations. It is true that there are also trade unions representing a large number of professionals, but until now they have mainly emphasized traditional matters like employment conditions and income. Finally, for a number of years now, some foundations, organizations or associations have acted as protest groups, fighting (with varying degrees of success) for better education and for home care with more dignity. In other words, the picture is not positive.

It is characteristic of the public sector that for a long time, unions have focused strongly on the (financial) conditions of practicing a profession. They pay much less attention to a profession's content or the strategic challenges associated with those issues. One also wonders whether the stance taken by trade unions is as defensive as, for example, Ten Have suggests. In any case, the FNV (the Federation Dutch labor Movement) claims that various unions affiliated with it really do provide support for professionals. For example, the NVJ (national union of journalists) is committed to protecting press freedom, journalists' safety, the safeguarding of sources and copyright. The union even awards a prize for the best professional. However, the FNV also includes

unions that are confronted with deteriorating employment conditions. They are primarily fighting for good CAOS (collective employment contracts), so that at least basic conditions are settled. In fact, the two sides cannot be separated. This accords with the findings of the American GoodWork Project. Looking at the facts, we note that there are still considerable differences among professions on this point. Some have organized themselves strongly when it comes to issues of content, while others are in a very weak position.

It is well known that medical specialists have organized their affairs well in every way. Their professional associations develop professional standards and attend to qualification and training, but they also attend to down-to-earth matters like salaries and insurance. Other professions are in a weaker position. They cannot defend themselves when austerity measures are put in place, when managers increase the workload, or when doubts are cast on the value of their work.

Add to this, there are virtually no procedures or bodies that systematically balance diverging values in the practice of a profession. It could be said that this is a suitable task for bodies like the Stichting van de Arbeid (the Labour Foundation), certain umbrella organizations or even parliament. However, in all honesty, we do not believe that the dialog we have in mind will stand much chance in those forums. The platform that comes closest to what we have in mind is the Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, a foundation that brings together different parties in secondary education in a joint attempt to put the quality of the teaching profession on the political and social agendas. This is quite a difficult route. The foundation's experience can teach us a lot about the current possibilities and impossibilities of getting professional quality declared a priority in the "polderlandschap", or "consensus-building landscape." We argue for a consultative body developed "from within." At the moment, however, that does not make much sense because such a body will only succeed if the most important professions organize themselves with regard to issues of substance at the national level and understand the urgent need for such a dialogue. That stage has not been reached yet. For the time being, argument, negotiation and dialogue take place in the relatively closed space of professionals' own organizations and in the minds of individual professionals. This is an evident weakness in Dutch professional life, and it has serious drawbacks.

#### *Lagging productivity*

Those drawbacks include – to mention just one example – that there is hardly any debate about the question of productivity in the public sector. Klaas ten Have's contribution makes it clear that this problem really does exist. He points out that productivity in the public services sector has lagged behind that in the private sector for many decades. And this comes at a price. It means that public sector costs to the national income have risen to an unacceptable level. If the professionals themselves do not do something about this, then it is inevitable that managers, administrators and politicians will do something.

Actually, the same sort of revolution needs to occur in the public sector as happened in the private sector at the beginning of last century, when the introduction of Taylorism led to an unprecedented increase in productivity. The difficulty, however, is that the means that were introduced at that time won't work in today's public sector. Professionals will not work better as a result of dividing tasks, separating policy and practice, working with standards and increasing the work tempo. There is therefore only one solution, which is that professionals themselves increase their productivity. That alternative revolution, which fits in with the professional pride movement, might already be taking place. The best example is Jos de Blok, himself a former district nurse, who with his new organization Buurtzorg Nederland [Netherlands Neighborhood-care] reintroduced the work of the district nurse [nurses who visit sick people at home]. The success of "Buurtzorg" is described in the article written by Bart Kiers for this book. It is no surprise that nurses enjoy working at Buurtzorg Nederland. At many home care organizations they became alienated from their profession. They are trapped by administrative tasks and hardly any use is made of their skills. At Buurtzorg Nederland, they are pivotal to the organization. Teams of highly trained nurses arrange all manner of tasks themselves. De Blok: "Often, administrators do not understand that the commitment of highly trained personnel is much more effective and yields better care, as a result of which organizations can operate up to 30% more cheaply. Every district nurse understands this immediately."

De Blok sees the approach based on production, which was introduced about ten years ago and is now widespread, as the cause of the malaise in the home care sector. In this approach, care is seen as a product that you can split up into different activities. The whole primary process of registration, intake, planning and delivery is split up, with each activity being completed by a different person. The underlying idea is that if you split up these processes, it is more efficient and cheaper per hour.

However, De Blok says it has had exactly the opposite effect: It is more expensive! "If the financial pressure increases, there is the tendency to subdivide the process further and, increasingly, to hire people who have an even lower level of training. That is crippling for the motivation of the nurses and the quality of the care and, moreover, it costs society barrels of money." Calculated at a national level, two to three billion euros would be saved if all home care were provided on a small scale.<sup>15</sup>

In other sectors, too, professionals have set up innovative organizations like this and have taken over organizational control. In these new organizations, the overheads are very low, and the professionals on the ground have considerable input. An example of this is Mentaal Beter, a mental health organization. The example of Buurtzorg shows that professionals who assume more responsibility and who demand more freedom to put their skills into practice can provide better and even cheaper care. It appears that good sense and economy are not mutually exclusive.

## 8 Conclusion

These then, are a few of the main features of the administrative philosophy that we propose as an alternative to the usual business-economics view. We began with an outline of the increasing interest in pride, honor and self-respect that has become evident in public life in recent years. An interesting expression of this undercurrent is the need for recognition felt by professionals who work in the (semi-) public sector. They increasingly want to be recognized as professionals, they resist hierarchical forms of management, and they have great difficulty with the business economics models used by policy makers and managers to direct their work. That pursuit of self-respect is the premise on which our neo-republican administrative philosophy is based.

We asked ourselves how the pursuit of professional pride could be given a positive spin. It can, and it can't.

The negative conclusion is that a number of currently accepted beliefs must be abandoned. We must counter the idea that the professional is first and foremost a calculating actor. We also need to abandon the illusion that he or she can be managed by means of targets or other quantifiable measurements. And we need to stop the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust that still determines attitudes towards professionals.

The positive conclusion is that the management of professionals should be based on argument, debate or dialogue. There is good reason for this because in professional reality, not one but several, often incongruent, values and ambitions come to the fore. With an elementary structure in mind, we have distinguished between technical/professional, legal, commercial and humane principles. Situations must be avoided where only one of these four principles holds sway. Instead, we must strive for a system of "checks and balances" that balances these four values, allowing for variations depending on specific situations. The search for that balance takes place on three levels. It is a task for the individual professional (micro-level), the organization (mid-level) and society as a whole (macro-level).

Next, we indicated that certain assumptions are made in the search for this multiple balance. At the individual level, professionals must have the necessary training and practice. Learning to deal with diverging values should therefore be an integral part of all professional training. Further, there must be enough freedom to ensure that a professional who chooses a particular approach in good conscience is not reprimanded on commercial or political grounds. We see a special role for managers in creating the desired balance within an organization. It is their specific task to mediate between the forces that are active inside and outside an organization and to shape the process of debate or dialogue through which the professionals pursue a balance among diverging values. Furthermore, managers can set out a particular course so that their organizations, using a mix of values, present a deliberate identity to others. We see professional associations leading the pursuit of "checks and balances" at the level of society as a whole. In our opinion, the specific dynamics of professional life mean that matters like



quality and efficiency can no longer be directed by the state. At the same time, we must concede that in the Netherlands there are still too few professional organizations that are able to do this.

With this, we formulate a philosophy that stands for responsibility and self-respect, debate and dialog, values and principles, commitment and citizenship. This approach is primarily inspired by the problems and ambitions that we come across in the public sector but it is also an approach that, for various reasons, fits Dutch society well. To end, we would like to summarize three of those reasons.

#### *Superseding the Anglo-Saxon model*

The first reason is the impact of the so-called Anglo-Saxon model on the private sector. It is indisputable that this model has become increasingly influential in recent decades in the Netherlands. In Edwin Lambregts's contribution, one can glean the effect that the advance of this model has had on relationships within commercial enterprises. Many people have become convinced that the organizational principles associated with this model can also be applied to the (semi-) public sector. However, hard questions are now being asked about this development. First, it is not clear, and by no means "inevitable," that processes applied in the private sector move over equally to (semi-) public sector organizations. Second, a fairly stable majority of the Dutch population sees little benefit in applying market forces to services which are considered part of the welfare state. Many citizens are, in contrast to influential economists and policy makers, quite attached to the Dutch welfare state. Naturally, the level and the quality of the services play a role, but there are also other values involved. In any case, the symbolic and moral aspects of these services must not be underestimated. Third, the apparatus of government is not always prepared to exchange practices which have grown up in the Netherlands for Anglo-Saxon practices.

On this point, we refer to the issues articulated by Christopher Pollitt in this book. He points out, for example, that New Public Management methods have been introduced with a certain caution in northern European countries. The states on the European continent often conform to the picture of classic Weberian bureaucracy. This includes an independent civil service whose aim is to serve the public good, not the government in power. Furthermore, it is important to note that in these countries, governments are coalitions of minorities, therefore, civil servants play a mediating role. This may explain why these countries, despite increasing pressure, still maintain a certain distance from the Anglo-Saxon model. One could say that they are, in their hearts, still "Rhine-landish," although they are forced by the process of globalization to join a different game. No one knows how this is all going to end, but the current economic crisis might cause the old love for the Rhineland model to be rekindled. In any case, the administrative philosophy that has been outlined here, with its appreciation of dialogue and consultation, would fit in very well with this model.

*Craftsmanship as a form of citizenship*

The second reason we think a neo-republican administrative philosophy fits the Dutch context well has to do with the connection that has traditionally existed between craftsmanship and citizenship in the Netherlands. Research into the history of the guilds is particularly relevant in this respect.<sup>16</sup> At one time in England, citizenship rights were automatically conferred following admission to a guild. In the Netherlands, the opposite was true; only citizens were allowed to join the guilds. During the Republic, it was necessary to be a citizen to become a member of the town council. In Gent, the local council was long dominated by guilds, and in the sixteenth century they even tried to seize power on more than one occasion. Seen historically, therefore, there is a strong link between guilds and citizenship. It means that citizenship and all the qualities it implies should not be perceived as something external to the values of good professional practice. Rather, a professional who does his or her work well makes an important contribution to the general public interest or public affairs – i.e., is a good citizen – *precisely because of his work*.

In relation to this, Richard Sennett points to an interesting and unexpected connection between craftsmanship and citizenship that developed from the time of the Enlightenment, for example in the works of Diderot and Thomas Jefferson. The connection is based on the simple but relevant assumption that people who do their work well develop a certain affinity with complexity. A real craftsman knows all too well that there are often no simple solutions to complex problems. He knows that you have to investigate matters in detail and that you need a lot of experience. Diderot therefore describes a good citizen as someone who learns from his experiences. The craftsman's work teaches him realism and a feeling for correct proportions. According to this chain of thought, he can therefore form his own judgment about politicians' behavior. With this tradition in mind, Sennett rejects the concept of citizenship that, in the spirit of Habermas, mainly emphasizes communicative processes. Such processes are generally not strong and stable enough to act as a counter-balance to political reality. In that respect, the craftsman's practical wisdom is more reliable. According to Sennett, it is therefore wrong to see craftsmanship and efforts for the public good as two different quantities. You cannot say that a professional who does his work well should also add a moral or public dimension to his work. The point is that a person contributes to the public good precisely by practicing his profession properly. Conversely, you cannot say that someone gets better at his profession if he makes conscious efforts for the public good. If you impose a certain standard on doctors in the name of the general public interest, for example that they are not allowed to spend more than ten minutes on a particular treatment, then you are managing, but not with quality standards. Here, Sennett links up with Dewey's pragmatism, which taught that work or professional practice must be judged solely on the basis of standards or measurements that are already present in that work or profession itself. Practicing a profession well is an end in itself and must not be considered a means to reach other ends.

*Thinking for the longer term*

Finally, in our administrative philosophy we emphatically opt for long-term thinking. That is also the case with the researchers of the GoodWork Project. They remind us that good work generally requires more effort than what they refer to as compromised work. Things that require a lot of effort are, quite simply, rarer – they require more time and energy, they demand practice, experience, discipline and determination, and they meet higher quality standards. It is easier to stop than to go the extra mile.

In that light, one understands why Wouter de Been attaches great value to the elements of ritual, initiation and tradition. He describes professionalism as an attitude to life which one cultivates. That attitude only develops if someone practices and takes time. One of the most disastrous results of our permanent drive for reorganization is that people are no longer prepared to invest in “depth,” but that type of investment is indispensable for real professionalism. In our current superficial world, you are your career’s worst enemy if you emphasize professional dedication. Dedication simply does not combine well with flexibility.

Thinking long-term was also a constant in Deming’s pursuit of permanent quality improvement. He was very critical of enterprises which do not look further than the next quarter. Without planning for the longer term, no distinction can be made between urgent matters and really important matters. As a result, you race from one urgent matter to the next without knowing the big picture. It leads to the wrong way of innovating. Many people think you can replace certain parts of an organization the way you replace a technical part in a machine. This means, however, that you never attain high quality, because high quality is only achieved when effort is sustained over a long period.

Christopher Pollitt, too, draws attention to the fact that changes require much more time than people usually realize. At least four years, or even longer, are usually necessary before changes have really been internalized. However, in reality, professionals often get no longer than a year to carry out a change. There is too little understanding that cultural changes take a long time. Politicians, among others, make this mistake. The time spans in which they think and work are far too short. With a great deal of fuss, they decide to change policy and do not understand that carrying out that change will take longer than they themselves will be in office. They give priority to tomorrow’s newspaper headlines and to the next elections. It would be better if they gave greater consideration to the meaning of long-term processes.

That also affects how researchers go about their work. According to Pollitt, academics in the field of public administration, for example, would do well to immerse themselves more often in the history of the bodies or organizations that are the subject of their study. Too often they give preference to timeless models. The difficulty is that studies into the longer term are very difficult to carry out at today’s universities because there, too, the emphasis is on quantifiable output and quick results. It’s a vicious circle. A critical analysis of the dominant professional practice becomes virtually impossible,

because the analysis has to conform to whatever has, in the meantime, become the prevailing practice. The publication of this book is intended as a form of resistance to this development. We will consider our enterprise a success if the insights unfolded here contribute to Dutch professionals being able to think about their tasks or situations in new, independent ways that are uniquely theirs.

Translated by Vivien Reid

## Notes

### Professional pride. A powerful force. Introduction

- 1 Gabriël van den Brink, Thijs Jansen and Dorien Pessers, (eds.), 2005 *Beroepszeer. Waarom Nederland niet goed werkt*, (four editions), Popular books that describe how “professionals” are stuck and which call for change appear like clockwork in the Netherlands. Books that have been popular over the past few years are: *Mondige burgers, getemde professionals*. *Marktwerking, vraagsturing en professionaliteit in de publieke sector* (Evelien Tonkens, 2003, revised and expanded fourth edition in 2008), *De intensieve menshouderij. Hoe kwaliteit oplost in rationaliteit* (Jaap Peters and Judith Pouw, 2005, late 2008 21,000 copies sold), *Onder onderwijzers en andere gemengde berichten* (Martin Sommer, 2006), and recently, *Ontregelen. De herovering van de werkloer* (Jos van der Lans, 2008, already nine editions).
- 2 Murphy, R. *Proletarianization or Bureaucratization: the Fall of the Professional?* In: *The Formation of Professions*; Torstendahl, R., Burrage, M., eds.; Sage Publications: London, 1990; 73-75. Haug, M.R. 1973. *Deprofessionalization: An alternative hypothesis for the future*. *Sociology review monography*. 20:195-211. Haug, M.R. 1975. *The deprofessionalization of everyone? Sociological focus* 3:197-213.  
Oppenheimer, M., 1973. *The proletarianization of the professional*. In: Halmos, P. (eds.), *Professionalization and Social Change*. *Sociological Review Monograph No. 20*, University of Keele. pp. 213-228.
- 3 According to Tara Smith, “The practice of pride,” in Clifford Williams (eds.), *Personal Virtues*. *Introductory Essays*, Basingstoke: Palgrave 2005, 93: “you can only take pride in what is, in some sense, yours.”
- 4 Geertje Dekkers, “Trots zijn mag best, maar wordt niet verwaand”, interview with philosopher Frans Jacobs, *Filosofie Magazine*, 2009, nr. 1, and see Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, Book IV, 3.
- 5 Gabriël van den Brink, *Schets van een beschavingsoffensief. Over normen, normaliteit en normalisatie*, Amsterdam University Press 2004, 140.
- 6 Herman Wijffels is a former Dutch representative at the World Bank (November 2006 - November 2008). Wijffels served as Chairman for the Executive Board of Rabobank Group, Utrecht, the Netherlands (1986-1999) and as the Chairman for the Economic and Social Council of the Netherlands in The Hague (1999- 2006).
- 7 Interview with Herman Wijffels in Hubert J. M. Hermans, *Dialogo en misverstand. Leven met de toemende bevolking in onze innerlijke ruimte*, Soest: Nelissen 2006, 67-69.
- 8 Geoffrey Brennan and Philip Pettit, *The Economy of Esteem. An Essay on Civil and Political Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004.

- 9 Ron Niessen and Edgar Karssing (eds.), *Geroepen om het algemeen belang te dienen. Ambtenaren, integriteit en beroepstrots*, the Hague: CAOP 2007.
- 10 See James Perry and Annie van Hondighem (eds.), *Motivation in Public Management. The Call of Public Service*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008.

### The GoodWork Project: An overview

- 1 The GoodWork Project website is [www.goodworkproject.org](http://www.goodworkproject.org). A list of papers, presentations, and publications can be found on the site. See also [www.goodworktoolkit.org](http://www.goodworktoolkit.org), and Gardner, H. (2010).
- 2 “Good work” is formally defined by the three principal investigators of the GoodWork Project as work that is of high quality, socially responsible, and meaningful to the worker.
- 3 The term “compromised work” is used for work which is legal, but undermines the core values of the profession (see Gardner, 2005).
- 4 In some cases, names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of participants in the study.

### Honor, a topical concept

- 1 In: P.L. Berger, B. Berger, and H. Kellner, *The Homeless Mind. Modernization and Consciousness*, Middlesex: Penguin 1974, 78–89.
- 2 R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989.
- 3 S. Neiman, *Morele helderheid. Goed en kwaad in de 21<sup>e</sup> eeuw*, Amsterdam: Ambo Anthos 2008, 319 ff.
- 4 M. Gauthéron (eds.), *L'honneur. Image de soi ou don de soi, un idéal équivoque*, Paris: Autrement 1991, 132.
- 5 Gauthéron, *L'honneur*, 79.
- 6 D. Pessers, *Menselijke waardigheid en het persoonsbegrip in het recht*, preliminary advice for the Christen-Juristen Vereniging, Utrecht 2005.
- 7 The expression is borrowed from M. Delmas-Marty, in: H. Atlan et al (eds.), *Le Clonage humain*, Paris: Seuil 1999, 107.
- 8 A. Zijderveld, *The Institutional Imperative. The Interface of Institutions and Networks*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000.
- 9 D. Pessers, “Goede en kwade trouw in het openbaar bestuur,” in: *Goede en kwade trouw in het openbaar bestuur*, Raad voor het Openbaar Bestuur, The Hague 2006, 11–24.
- 10 The term “totalism,” taken from Benjamin Barber, refers to the creeping processes of totalitarianism. B. Barber, “Conceptual Foundations of Totalitarianism,” in: C. Friedrich et al, *Totalitarianism in Perspective. Three Views*, New York, 1970.

### Hans Monderman and the Shared Space Philosophy

- 1 From Henk Dilling, “Minder verkeerskentekens bevordert sociaal gedrag van weggebruikers”, *Kijk op het Noorden*, no. 323, November 2006.
- 2 Michael, Michael L., “Business Ethics. The Law of Rules.” Regulatory Policy Program Working Paper RPP-2006-03, Cambridge, Ma: Mossavar-Rahnani Center for Business and Government, John

F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Published in *Business Ethics Quarterly*, Vol. 16, no. 4 (October 2006).

### **Administrative burdens for public professionals: Facts and fiction**

- 1 For example, Van den Brink et al 2005; Van den Brink 2006; Tonkens 2008, Van der Lans 2008; see also WRR (Scientific Council for Government Policy) 2004; for overview Noordegraaf 2008.
- 2 See Watson 2002.
- 3 Based on Noordegraaf and Sterrenburg 2009.
- 4 Compare Noordegraaf 2008.
- 5 Palm et al 2008.
- 6 Ministerie van Financiën (Ministry of Finance) 2007.
- 7 Compare Noordegraaf and Sterrenburg 2009; Van Bostelen et al 2008; PricewaterhouseCoopers 2006.
- 8 Compare Noordegraaf and Sterrenburg 2009; Van Bostelen et al 2008.
- 9 Wardenaar 2007; Sterrenburg et al 2008.
- 10 PricewaterhouseCoopers 2006; Van Bostelen et al 2008.
- 11 Compare Van Bostelen et al 2008.
- 12 Noordegraaf 2008.
- 13 Compare Van Bostelen et al 2008.
- 14 Noordegraaf and Sterrenburg 2009.
- 15 See Noordegraaf 2008.
- 16 Compare Ackroyd et al 2007.
- 17 For example, Van der Boom 2008.
- 18 Van den Brink et al 2007.

### **The autonomy of professionals in public service**

- 1 Victor Bekkers, Arthur Edwards, Rob Gilsing, Henk Klaassen, Theo van der Krogt, Mirko Noordegraaf, Bram Steijn and Sandra van Thiel commented on an earlier version of this chapter. The author would like to thank them.

### **Regulations, market stimuli and professional virtues in conflict: About self-regulation and professionals**

- 1 There is an enormous amount of literature on this subject. Lowi 1969 and Van Gunsteren 1976 are early critics of centralized government regulation; Osborne and Gaebler 1992 wrote an influential manual on what has come to be known as the Third Path; Teubner 1993 analyzes the decreasing effect of government regulation from the perspective of systems theory; Sunstein 1997 provides a good critique; and Moran 2002 gives us a good overview of the so-called deregulation and the rise of the regulation state.

- 22 A different explanation for the resistance to quantitative standards among some professionals, such as lawyers and psychotherapists, may be that, in the Dutch educational system, many of the students choosing those fields have always shied away from mathematics and similar disciplines.
- 23 This is an ideal-typical sketch and, therefore, I will neglect the sophisticated theories which incorporate more horizontal views. Even if they are taken seriously by actual legislators in some fields, they are never the only view on legislation; the simple top-down command control view is always lingering in the background as well, e.g., if populist politicians demand stricter laws and tougher enforcement.
- 24 Witteveen, "Alternatieve regulering: de vele gezichten van de wetgever," supra, n 8, 4 and 22. Witteveen's claim is a more general one about individuals in semi-autonomous fields and practices, but it may easily be applied to professionals.
- 25 In fact, there are many more versions of sophisticated instrumentalism that we may encounter in modern regulatory theory and practice. My ideal-typical sketch cannot do justice to them all. For an overview, see Witteveen, "Alternatieve regulering: de vele gezichten van de wetgever," supra, n 8. For a critical analysis of the rise of auditing mechanisms (even referred to as the "auditing explosion"), see M. Power, *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification* (Oxford University Press, 1997).
- 26 Cf. Witteveen, "Alternatieve regulering: de vele gezichten van de wetgever," supra, n 8, 30–31 and 50.
- 27 The concept of "legally conditioned self-regulation" was introduced in a Dutch government report *Zicht op Wetgeving* in 1991 and has been used since in Dutch regulatory theories as well as in official policy documents. Usually, it only refers to the second characteristic mentioned here, that state legislation should set the framework for self-regulation. I have added the other two characteristics because, in my view, they are essential elements in the state perspective underlying the concept. See De Been, "Rules and Aspirations. Self-Regulation and the Professions," supra, n 11, for an analysis of the inherent tensions of the idea of legally conditioned self-regulation.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 We may distinguish between personal professional autonomy and autonomy of the profession, but in this context, we combine both under the umbrella of professional autonomy.
- 30 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, supra, n 8, 319. Cf. *ibid.*, 316; "Metis resists simplification into deductive principles."
- 31 Witteveen, "Alternatieve regulering: de vele gezichten van de wetgever," supra, n 8, 48.
- 32 Cf. De Been, "Rules and Aspirations. Self-Regulation and the Professions", supra, n 11.
- 33 Cf. *Verslag Commissie Parlementair onderzoek Onderwijsvernieuwingen (Commissie-Dijsselbloem)* (Report of the Committee Parliamentary Investigation on Educational Innovations – Dijsselbloem committee), Kamerstukken II, 2007–2008, 31 007.
- 34 Cf. Prichard and Willmott, "Just How Managed is the McUniversity?", supra, n 1, 300: "...some senior academics identify their task as buffering and protecting their colleagues from the demands of managerialism."
- 35 At the state level, a similar transforming role may be played by former professionals working in the state regulatory bureaucracy.
- 36 Cf. Freidson, *Professionalism: The Third Logic*, supra, n 2.



- 37 A Dutch example is the new educational philosophy, called “the new learning,” which was strongly promoted by some school managers and politicians, but found much less support among teachers, parents and students. Cf. *Verslag Commissie Parlementair onderzoek Onderwijsvernieuwingen*, supra, n 33.
- 38 Schön and Rein, *Frame Reflection: Towards the Resolution of Intractable Policy Controversies*, supra, n 7. For a similar suggestion, see Witteveen, “Alternatieve regulering: de vele gezichten van de wetgever,” supra, n 8, 58.
- 39 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, supra, n 6.
- 40 Van der Burg, “Essentially Ambiguous Concepts and the Fuller-Hart-Dworkin Debate,” supra, n 9.
- 41 The arguments for incommensurability of the basic perspective require a fuller discussion than can be given here. If, therefore, some readers are not convinced that they are incompatible, I hope the analysis at least convinces them that there are serious tensions to overcome and that distinguishing the two perspectives as at first sight incompatible may help us to understand some of the problems of regulating professions.
- 42 The exception is Witteveen’s distinction between centre-periphery and top-down. This can only be transcended by taking a Herculean or God’s eye point of view – but such a view from everywhere is not humanly possible.
- 43 The idea of a design legislator is introduced by Witteveen, “Alternatieve regulering: de vele gezichten van de wetgever,” supra, n 8, 58, inspired by the idea of co-design suggested by Schön and Rein, *Frame Reflection: Towards the Resolution of Intractable Policy Controversies*, supra, n 7, 165–87.
- 44 Witteveen, “Alternatieve regulering: de vele gezichten van de wetgever,” supra, n 8, 60.
- 45 Schön and Rein, *Frame Reflection: Towards the Resolution of Intractable Policy Controversies*, supra, n 7, 186 and chapter 6.

### **Evaluations: Hidden costs, questionable benefits and superior alternatives**

- 1 For a detailed description of the evaluation process of management research in the United Kingdom, see Bessant et al (2003).
- 2 For a defense of peer reviews, see e.g. Daniel (2005).
- 3 The Academy of Management seeks to redress this neglect by bestowing a “Distinguished Scholar Practitioner Award.”
- 4 See Kieser and Nicolai (2005) for a discussion of rigor versus relevance in management research, which in their view is inevitable.
- 5 For rankings of business schools and economic departments, see e.g. Stake (1998), Dichev (1999), Thursby (2000).
- 6 Such problems of sabotage in tournaments have been extensively discussed in personnel economics, see, e.g., Lazear (1995).
- 7 Nevertheless, they often fail in assessing the performance of individuals, see Latham et al (2005).
- 8 Medoff (2006) finds that the Matthew Effect applies to Harvard University and The University of Chicago only.
- 9 At best, one could argue for a variety of rankings with diverse criteria to make clear that no single ranking can meet the requirements of scholarly work, see Gioia and Corley (2002: 118).

- 10 But see Cardinal (2001). She finds that output control enhances radical innovation in the pharmaceutical industry. But the dependent variable – FDA approvals – might not well serve as an indicator of radical innovation, and might be subdued by the multiple task effect itself.
- 11 It should be noted that sometimes there are conflicting logics between science and innovation in industry, see Gittelman and Kogut (2003).
- 12 But see Nooteboom (2000) for a discussion of the problem of optimal cognitive distance and cognitive proximity in knowledge production.
- 13 See <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/research/greybook/principles.html>.
- 14 This explanation for the “up or out” rule differs from the explanation in orthodox economics (e.g. Milgrom and Roberts 1992: 379–82). In this literature, “up or out” is understood as an instrument to overcome opportunism of decision makers and potential partners when performance is not contractible.
- 15 This is the kind of evaluation the German Science Council (Deutscher Wissenschaftsrat) usually conducts. Recently the Wissenschaftsrat has decided to engage in a pilot study concerning a rating of research institutions similar to the British Research Assessment Exercise (see Wissenschaftsrat 2004), which is the kind of output control we criticize in this paper.
- 16 Another impressive example of how autonomy in knowledge productions furthers productivity is open source software production, see Osterloh and Rota (forthcoming).
- 17 The Google way is documented in, e.g., [http://www.infoworld.com/article/04/02/20/08OPconnection\\_1.html](http://www.infoworld.com/article/04/02/20/08OPconnection_1.html).

### Trade unions and professionals in the FNV

- 1 Jos Kole, “Professionele idealen vanuit ethisch perspectief,” in: J Kole and D. de Ruyter (eds.), *Werkzame idealen*, Assen: Van Gorcum 2007.
- 2 Richard Sennett, *De cultuur van het nieuwe kapitalisme*, Amsterdam: Meulenhoff 2007.
- 3 Jacques van Hoof, *Nieuwe geluiden, oude thema's. Veertig jaar veranderingen in het arbeidsbestel*, Radboud University Nijmegen 2007.
- 4 See previous note.
- 5 Lex Heerma van Voss and Bob Reinalda, *Waarom de FNV ontstond*, Amsterdam: FNV Pers 2005; Jan Bom (eds.), *De eeuw van de FNV, 51 sociale monumenten*, Amsterdam: FNV Pers 2005.

### Works councils are dead. Long live employee participation!

- 1 Wout Buitelaar (also ed.), Jan Peter van den Toren, with a contribution by Pieter van der Meché, *DSM. portret van een Maaslandse reus*, Amsterdam: Mets & Schilt 2002.

### The professional pride of Jaco van Hoorn

- 1 Jan Nap is program manager at the School for Police Leadership; professor Cees Zwart is professor emeritus of social pedagogics and organization development and human quality.

### Organizations in service of the good life? A poetic reflection on modern management practice in the care sector

- 1 The concept of poetic reflection is derived from the book *Het poëtisch argument* by philosopher and trainer Jos Kessels. This book considers different leadership and management situations, including their dilemmas for action from a philosophical angle (Kessels 2006).
- 2 Plato refers to this text form as “representation.” The author himself doesn’t speak; others do. The author takes the place of the figures presented to and tries to persuade the reader to do the same (*Politeia*, transl. G. Koolschijn, 1995, 67). Martha Nussbaum is a modern philosopher who frequently uses narrative research methods. In one of her recent studies, *Opleving van het Denken. Over Menselijke Emoties*, she makes a solid philosophical, and also personal and moving, plea for the wealth, dignity and force of emotions (Nussbaum 2004).
- 3 The Dutch philosopher Ad Verbrugge describes a development in the public sector whereby professional honor is violated by the rationalization of organizations, market dictates, and modern management, which is mainly geared to measurable output. This robs employees of their motivation (professional honor) and alienates them, resulting in mounting frustrations and deep dissatisfaction with their jobs (Verbrugge 2005, 108–42).
- 4 Hiking in gorges is a serious branch of hiking that appeals to people who are after peace, nature and mountains, and who want wholesome, not-too-dangerous activities. Depending on the level of difficulty, gorge hiking demands more of hikers, their equipment and materials. Alex, based on advice from Henk, opted for a nice and fairly easy hike. A number of gorges, such as the famous Samaria Gorge and the Gorge of the Dead near Zakros on Crete, have been used by ancient civilizations as places of residence and/or burial and sacrifice. Websites of hiking clubs/travel agencies provide extensive information on hiking in gorges (cf.: [www.voetstappen.nl/buitenland/griekenland/kreta](http://www.voetstappen.nl/buitenland/griekenland/kreta)).
- 5 Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are the three main philosophers from Greek antiquity who lived around 450–300 BC. Plato was a student of Socrates, and Aristotle was a student of Plato. One of the central issues they addressed is the question of the good life. A good overview of these and other Western philosophers can be found in *25 eeuwen westerse filosofie* (Bor et al 2003).
- 6 In classical philosophy it is not uncommon to raise issues in a partly or fully fictitious dialog. Cf., e.g., Plato’s *Republic*, an extensive dialog on forms of conduct, organizing, and leadership (Hare 2004).
- 7 Socrates is known to have posed questions to passers-by in all sorts of public places in Athens. According to Plato, Socrates showed concern for the souls of his fellow human beings by constantly asking them questions so as to improve their self-knowledge (Taylor 1998, 27–32).
- 8 In *The Decent Society*, the Israeli philosopher Avishai Margalit refers to the fact that a “just” society with transparent laws, rights and duties can still be humiliating to people. Ensuring people’s rights

- is not a sufficient condition for being able to speak of a decent society or organization that promotes the well-being of all its participants (Margalit 1996, 45).
- 9 Throughout its history, Athens has had multiple forms of government, including tyranny, oligarchy and democracy. It was, in fact, during a democratic period that Socrates received the death penalty after a court established that he rejected the gods and spoiled the youth (Taylor 1998, 20). Socrates was such strong believer in the democratic form of government that he accepted the outcome of his trial.
  - 10 According to Hannah Arendt, in the essay collection *Politiek in Donkere Tijden. Over vrijheid en vriendschap*, Socrates tried to turn the citizens of Athens into a community of friends. This was understandable, given that city life at that time was poisoned by constant strife and struggle for power (Arendt 1999, 126–27).
  - 11 According to Socrates, all wisdom starts with self-knowledge. In his quests for wisdom he, therefore, limited himself to posing critical questions, without drawing conclusions. Specific forms of conversation that pivot on posing questions and conducting a dialog are also called Socratic dialogs. They are marked by a horizontal dimension, whereby there is no one leading or guiding the interactions; at most, one individual provides support in conducting the dialog (Kessels 2006).
  - 12 That something is discussed or shared with one or more friends is enough. Networks (communities) of friends, after all, have all sorts of follow-up conversations on common interests, thereby minutes or prior agreements are unnecessary.
  - 13 Kunneman describes the colonization of the social world as a process whereby the system dominates our social world. In his later work, Kunneman specifically addresses the colonization of professional action by all sorts of control measures and bureaucratic processes in organizations that mainly aim for efficiency and profit (Kunneman 2006, 20–22).
  - 14 In contrast to what Plato claims in *Republic*, Aristotle argues that friendships, rather than justification mechanisms such as laws and rules, bind and shape communities (Arendt 1999, 127–28).
  - 15 This passage is inspired by a quotation from Aristotle: “It is worse to steal money from a friend than from a fellow citizen.” See the volume on *Vriendschap en Liefde* (Verkuijlen et al 2002).
  - 16 Aristotle, in his *Ethica*, offers a detailed explanation of the concept of friendship. He establishes a link between friendship and the community, modeled on the city-state of Athens (Aristotle 1999, 239–298). See also Appendix 1, fig. A, the triangle on friendship by Aristotle.
  - 17 Aristotle draws a direct link between friendship, the community and justice. In his view, a just community cannot exist without solidarity based on love and affection (Aristotle 1999, 241).
  - 18 Cf. *Politiek in donkere tijden* (Arendt 1999, 128–29).
  - 19 In Greek philosophy and Christian spirituality, virtues should help people grow towards their image as originally intended by God in his creation. Pursuing virtues is a way of life that you can develop. The concept of virtues starts from an optimistic view of man. From this angle, we are not merely at the mercy of our weaknesses, such as strictly living for pleasure and use, but we can improve ourselves and learn virtues. Virtues such as friendship, then, bring us closer to our origin and our goal (Grün 2005).
  - 20 We owe the art of learning to reflect and using reason to address particular problems or to explore issues to Socrates and Plato (Hare 2004, 113). We can see the world as an appearance of things, but

also as a shadow of a divine, unchanging eternal world. The search for universal truths (wisdom) behind the world of things is also called Plato's theory of Ideas (Bor et al 2003, 57–59).

- 21 Giorgio Agamben introduces his book *Homo sacer* with a description of the three layers: The consuming, the organizing, the contemplative life. This study is about the growing biopolitical power of governments and organizations, whereby all kinds of systems exert huge influence on our biological and physical existence, and thus, on the behavior of citizens in modern society.
- 22 Plato submits that supreme leaders, at the highest level of “ruler,” should have the qualities of both kings and philosophers. A good king stands above consumptive and political life. Rather than his own interests, he will put those of his subjects center-stage. The concerns of craftspeople and leaders are geared to transitory affairs, but those of the philosopher to the universal and the eternal. Organizations have to be led to this higher world of ideas to be in service of the good life (Arendt 1999, 120–122). In this era, inspiring leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa, and Mahatma Gandhi are philosopher-kings.
- 23 Unfortunately, dictators are also aware of the power of leadership driven by values. We can unmask them, however, because they rely on values that include and exclude people. Universal, divine values comprise love and care for all people and living beings and, thus, exclude no one. In response to this text, Elena Cavagnaro, professor at Stenden University, introduced the concept of “care for all,” a standard which values of the good life should meet.
- 24 The question of the good life has been raised by philosophers ever since Socrates. Modern organizations concentrate in particular on questions about our duties and rights (what is the right thing to do), as a result of which there is less attention to values and virtues (what is a good thing to do.) However, the question of which values we want to put center-stage in organizations seems to be gaining ground (Van Hees et al 2003.) This growing attention to values in determining organization strategies is evident in, among other things, issues like inspiring leadership and socially responsible and sustainable entrepreneurship. An organization's strategy, then, should be more about the values that drive us, who we want to be and how we can mean something to others (Ten Bos 2001). In this sense, organizations could be in service to the good life more.
- 25 Kunneman speaks of “slow questions” when they are about existential issues such as birth, suffering, mortality and meaning. These issues cannot be dealt with only rationally, but call for exchange of experiences, emotions and personal stories. Rather than (quick) rational solutions, these issues call for interpretation and meaning (Kunneman 2006, 15–16).

### **The professional pride of Jan Menge: Advising people by listening and bringing them together**

- 1 *Evidence-based practice* originates in medicine: *evidence-based medicine*. This term was introduced in the welfare sector in the 1990s. Whereas in the past people relied on experience, tradition and authority, nowadays the medical practitioner bases as much as possible on the results of scientific research. Something that is evidence-based is tested against the best research available in scientific literature and based on the best available information on efficiency and effectiveness.

### Always adding a little extra does not help, searching for new pathways does

- 1 Status hierarchy: part of the organization culture which indicates the extent to which it is important within an organization to pay attention to behaviors that stem from the position of a person within the organization.
- 2 A.M. Weimar, MA “Rechters, raadsheren en prestatiegerichte bekostiging”, *Trema*, vol. 32 (2008), no. 9.
- 3 Prisma, *Stemmingswisselingen, Medewerkerswaarderingsonderzoeken van de gerechten in de jaren 2003–2005*, August 2006.
- 4 Sources for this and the following paragraph: Dr. ir. A.G.M. van Asseldonk, *Innovaties en nieuwe coalities in Innovaties en nieuwe coalities op het breukvlak van de 21<sup>e</sup> eeuw*, SMO-notitie June 2000; dr. G.A.C. Smid and Dr. G.F. Bernaert, “Maakbaarheid: macht en leren”, *Management and Organization*, vol. 2008, no. 3/4.
- 5 C. Argyris, “Double Loop Learning and Organizational Change. Facilitating Organizational Change, in: J.J. Boonstra (eds.), *Dynamics of organizational change and learning*, Chicester: Wiley 2004; C. Argyris, *on Organizational Learning*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell 1992.
- 6 Preliminary Memorandum Multi-year forecast *Rechtspraak*, 27 October 2008.
- 7 *Overheidsmanagement*, vol. 2008, no. 7/8.
- 8 Gary Hamel en Bill Breen, *The end of management as we know it*, Amsterdam: Business Contact 2008, incl. pp. 119–120.
- 9 C. Argyris, see note 5.
- 10 K.M. Bijlsma-Frankema, S.B. Sitkin en A. Weibel, *Development and Repair of Distrust between Judges and Administrators in a Court of Law*, Paper presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, August, 2007.

### Work like any other?

- 1 <http://www.beroepseer.nl/en/about-us/missie>
- 2 Geert Mak is a Dutch journalist and a non-fiction writer in the field of history. His ten books about Amsterdam, the Netherlands and Europe have earned him great popularity. His best-known work, *In Europe*, a combination of a travelogue through the continent of Europe and a history of the 20th century, has appeared in over a dozen languages. Geert Mak participates actively in Dutch public debate, as a staunch defender of the values of an open and tolerant society.
- 3 Van den Brink et.al. 2005, 95.
- 4 Smulders, P.G.W., F. Andries and F. Otten 2001.
- 5 Bossche et.al. 2008.
- 6 The slicing up of control loops and the imposing of heavy performance targets on the resulting fragments, as is the practice with large financial firms, is an underexposed cause of the current credit crisis. This method of control always leads to sub-optimalization and sometimes to disasters.
- 7 The division of thinking and doing in Taylorism can now be described more specifically. It is the separating of the evaluative control loop from the implementation control loop.

- 8 This form of autonomy possibly explains extreme quality differences – the history teacher you remember your entire life at the expense of the many who made no impression at all.
- 9 In *Naar een toekomst die werkt* (2008), by the Commissie Arbeidsparticipatie [Commission of Labor Participation] (the ‘Commissie-Bakker’), a shortage of 375,000 people is predicted for the labor market in 2015. In the healthcare sector, half a million more people will be needed through 2020. Other sectors in public service will also be forced to deal with major shortages. If the policy remains unchanged, this will be at the expense of the quality and quantity of public services. The current economic crisis will perhaps cause temporary solace, but the shortage is structural.
- 10 For that matter, there are a lot of snags in comparing productivity in the free-market and public service sectors, including that, in the public sector, changes in the quality of the service provided are generally not counted.
- 11 Targets are the operationalization of objectives and, within that operationalization process, there is a strong reduction in complexity. Targets are quantitative and unequivocal, objectives are qualitative and ambiguous. Targets are, in a specific and, therefore, debatable manner, “frozen” objectives.
- 12 The continuous shuttling between the task and the function of the task.
- 13 Moreover, managers and professionals are, by the way, certainly not always opponents. Many managers are also suffering under the current systems of performance assessments and target steering and are searching for alternatives.
- 14 It is still about counting and recounting, as Jaco van Hoorn, district chief of police for Hollands Midden, puts it. See the interview with him in this book on pp. 231

### **Professional pride as a program. The case for a neo-republican administrative philosophy**

- 1 Appeared in *Minerva* 1 (1962), 54–74. Michael Polanyi is the “inventor” of the concept of “tacit knowledge,” the unconscious knowledge that plays such an important role for professionals. One of his important books is *Personal Knowledge, Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, London, Routledge & Keegan Paul 1958.
- 2 Cf, among others, Philip Pettit, *Republicanism. A Theory of Freedom and Government*. According to Pettit, one of the essential points of republican thinking is that freedom can be defined as not being humiliated, or not being able to be humiliated. He states that by others freedom is defined as not having to be subject to the arbitrariness of other people. Pettit writes, “There is a strong and traditional association between being free and not being dominated or subjugated by anyone: not being under the yoke of another’s power, not being defenselessly susceptible to interference by another. The opposite of the liber, or free, person, in Roman, republican usage was the servus, or slave, and up to at least the beginning of the last century, the dominant connotation of freedom, emphasized in the long republican tradition, was not having to live in servitude to another: not being subject to the arbitrary power of another. The author of the eighteenth-century tract *Cato’s Letters* expressed the point succinctly: ‘Liberty is, to live upon one’s own Terms; Slavery is, to live at the mere Mercy of another.’” See “Freedom as Antipower,” *Ethics* 106 (April 1996), 576–604 (p. 576). For Pettit, this republican philosophy is closely related to an “economics of esteem” which he developed in the book that

- he wrote with Geoffrey Brennan, *The Economy of Esteem. An Essay on Civil and Political Society*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2004.
- 3 In the Netherlands, a detailed case was made as early as 1992 for a neo-republican form of citizenship, which was seen as more suited to today's world. See the report by the WRR (the Scientific Council for Government Policy), *Eigentijds burgerschap*. WRR publication produced by H.R. van Gunsteren, The Hague, Sdu.
  - 4 The Rhineland way of thinking was recently presented by Jaap Peters and Mathieu Weggeman in their inviting *Rijnland boekje. Principes en inzichten van het Rijnland-model*, Amsterdam, Business Contact 2009.
  - 5 Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, New Haven, Yale University Press 2008.
  - 6 The close relationship between self-respect and recognition has become an increasingly important issue in political and social philosophy in recent decades. The initial impetus for this was Axel Honneth's *The Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, Cambridge, Polity Press 1995. See the excellent collection on Honneth's thinking in *Recognition and Power*, Bert van den Brink and David Owen (eds.), New York, Cambridge University Press 2007. See, too, among others, Rainer Forst, *Contexts of Justice. Political Philosophy beyond Liberalism and Communitarianism*, Berkeley, University of California Press 1994, and Paul Ricoeur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance. Trois études*, Paris, Stock 2004.
  - 7 William Edwards Deming, 1900-1993, American statistician and quality-control expert, born in Sioux City, Iowa. Deming used statistics to examine industrial production processes for flaws and believed that improving product quality depended on increased management-labor cooperation as well as improved design and production processes. He greatly influenced Japanese industry as it rebuilt in the years after World War II and was often critical of U.S. corporate management.
  - 8 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, revised edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press 1999, 374, 379.
  - 9 Sennett, in his book *Respect in a World of Inequality* New York/London 2003: "The development of any talent involves an element of craft, of doing something well for its own sake, and it is this craft element which provides the individual with an inner sense of self-respect." And, "a profound pleasure in and for itself, and a sense of self-worth which didn't depend on others," (pp. 13-14).
  - 10 Sennett, in his book *The Culture of the New Capitalism* New Haven/London 2006: "An embracing definition of craftsmanship would be: doing something well for its own sake. Self-discipline and self-criticism adhere in all domains of craftsmanship; standards matter, and the pursuit of quality ideally becomes an end in itself." (p. 104).
  - 11 Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2008 (pp. 294-5)).
  - 12 Cf. Tara Smith, "The practice of pride," in Clifford Williams (eds.), *Personal Virtues. Introductory Essays*, Basingstoke, Palgrave 2005, 93: "You can only take pride in what is, in some sense, yours."
  - 13 These norms can be found in the Nationale Ombudsman's "Behoorlijkheidswijzer." See P. Langbroek and P. Rijpkema, *Ombudsprudentie. Over de behoorlijkheidsnorm en zijn toepassing*, The Hague, Boom Juridische uitgevers 2004.
  - 14 See his excellent book, *Managers en professionals. Over management als probleem en als oplossing*, The Hague, Sdu 2008.



- 15 Marc Chavannes, "Het verschil tussen Meavita en Buurtzorg – waarde en waarden," in *NRC Handelsblad*, 13 February 2009.
- 16 See S. R. Epstein and Maarten Prak, *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400–1800*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2008; Maarten Prak et al, *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries. Work, Power, and Representation*, Hampshire, Ashgate 2006. The presence of Maarten Prak (Utrecht University) means that we in the Netherlands have access to one of the most important researchers of the revisionist school. His internationally respected historical research shows that the dull and negative image of the guilds is unjustified.



## About the Editors

Thijs Jansen is senior researcher at the School of Politics and Public Administration of the University of Tilburg. He was trained in literary theory (Utrecht University). He is co-founder and board member of the *Stichting Beroepseer* [Professional Honor Foundation] ([www.beroepseer.nl](http://www.beroepseer.nl)). The central question that this foundation has been trying to push unto the social and political agenda since 2006 is: How can we regain professional pride and with that improve the quality of our work? This initiative was inspired on the book *BeroepsZeer, waarom Nederland niet goed werkt*. This successful book on professional discontent was edited by Jansen together with Gabriël van den Brink and Dorien Pessers and appeared June 2005 (Boom Publishers, four editions). He has edited many books on burning political and social questions in recent years. Among other titles he co-edited *Even geen Den Haag Vandaag Naar een Nederlandse civiele journalistiek* (Sdu, The Hague 2001) on civic journalism together with Nico Drok; he co-edited *Zonder geloof geen democratie* (Boom Publishers, Amsterdam 2006) about faith and democratic politics together with Erik Borgman and Gabriël van den Brink; and he co-edited *Burgers and barbaren. Over oorlog tussen recht en macht* (Boom Publishers, Amsterdam 2007) on armed conflict and international law together with Janne Nijman and Jan Willem Sap.

Gabriël van den Brink was educated as a philosopher but he switched to historical research. His main area of research is the process of modernization. After finishing his dissertation in 1995, he concentrated on problems of Dutch society. He has published more than 15 books about different aspects of Dutch social life, among others: *Mondiger of moeilijker. Een studie naar politieke habitus van hedendaagse burgers* (2002), *Schets van een beschavingsoffensief. Over normen, normaliteit en normalisatie in Nederland* (2004), *Culturele contrasten. Het verhaal van de migranten in Rotterdam* (2006) and *Moderniteit als opgave. Een antwoord aan relativisme en conservatisme* (2007). In 2006 he was appointed as a full professor in Social Administration at the University of Tilburg. In addition to this function, he is lecturer in *Authority and Ethics* at the Dutch Police Academy.

Jos Kole holds a doctorate in ethics and is specialized in (academic) research into professional ethics and the provision of ethical advice to professional associations. He participated as a postdoctoral researcher in the NWO project in Ethics, Research & Public Poli-

cy, *The Good Professional*, at the vU Amsterdam, Faculty of Psychology and Education and is currently senior research fellow ethics at the Ethics Institute of Utrecht University. Among his publications in professional ethics are several volumes in Dutch, e.g. *Werkzame idealen. Ethische reflecties op professionaliteit* (Van Gorcum, Assen 2007) en *Code en karakter. Beroepsethiek in onderwijs, jeugdzorg en recht*. (SWP, Amsterdam 2009). Both books were co-edited with Doret de Ruyter. Furthermore he has published (with Doret de Ruyter) on professional ethics in international scientific journals

In **Professional Pride – A powerful force**, the authors trace a growing sense of professional pride among police officers, teachers, judges, doctors, nurses, social workers and other professionals. This book is aimed at supporting and directing this development. It contains a wealth of positive insights, strong opinions, sound research and true stories about people working in the Netherlands and elsewhere. It is a must for professionals, managers, organizational experts and students.

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«In **Professional Pride – A Powerful Force**, Thijs Jansen, Gabriël van den Brink and Jos Kole offer an insightful treatment on the significance of professional pride. They not only broaden and enrich the discussion on managing professionals, but they rewrite the rules. Everyone working in a professional organization should be aware that nothing is more conducive to professionalism than simply relying on professionals and their professional pride. This insight renders many management tools and models superfluous and requires a completely different mindset of those who hold management positions within professionals' organizations.»

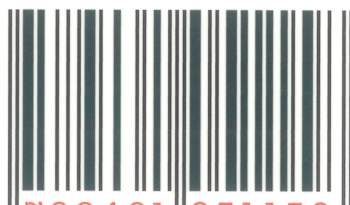
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