Value Divergence

How Professionals, Managers, and Policy Makers Perceive Public Values and Street-Level Craftsmanship in the Prison Sector

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door

Hester Luna Paanakker

geboren te ‘s-Hertogenbosch

promotoren: prof.dr. L.W.J.C. Huberts
prof.dr. G. de Graaf

"*And so these men of Indostan*
Disputed loud and long
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong
Though each was partly in the right
And all were in the wrong!"

[...]

"The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!"

John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887), The Blind Men and The Elephant

I dedicate this book to my father, dr. Johannes Everardus Paanakker

Reading committee: prof.dr. Willem Trommel (Vrije Universiteit, the Netherlands)
prof.dr. Barry Bozeman (Arizona State University, USA)
prof.dr. Tina Nabatchi (Syracuse University, USA)
prof.dr. Zeger van der Wal (Leiden University, the Netherlands)
prof.dr. Trui Steen (KU Leuven, Belgium)

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nijmegen, 18 August 2020

In addition to the valuable people I acknowledge below, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the reading committee of this thesis for their time and willingness to read and evaluate my work, for their constructive feedback, and for being leading examples of good scholarship in the field of values, governance, and public management themselves: prof.dr. Willem Trommel (Vrije Universiteit, the Netherlands), prof.dr. Barry Bozeman (Arizona State University, USA), prof.dr. Tina Nabatchi (Syracuse University, USA), prof.dr. Zeger van der Wal (Leiden University, the Netherlands), and prof.dr. Trui Steen (KU Leuven, Belgium).

Nijmegen, 18 May 2020

So here I am, writing the preface and acknowledgements to my thesis at eight in the evening with my four-year-old next to me on the couch, because she really wanted to go camping (in the living room) and it is not camping if you cannot stay up late, she assures me. It is illustrative of the slightly chaotic last couple of weeks of finalizing this thesis. Of course I anticipated it to be stressful, I saw it many times with many of my friends and colleagues (and yes, this covers as long a period as it sounds). But little did I know I would be writing my final chapters amidst a global pandemic that turned society upside down, combining working at home with remote teaching and the care of three little girls who no longer went to day care, school, on playdates, or to their grandparents. Let's just say it was an excellent opportunity to further improve my multitasking skills.

I want to thank quite a few people for different reasons. First, I want to acknowledge Ron Scherf (Custodial Institutions Agency), Toon Molleman (at that time employed at the Research and Documentation Centre, but later on also as senior policy advisor at the Custodial Institutions Agency, and, as this goes with careers that move too quickly to keep up with, managing director of different prisons) and Arie van den Hurk (Custodial Institutions Agency) –all at the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security- for helping me to obtain access to and knowledge of the prison sector in the Netherlands, and as such for their role in shaping the contours of this PhD research. Special thanks also go to the prison officers, prison managers and policy makers that shared their stories with me. Thank you for letting me access your world and finding the time even if

it was hard. Thank you for showing me the ins and outs of prison life and the true nature of frontline craftsmanship.

Next, I want to thank my supervisors and dear colleagues Leo Huberts and Gjalt de Graaf. For letting me pursue my own direction, for listening to my ideas, for their advice, but also for showing me the beauty of academic life. Leo, thank you for the wonderful trips to conferences in familiar and not so familiar places, for the good company and leadership in all those years, for the fantastic co-teaching, and for the ever sincere interest in how I was doing as a colleague but also as a person. You definitely shaped me as an academic and I am very proud to be a descendant of the "Leo-school." It has been my honor working with you. Thank you for all you have taught me about networking, multilevel thinking, what not to say to a waiter when you really like their pasta, work as a hobby (although I am not sure if I fully went along on that one) and most of all, for stressing the importance of keeping one's (academic *and* non-academic) priorities straight. Gjalt, thank you for always believing in my academic path and for patiently waiting for me to discover it myself, for making commuting from Nijmegen to Amsterdam so much more enjoyable, for inciting my love of public values research, for your humor and self-irony, for the good times with your great family, and for your engagement, concern and support. It is for a reason that you are the person I go to when I get caught up in my own thinking, or when I need a nice cup of tea in the best city of the… I was going to say country, but perhaps we should not be too modest about this…. I will really have to start buying decaf now to make your trips to the Heiweg a more welcoming and rewarding experience.

In the wonderful eleven years I worked at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, a large share of which was devoted to my part time PhD research, I could not have done without the support and friendship of a couple of people. In particular, I want to thank Leonie Heres for being such an awesome friend and partner-in-crime (in dancing, running, kids talk, working late nights in dark VU buildings). Thank you for letting me share my joys and sorrow with you. And I want to thank Karin Lasthuizen for her sharp mind and warm hearth. Without you, Karin, I would never have been able to start this PhD research in the first place. Thank you for introducing me to some many good people and good habits, such as how to "woman up" in the professional field, always keeping an eye out for new talent and opportunities, and practicing pragmatic scholarship. You are such a binding factor in where I have come from and what I have accomplished, that I owe you big time. Zeger, Judith, Debby, Anneke, Eelco, Ronald, Jaap, Willem-Jan, to give only a few examples: all of you made my time at the VU worthwhile.

By now I have moved to another university, from the VU to the RU, from the concrete colossus in Amsterdam that will always remain my academic “home” to the green campus in my hometown Nijmegen. Here, I would like to express a word of thanks to my new colleagues for making me feel welcome, for putting up with my severe case of “baby brains” (which apparently is the term for pregnancy dementia in English) during the first few months of my appointment, and for granting me the time to finish my dissertation!

In addition, I am very grateful for the support I received from people who live afar, but feel so close. In the UK, Kay Caldwell, for her fantastic language editing, with a personal touch. Ozzie Adam Masters for always making me laugh, and Anna Simonati (Italy), Lijing Yang (China) and Anne-Marie Reynaers (Spain) for their friendship and cheerful pep talks. Thank you for the fun and fruitful collaborations, PhD related and beyond.

And then there are the most important people. My sweet, handsome, funny, supportive partner Antony Schraven, and my sunshine girls Lune (4 years old, but almost 5), Soof (just turned 3, but wishing it had been 4), and Fehla (10 months old, perfectly satisfied with her age, except for the semi-ban on sweets). I do not know where to start thanking you. The list is endless. I am fully aware this dissertation is as much a product of your support as it is a product of my effort. Thank you for being the loves of my life, for your cheerfulness, your jokes and laughter, for the little adventures we create together, and for always being there for me. Liefje, thank you for putting up with all the hours I put in to finish this dissertation. I fully intend to make the most of my payback time! The same goes for my dear parents, my wonderful sister, and my precious friends. I love you all very, very much.

So now comes the time to fully return to my family, to feet in the grass, endless dancing, singing and playing with my wonderful three girls, and time for everything (and everyone) put on hold during these last weeks (or longer) of finalizing my thesis. I am looking forward to it. A wise man once told me life is all about priorities, and a wise woman that responsible scholarship includes standing your ground to a poor work life balance. As scholars of management, leadership and good governance, we should practice what we preach. I intend to take their advice to heart.

Before she curled up in her festively decorated tipi, my beloved four-year-old suggested I type the following to end my dissertation with: “And then came the prettiest elephant.” I could not think of a better ending.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"*It is not about numbers, no, it is about persons. How do we interact with the crooks? The foundation of the prison is still the crook, and we are shifting away from that somewhat: it is becoming a side-issue, so it seems*." (Quote from prison officer 4)

1.1 Introducing the Topic: Values, Craft, and Convergence

The lawyer does his job well when he wins cases for his clients. The telemarketer when he sells the company's products. The research & development department of a pharmaceutical concern if they expand into new markets. The plumber when the leakage is fixed. And the heart surgeon when the patient's by-pass succeeds. One may argue this covers values such as persuasive power, profitability, innovativeness, technical expertise, and diligence. But when does a public official working in public service delivery deliver good work? In the academic field of public administration, scholarly work on public values tends to focus on values as the abstract and generic key principles of good governance, rather than on what characterizes the application of skills, knowledge, and practices that define the public craft.

This concerns a different object of value analysis, and supplements academic work that measures values with respect to different areas: organizational principles or person – organization "fit" (Kristof, 1996; Moyson, Raaphorst, Groeneveld, & Van de Walle, 2018; Paarlberg & Perry, 2007), public service motivation (Bozeman & Su, 2015; Perry, Hondeghem, & Wise, 2010; Steen & Rutgers, 2011; Wright, 2007), modes of governance (L. B. Andersen, Jørgensen, Kjeldsen, Pedersen, & Vrangbæk, 2012; Nabatchi, 2018; Reynaers, 2014b), public participation and policy conflict (Nabatchi, 2012), or value conflict in public governance (De Graaf, Huberts, & Smulders, 2016; De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015; Jaspers & Steen, 2019; Oldenhof, Postma, & Putters, 2014; D. Thacher & M. Rein, 2004), to give only a few examples. Hence, this thesis focuses specifically on the role of values and value convergence in the context of the craft practiced at the frontline, in the specific context of the Dutch prison sector. Is there a shared perception and common consideration of these values? And does it matter if there is, or is not? These are the central questions of this thesis.

The two main contributions that the thesis makes are the examination of value convergence, and the examination of values in terms of (street-level) craft. I start with the latter. Recent studies on street-level craftsmanship (Paanakker, 2019, 2020; Van Putten, 2020; Van Steden, 2020) show how craftsmanship offers a new narrative for bringing to the surface the values that matter to frontline officials in street-level practice. Alluding to "the principles and ethics of 'good work', a virtuous way of fabricating or doing things" (Van Steden, 2020, p. 6), street-level craft constitutes the concrete skills, knowledge, and practices that professionals exercise in their everyday public service delivery (Paanakker, 2019, 2020). Unlike the often generic nature of public values that are presumed to be applicable to all public professionals in the public sector, a values approach to frontline craft is descriptive of the hands-on work delivered at street level. In unraveling how values relate to and are descriptive of the application of concrete skills, knowledge, and practices in specific street-level work contexts, they are seen to comprise the aspirational principles that direct "good" work.

This thesis thus defines values as the key qualities that are esteemed in the context of, and toward the object of, public professionals' street-level work. As such, viewing values from the perspective of "craft" responds to the call to study values contextually, as values only acquire meaning in relation to the specific context they are found in (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012; Rutgers, 2008; West & Davis, 2011) and because "on an aggregate level, [values work] along the lines of the confined and decisive professional logics of bounded policy domains" (Paanakker & Reynaers, 2020, p. 8). Because values attain their actual significance through the way they are interpreted and negotiated "on the ground," a bottom-up approach to how they apply to the skills, knowledge, and practices of craftsmanship moves public values research forward. It is an approach that is particularly well suited to examining how actors from policy level down to implementation level see the salience and centrality of public values in the work at street-level.

The second main contribution of the thesis lies in putting value convergence center stage. As the interviewee quote in the beginning of this introduction suggests, pinpointing the values that define craftsmanship is not straightforward and can be subject to negotiation. Value approaches may differ between policy level and implementation level, between organizational managers and street-level professionals, or even within more homogeneous groups, between public officials of the same position. As of yet, value convergence is quite a blind spot in public values research.

First, the focus on value convergence in this thesis concerns the question of how, in the specific context of street-level penal craftsmanship, the value approaches of street-level workers compare to each other, and how they compare with the value approaches of their immediate superiors, senior managers, and officials at policy making level. Do they all consider the frontline craft alike?

As the chapters in this thesis will explain, value convergence is conceptualized as "the degree to which, throughout the professional domain, public values are similarly or differently identified, understood, and prioritized or enacted in practice." This includes both espoused values (how values are formulated as ideal and aspirational principles) and enacted values (how values are emphasized in actual practice) (Schein, 2004; Van der Wal, 2008). When taking into account the different public sector levels that the thesis compares, and the spectrum of convergence implied in this definition, it follows that *value convergence* refers to the perceived similarity of value approaches held by policy advisors, organizational managers and street-level professionals in the sector, whereas *value divergence* refers to the perceived misfit or incongruence between the value approaches of policy advisors, organizational mangers, and street-level professionals in the sector.

Although this explores a new field of public values research, we may find several leads from related fields of study that hint upon value convergence or divergence. These insights, however, do not provide an unambiguous image. For instance, social learning and organizational socialization theory suggests that, at organizational level, employees, especially in smaller sub-groups, are socialized into organizational group norms and values (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Kjeldsen, 2014; Kohlberg, 1969; Moyson et al., 2018; Paarlberg & Perry, 2007). This suggests a high level of value convergence within organizations, at least on broader organizational values, which do not necessarily equate to craft in public service delivery. In the public sector, strong socialization is presumed also to apply to the context of public professions that are guided by strong professional principles and a dominant common professional logic (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012; L. B. Andersen & Pedersen, 2012; Freidson, 2001; Teodoro, 2014). This would suggest a potentially high level of value convergence, not necessarily within the organization but inter-organizationally between street-level workers that have the same profession. Indeed, Van Steden, Van der Wal, and Lasthuizen (2015) found that employees in street-level policing convergently identified and comprehended values in the professional context of their public service delivery, indicating street-level officials may have rather homogenous value preferences.

The opposite argument of value divergence rather than convergence can also be made. The physical or ideological distance between policy development and execution (Gofen, 2013; Lipsky, 1980; Maroulis & Wilensky, 2014; Tummers, 2011) may increase the likelihood of value divergence along the lines of the policy sector's hierarchy. Literature on role differences stresses how vast and stark lines are drawn between the tasks, logics, responsibilities, and norms of managers and street-level professionals working at different organizational or public sector levels (Hanson, 1996; Tummers, Vermeeren, Steijn, & Bekkers, 2012; Van Bockel & Noordegraaf, 2006). These role differences may also extend to value differences between these different levels (i.e. value divergence), leaving us with two plausible yet very contradictory sets of expectations.

Although few studies compare how different organizational levels see or enact public values, some public value studies do indicate that the institutional role of the actor involved plays a role in public value enactment (see the work of Andersen et al. 2012 on managers of lower-level, service providing organizations and higher-level authorities), or in the perception of public value conflicts: for instance, actors at policy formulation level perceiving more conflicts than actors at policy execution level (De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015), or, contrary to that, middle managers seeing more conflict and more serious conflict than street-level workers (Oldenhof et al., 2014). It remains unclear whether there is value convergence or divergence within and between such public sector levels, how this relates to perceptions of public craft at the frontline, and, moreover, how this impacts public service delivery.

The latter question of effects on public service delivery constitutes the final focus of this thesis. It concerns the "so what?" question: does it matter if there is convergence in value approaches towards craft or not? It is evident that organizations often strive for value convergence and seek to actively socialize organizational members into their value system (Moyson et al., 2018) because of its ascribed positive effects. They seek to align employees' values with the "key values related to acceptable behavior within the organization and the organization's strategic direction […], and, more important, that they share the espoused values of organizational leaders" (Paarlberg & Perry, 2007, p. 388). Although this top-down approach to the values of the organization differs from the bottom-up approach to the values of the street-level craft, it is clear that values importantly impact behaviors and outputs in administrative practice. As "predetermined script[s] of acceptable behavior" (Paarlberg & Perry, 2007, p. 389), values are believed to "have influential consequences in that they form our perceptions of reality, give

identity to individuals as well as organizations, and guide behavior" (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012, p. 716).

Findings from the disciplines of psychology and organizational science point at the potentially significant effect of (the lack of) value convergence. Studies of organizational theory demonstrate that value congruence on personal and organizational values (rather than public values) (Kristof, 1996) positively affects, for instance, moral efficacy and moral voice within organizations (Lee, Choi, Youn, & Chun, 2017), or job satisfaction, organizational identification and trust, and intent to stay in the organization (Edwards & Cable, 2009). By contrast, value incongruence between the individual and the organization causes employees to experience stress, discomfort, and a range of negative work attitudes and behaviors, including higher turnover within the organization, and lower job satisfaction, lower engagement and lower productivity for the employee (Vogel, Rodell, & Lynch, 2016). Although this thesis focuses on a different type of values and a different level of analysis than the studies quoted above, similar effects may result from value convergence – and, as in the case of value divergence, similar pathologies – in public sector service delivery.

In public service delivery, there is pressing need to look at value convergence with respect to craft and its effects. The frontline craft is increasingly put under pressure. Extensive research shows how street-level workers cope with excessive reforms, managerial logics, neoliberalist strategies, and performance rhetoric that hamper street-level practices (Connell, Fawcett, & Meagher, 2009; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; Trommel, 2018; Tummers, Bekkers, Vink, & Musheno, 2015; Van de Walle, 2006; Wynen, Verhoest, & Kleizen, 2019), but not how this relates to values and (the lack of) value convergence, and not how street-level workers deal with the effects that value divergence has on implementation level at the frontline. This thesis seeks to contribute to filling those gaps.

1.2 Research Aims and Questions

The aim of the research is threefold. First, it sets out to establish how values of street-level craftsmanship, and their facilitation in administrative practice, are understood by street-level officials. Second, the study aims to identify the extent of convergence or divergence in the value approaches to street-level craftsmanship of operational staff and their superiors (both managers and policy developers). Third, it takes into account the effects of such value convergence or divergence on public service delivery at street-level. These three aims unite in the overarching

aim to advance scholarly as well as practitioner knowledge in the field of public values in the frontline craft. The research deconstructs abstract notions of "good public service delivery" and "co-existing and competing public governance values" into real life phenomena and seeks to provide insight into the practical value and workings of these notions. With the prison sector in the Netherlands as its case study, the following central question guides the research:

> *How convergent are public officials' value approaches toward street-level craft in the Dutch prison sector, and in what way does value convergence or divergence affect administrative practice?*

The three aims reflected in the main research question are represented by three sub-questions, that each cover a specific subset of the data and comprise the three parts the thesis consists of.

- **Research question 1**: What do values of public craftsmanship constitute, both in terms of ideals and in terms of their institutional facilitation, in the administrative practice of the frontline, and to what degree are those views convergent among prison officers?
- **Research question 2**: To what degree are prison officers' views on street-level craftsmanship convergent with the views on street-level craftsmanship of prison middle management, prison management, and penal policy officials, and what explains their mutual perception?
- **Research question 3:** How and to what degree does value convergence between prison officers and their superiors at middle, senior, and policy management level affect public service delivery at the frontline?

The three research questions structure the data collection and data analysis and correspond to different sections of the thesis that together cover a full examination of the central question. *Part 1* addresses the first research question and covers Chapters 2 and 3. It examines which values of the street-level craft can be identified among street-level workers in the prison sector, and contrasts street-level ideals of craftsmanship (by means of prison officers' ideal-type values) with the institutional facilitation of those values (by means of the prison officers' perception of there being room for craftsmanship in practice). Using a value lens, this first part aims to establish what street-level craftsmanship, and its impairment in practice, means to prison officers, and is about value convergence within the street-level layer of prison officers.

Part 2 compares prison officers' value approaches to the value approaches of the staff levels above them. This addresses the second research question, and is covered by Chapters 4 and 5.

Do policy makers, higher management, and lower management consider craftsmanship at street level in the same way as their street-level colleagues? What mutual perception do the groups have of each other? What does each think "doing the job of prison officer well," i.e. craftsmanship, means to the other group? Is there convergence in mutual (stereotype) views or not, and what explains this value (in)congruence? Linking this back to the broader scholarly debate on the role and meaning of values in public governance, what do these insights teach us about value contextuality? In this part, the value convergence between different levels of prison officials is examined.

Part 3 scrutinizes the effects of value convergence (or divergence) on policy practice. It discusses the third research question and puts the question of how it benefits or thwarts frontline public service delivery center stage. This is covered by Chapter 6. What potential problems arise if value orientations vary significantly throughout the organization or sector? For operational staff, for value realization at the frontline, and for frontline craftsmanship? As the first two parts clearly demonstrate the existence of different, or even clashing, value approaches between staff levels, be they perceived or real, part 3 focuses on value divergence rather than convergence and explores the types of pathological effects that value divergence may give rise to at the frontline.

1.3 The Case Study of the Dutch Prison Sector

The research in this thesis is conducted in the prison sector in the Netherlands. The prison sector is harnessed as a uniquely relevant case study setting for studying the topic at hand for three main reasons: the significance of prison management and performance for broader society, the strong presence of multiple co-existing and potentially conflicting values, and the institutionalized hierarchy and stratification in prison system structure and culture.

First, prison management and performance are commonly seen as key indicators of the overall societal performance of governance (Boin, 2001; Molleman, 2014). The way countries treat prisoners, and govern sentencing and imprisonment, play a significant role in their global and societal reputation and status. On the positive side, imprisonment can be a direct tool for combatting crime, in order to protect and advance society. On the negative side, imprisonment can be a deterrent to the preservation of an elite and the oppression of (free) civilians, or a "training school" that produces even smarter and more serious criminals, all to the detriment of society. Coherent and effective realization of incarceration depends heavily on the prison

officers that take care of prisoners and provide everyday public service delivery on the ground. In comparison with many other countries, prison officers in the Netherlands have a great deal of discretionary power, and a wide range of responsibilities (including the roles of mentoring, being a first line of psychological support, and stimulating rehabilitation). This makes them pre-eminent street-level professionals. This will be further elucidated in the upcoming chapters of the thesis. In this introduction, the point I want to make is that the extensive societal effects of incarceration make the way the street-level craft of penal service delivery is viewed and practiced highly relevant to society, and makes the prison sector an exemplary case study of frontline craft.

Second, in the prison sector, the articulation of craft is strongly related to values. The nature of the service delivery and the nature of its beneficiaries (i.e. prisoners) make the prison sector a sector in which good craftsmanship and the realization of public values as vital as it is vulnerable. The existence of multiple co-existing values becomes very apparent in every aspect of prison sector work (Liebling & Arnold, 2004; Liebling, Price, & Shefer, 2010). These complicate an unambiguous realization of frontline craftsmanship. Prison officers must continually combine repressiveness with humanity, trying to strike as good a balance as possible between such essentially different values (Liebling, 2000). Moreover, prison officials are required to display a constant and relatively large adaptive capacity. This holds for policy actors and correctional managers in responding to unanticipated situations or scandals (for instance prison escapes, riots, inhumane treatment of prisoners, and the concurrent call for immediate adaptation to and monitoring of more humane, or better secured, imprisonment) as well as for street-level workers in coping with the sometimes unpredictable, aggressive, or even violent behavior of prisoners, opening up space for different interpretation of and adherence to the values of penal craftsmanship.

Third, and in contradiction, the prison system and its correctional facilities are also characterized by a strongly protocoled policy and work environment: strict hierarchy and stratification are core characteristics. In the prison system abiding authority is deeply embedded in both its functional structure and its organizational culture. This profoundly layered structure creates a fairly large gap between policy actors and executive actors. Values pertaining to the frontline craft may be differently identified, understood, or prioritized and enacted, depending on whether the public official operates closer to or further away from prisoners. The fact that, despite the highly protocoled environment and an overall command culture, individual prisons are known to develop their own fairly "closed" culture with a strong signature of "the way

things are done around here" (Liebling, 2000) adds another interesting dimension. Clearly, prison management is a significant actor in the value chain, in between policy developers and street level bureaucrats. The friction between top down policy imposition and required room for discretion (both from management and street-level prison officers) introduces an interesting scenario for the examination of convergent or divergent value approaches to street-level craftsmanship and their effects.

Finally, at the time of data collection in 2014 and 2015, the Dutch prison sector was going through a process of wide-ranging organizational reform (with significant cutbacks in personnel and the number of correctional facilities in the country) and the implementation of a new policy paradigm called the Modernization Program (aimed at a culture change in Dutch correctional institutions, emphasizing prisoners' supervision and coaching, embedded in a lifecycle approach to incarceration). This provides a setting of change in which ideas on street-level values and their enactment are challenged and renegotiated (Wright, Christensen, & Isett, 2013; Wynen et al., 2019), bringing the mechanisms of value understandings to the surface (Stewart, 2006). It forces penal officials, from policy development level through organizational management level, to middle management (head of departments) and street level bureaucrats to determine their position on what good work at implementation level looks like. As the role of values in shaping views on the frontline craft becomes particularly visible, it makes this a case study of specific relevance.

1.4 Methods

The data for this thesis is collected using a case study design in the prison sector in the Netherlands. The qualitative data collection consists of a two-month period of participatory field observation (spread over 75 hours), in two correctional facilities and across eleven different departments, document analysis, and a total of 55 in-depth semi-structured interviews. Data was collected among four different groups of respondents: prison officers (street level workers, N=32), prison middle management (N=9), prison management (the management team of the facility at large, N=8), and policy officers in the ministerial department that constitutes the prison sector's headquarters at the Ministry of Justice and Security(N=6). Using an inductive approach to data interpretation and code creation, data analysis consisted of a systematic content analysis through software-supported (MAXQDA) coding.

The chapters in this thesis each report on a particular subset of the data. Not only in terms of the number and type of respondents (see table 1), but, depending on the research question it addresses, also on a different type of data. For instance, the first two chapters (Chapters 2 and 3) in part 1 build on data on perceptions of ideal values and perceptions of the actual value facilitation of prison officers in the light of craftsmanship. The chapters in part 2 (Chapters 4 and 5) report on data on actual and mutual value perceptions of frontline craft between the different levels of respondents. And in part 3, Chapter 6 analyzes data on a shared vision of values between the different levels of respondents, and its effects with respect to prison service delivery in general. The methods are extensively discussed in the different chapters of this thesis. The full interview protocols are attached in the appendices.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

The three subsidiary parts, i.e. the research questions of this thesis, are addressed in five subsequent chapters. Notwithstanding the fact that the distribution and relatedness of these chapters has been carefully thought out, these chapters have been written as individual articles that have had different publication outlets. Therefore, each chapter has its own theoretical grounding, methodological setup and analytical angle. The reader will notice the chapters align in terms of the overall topic of value convergence and craftsmanship, but might show slight differences in terminology or conceptualization. Sometimes this is for the purpose of the stand-alone character of the chapter, but more often it signals how the chapters build on and enrich each other, and how the line of reasoning has matured over time because of new insights from previous chapters.

Table 1.1 further explains the outline of the thesis and how the chapters relate to the different parts. Per chapter, the table also specifies the data sources used, the methods applied, and the current status of publication. The content of the chapters is explained in more detail below.

Table 1.1. Outline of the thesis chapters

Research Question	Chapter	Data Source	Status
RQ1. What do values of public craftsmanship constitute, both in terms of ideals and in terms of their institutional facilitation, in the	2. Professionalism and public craftsmanship at street level	Field observations, document analysis, and interviews with prison officers	Published as a book chapter in Paanakker, H., A. Masters & L. Huberts (eds.) *Quality*

administrative practice of the frontline, and to what degree are those views convergent among prison officers?		from one correctional facility (*N*=18)	*of Governance: Values and Violations*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan (2020, single authored)
	3. Values of public craftsmanship: The mismatch between street-level ideals and institutional facilitation in the prison sector	Field observations, document analysis, and interviews with prison officers from two correctional facilities (*N*=32)	Published in *The American Review of Public Administration* (2019, single authored)
RQ2. To what degree are prison officers' views on street-level craftsmanship convergent with the views on street-level craftsmanship of prison middle management, prison senior management, and penal policy officials, and what explains their mutual perceptions?	4. Perceptions of the frontline craft: Assessing value convergence between policy makers, managers and street-level professionals in the prison sector	Field observations, document analysis, and interviews with policy advisors, and prison officers, middle managers, and managing directors from two correctional facilities (*N*=55)	Published in *Administration & Society* (2020, single authored)
	5. Value contextuality in public service delivery. An analysis of street-level craftsmanship and public–private partnerships	Literature review and synthesis of the results of previous chapters, supplemented by a case study on public–private partnerships	Published in *Public Integrity* (2020, first author, co-authored with A. Reynaers)
RQ3. How and to what degree does value	6. Public values in the frontline: The	Field observations,	Submitted to a journal (first

convergence between prison officers and their superiors' at middle, senior, and policy management level affect public service delivery at the frontline?	effect of value divergence on public service delivery in a case study of the Dutch prison sector	document analysis, and interviews with policy advisors, and prison officers, middle managers, and managing directors from two correctional facilities (*N*=55)	author, co-authored with G. de Graaf and L. Huberts)

Chapter 2. Professionalism and Public Craftsmanship

The first empirical chapter is exploratory by nature and sets out to perform the groundwork for the drawing up of the framework of values and craft. It was written as a book chapter in the edited volume *Quality of Governance: Values and Violations* (Paanakker, Masters, & Huberts, 2020). It positions the topic of the thesis within the debate on the overall quality of governance by exploring quality in public *professions* by means of public craftsmanship – both theoretically and empirically. As the first chapter of this thesis, it aims to map what it means to be a "good" public administrator according to prison officers themselves. In addressing the question "What value orientations do public professionals have towards public craftsmanship and how convergent are these?" it covers the first half of the first research question of the thesis. Based on the analysis of street-level prison officers within the setting of a single correctional facility (*N*=18), the chapter concludes that the specific work context is paramount in identifying and prioritizing a compact set of public service delivery values. However, prison officers are shown to make their own personal compilations of values when it comes to value enactment in practice. This shows that, in practice, values may be translated to rather different applications of concrete skills, knowledge and practices in order to deliver good work. Or, put differently, translated to rather different ways of good craftsmanship in practice. The results call for a focus on apprehending the meaning of values in specific professional work contexts, and for a move from the study of broad, predefined, and prearranged value sets to concrete articulations of values and the disparate nature of their actual application.

Chapter 3. *Values of Public Craftsmanship: The Mismatch Between Street-Level Ideals and Institutional Facilitation in the Prison Sector*

Chapters 2 and 3 comprise the first part of the thesis. Specifically, Chapter 3 covers the second half of the first research question. Rather than exploring the ideal-type values that prison officers attach to the frontline craft, examined in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 focuses on (the convergence of) prison officers' views on the institutional facilitation of craftsmanship. This allows for the ideal-type characterization of craft (perceptions of ideal values and practices) to be contrasted with the actual room for craftsmanship in, or its compatibility with, street-level practice (perceptions of institutional facilitation): to understand how abstract values acquire practical meaning in specific professional settings, we also need to understand how they are practically facilitated on the shop floor. Now using the data from prison officers from *two* correctional facilities (N =32), the chapter explains how the institutional context of the prison substantially restrains rather than supports the ideals that professionals attach to good street-level craftsmanship. The chapters' theoretical contribution is to show craftsmanship as uniquely localizing the normative underpinnings of good work. Empirically, the findings show how prison officers feel that in prison sector policy and management, protecting and promoting craftsmanship values in street-level policy execution and service delivery comes at the bottom of the list. Prison officers convergently identify an unyielding neoliberalist administrative practice that impedes the potential of frontline craftsmanship. Chapter 2 theorizes how this is likely to have negative impact on staff commitment and successful public service delivery, and thereby lays the foundation for the next three chapters. Finally, this chapter includes an in-depth reflection on the theoretical and practical implications of these findings. It ends with the formulation of propositions to advance future research of public craftsmanship in public administration theory, and to advance the further development of public craftsmanship in public administration practice. The chapters to come explicitly build on and explore several of these propositions. Chapter 3 has been previously published as an article in *The American Review of Public Administration*.

Chapter 4. *Perceptions of the Frontline Craft: Assessing Value Convergence between Policy Makers, Managers and Street-Level Professionals in the Prison Sector*

Chapter 4 is the next step in the research and forms, together with Chapter 5, the second part of the thesis that centers on the question of value convergence between different levels of penal officials (research question 2). From the perspective of perceptions of the frontline craft,

Chapter 4 is an empirical exploration of prison sector value convergence between policy makers, managers, and street-level professionals in two correctional facilities (*N*=55). In order to obtain the broadest possible impression of value convergence, data is not only gathered on whether there is an actual shared notion of values, but also on whether different actors *perceive* such a shared notion. To explain actual value convergence as well as mutual perception that the different levels have of each other, the chapter scrutinizes competing explanations of value convergence and divergence on value understandings and group dynamics (specifically from literature on professional socialization, role differences, and normative isomorphism). The empirical findings on values represent a clash between the ideological values that attach to street-level craft, and the contrarian instrumental values that policy actors and managers are seen to impose in practice. Each staff level seems to locate the source of an unwavering focus on performance measurement and cutbacks (numbers, targets, and superficial outputs) at the level directly above their own level. The higher the staff level, the stronger the stereotyping that they favor those values that support the organization over the values that facilitate street-level workers serving inmates, and that they prioritize targets over content. In terms of explanations, toxic stereotyping between staff levels, exacerbated by restrictive organizational conditions, are shown to overshadow positive value convergence from socialization processes. This explains how *perceived* role and value differences impact the actualization of shared values in public service delivery much more negatively than the actual differences. This chapter has been published as a journal article in *Administration & Society*.

Chapter 5. *Value Contextuality in Public Service Delivery. An Analysis of Street-Level Craftsmanship and Public–Private Partnerships.*

Chapter 5 takes one step back from the empirical outcomes generated so far and explores theoretically what the findings of Chapters 2, 3, and 4 mean for how we may understand public value contextuality. It fits Part 2 and the research question about value convergence because it reviews how the (lack of) convergence of values may be assessed in terms of broader theoretical discussions on the role of values in good governance, the integrity and ethics of governance, and value universalism. Empirically, it relates the findings on the role of values in frontline craft to another empirical body – that is, the role of values in public–private partnerships. The chapter thus demonstrates the contextuality of values in two specific settings of public service delivery: street-level craftsmanship and public–private partnerships. It contrasts these two empirical case studies to the value framework that Leo Huberts puts forward in his book "The Integrity of Governance: What is Is, What we Know, What is Done, and Where to Go" (2014)

and argues that the actual meaning of good or ethical governance is context dependent–as are its constitutive values. The chapter was co-authored with Dr. Anne-Marie Reynaers, and has been previously published as an article in a special issue on "A Legacy of Integrity: A Tribute to Leo Huberts" in *Public Integrity*. Findings show that values do not work along the lines of the systematic frameworks public administration scholars come up with. They work along the lines of personal interpretative repertoires, and, on an aggregate level, along the lines of the confined and decisive professional logics of bounded policy domains. Based on a wider exploration of how the findings of the thesis fit with insights from related studies and thoughts on public values, this conclusion that there is a need to factor in value contextuality and to examine values in concrete and specific public work contexts is a further substantiation of one of the key arguments of this thesis.

Chapter 6. Public Values in the Frontline. The Effect of Value Divergence in a Dutch Prison Case.

The last research question about value divergence *effects* is addressed in the final empirical chapter of this thesis: Chapter 6. It explains that there is a paucity of knowledge of how value differences or conflicts between the different public sector levels of policy, organization, and implementation affect public service delivery. This is an addition to scholarly work on the nature of the complexity and diversity of public values in public service delivery at the frontline, including how street-level officials deal with conflicting values in their work. In line with the previous chapters, but based on a different subset of the data, Chapter 6 finds considerable value convergence in value identification and understanding, but large (perceived and real) divergence in value prioritization or enactment in practice. Value divergence between policy managers, organizational management, and frontline workers (N=55) juxtaposes the numerical focus of instrumental values (effectiveness and efficiency) with the public service focus of intrinsic values (humanity, task effectiveness, security, and reintegration). Value divergence is shown to increase implementation problems for intrinsic values, leading to sub-optimal value realization in public service delivery. Value divergence is perceived to be problematic, but, contrary to our expectations, does not necessarily cause street-level workers to experience moral dilemmas. The chapter puts forward two unique coping strategies that explain how street-level workers deal with and mitigate value divergence: they were found to use coping strategies of *cognitive distancing (indifference)* to ignore their superior's values, or of *bureaucratic flexibility* that, from a deep-seated sense of loyalty, enables them to circumvent the most undesirable effects of value divergence. This chapter was co-authored by prof.dr. Gjalt de Graaf

and prof.dr. Leo Huberts (the supervisors of this thesis) and has been submitted to a journal. The chapter answers the third and final research question of this thesis and discusses the implications of value divergence in public sector organizations and the need for further exploration. It offers propositions for future research.

1.6 Academic Relevance of the Thesis

This thesis hopes to make a contribution –in academic work as well as in policy practice– to insights on the role of public values. As this introduction has explicated, viewing public values and value convergence in terms of frontline craft harbors a number of advantages that may advance public values theory.

Theoretically, considering values from the perspective of frontline craft has the potential to show how to uniquely localize the normative underpinnings of good work. It complements and brings together the often loosely coupled bodies of literature on street-level work and professionalism on the one hand, and public values literature on the other. It may provide more in-depth understanding of how abstract public values apply to the concrete work context(s) in frontline public service delivery, and how various actors see the salience and centrality of values to the meaning of such street-level work.

Moreover, with the results it describes this thesis aims to make a contribution to the unexplored field of value convergence in public governance. The thesis contributes empirical insight into the extent, nature, and effects of value convergence and divergence in the public sector. It is unique in its comparison of value approaches not only within but also *between* different hierarchical levels of public policy sectors. As such, it sets out to provide rich and in-depth description and explanation of the mechanisms at play when values are interpreted and negotiated down vertical lines of a public sector hierarchy.The specific focus on the tangible and hands-on craft in public service delivery at the frontline adds to the novelty of the research, and provides further exploration of the renewed attention to craftsmanship in the public domain. To date, the empirical examination of public craftsmanship is a field still in its infancy.

Methodologically, the thesis adds value by examining values from the bottom-up as identified and expressed by public officials themselves. It moves away from using predetermined and predefined sets of values in the empirical study of public values, and can identify the practitioners' implicit views that bear significant weight in how public officials think, act, and

make decisions, but that are often overlooked in the methodological setup of public values studies. This can help us gain a better understanding of how public values attain their actual meaning and significance at implementation level, and how they help to shape public service delivery, particularly (but not just) in relation to frontline craft. It also allows for a different interpretation of values to be observed between street-level professionals, and between different public sector levels, thereby pinpointing value divergence as a potential source of organizational conflict and dysfunctionality, of street-level frustration and moral stress, and of poor public service delivery.

1.7 Practical Relevance of the Thesis

For practitioners, this thesis provides insight into the degree to which views of frontline craftsmanship are analogous between the different organizational and sectoral groups in their own work fields. This applies first and foremost to the prison sector, but also beyond, as the dynamics of value divergence are seen to reflect administrative trends of performance measurement and cutback management that are central to many organizations in the wider public sector. The results may help public managers identify obstacles to creating a shared identity on work practice within public service delivery at the frontline. They may also offer them guidelines for action to minimize the detrimental effects of value divergence on the commitment, satisfaction, and public values realization of street-level workers at the frontline.

For public officials operating at policy formulation level, this thesis offers insight into the difficulties of getting policy implemented in line with set objectives. For street-level professionals, public managers, and policy makers alike, the thesis sheds light on the type and the volume of problems in implementation and the moral dilemmas that value divergence can create on the shop floor. It gives both operational employees and their managers at the organizational and policy level tools to anticipate them and to adequately address them.

Finally, the results also carry important implications for how to communicate the values that determine the composition and perception of public craftsmanship. The findings may pinpoint suggestions for how to manage such processes when alignment fails and appears to hamper either good public service delivery or the implementation of specific public policy programs or paradigms.

PART 1

VALUE CONVERGENCE AND VALUE FACILITATION ACCORDING TO PRISON OFFICERS

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CHAPTER 2

PROFESSIONALISM AND PUBLIC CRAFTSMANSHIP AT STREET LEVEL

Abstract

Rather than the overall quality of governance, this chapter explores quality in public *professions* by looking at public craftsmanship. What does it mean to be a 'good' public administrator according to professionals themselves? What value orientations do public professionals have towards public craftsmanship and how convergent are these? In-depth qualitative research among Dutch prison professionals (*N*=18) indicates that the specific work context is paramount in identifying and prioritizing a compact set of professional values. However, understandings of how to translate these values into good craftsmanship show only marginal commonality in practice, with professionals making their own personal compilations of ideal qualities. The results call for a focus on apprehending the meaning of values in specific professional work contexts, and to move from the study of broad, predefined and prearranged value sets to concrete articulations of values and the disparate nature of their actual application.

2.1 Quality of Governance at Street Level: Introducing Public Craftsmanship

Based on the profession of prison officers, this chapter will provide insight into interpretations of public craftsmanship at street level. As such it will situate the public values debate in street level discourse. It will scrutinize the role of public values in frontline public service delivery and, specifically, will examine professional divergence in values of *craftsmanship*. Craftsmanship is understood to represent 'the desire to do a job well for its own sake' and brings together the skill and commitment needed to do such good work, with continuous judgment and questioning of the abilities required, in an overriding motivation for quality-driven work (Sennett, 2008, pp. 9, 285).

Numerous studies examine when governance is 'good' at macro or meso level, commonly highlighting one or more core values of governance, without zooming in on what it means to be a 'good' performing professional at micro-level. Some studies set out to determine the overall levels of impartiality (Holmberg, Rothstein, & Nasiritousi, 2009; Rothstein & Teorell, 2008), integrity (M. Evans, 2012) or effectiveness pertaining to a minimum set of delivered public services (Woods, 2000). Others fully acknowledge the pluralistic character of

governance values, for instance stating good governance is to be understood as competence to handle a set of complementary values (Bovens, 't Hart, & van Twist, 2007, 2012; De Graaf, Van Doeveren, Reynaers, & Van der Wal, 2011) or the management of several simultaneously present competing and conflicting values (Bozeman, 2007; De Graaf & Van Der Wal, 2010; Michael W Spicer, 2009). What many studies specifically omit to address is what these values mean to the officials who must put them into practice.

Clearly, the value orientations of public professionals towards what public craftsmanship is about bear substantially on policy implementation and, ultimately, on public service delivery. Research shows extensively that public professionals' individual orientations towards the values embedded in policy visions and programs have an important effect on the final implementation of public policies (Kelly, 1994; Lipsky, 1980, 2010; Tummers et al., 2015). Value orientations at operational level shape bureaucratic reality and the way officials handle their work (cf Stewart, 2006). It is often thought that dealing with conflicting values is at the center of what public officials do or ought to do: it represents the daily reality of on-the-ground decision making (De Graaf & Van Der Wal, 2010; Oldenhof et al., 2014; Steenhuisen & van Eeten, 2008). Understanding how public officials themselves express such values to start with (similarly or differently), seems to be a fundamental exercise that would advance future research.

We argue that views on what it means to be good at one's job constitute the core of public performance (and, ultimately, quality of governance). The key to understanding the role of values in the eyes of street level public professionals lies in unraveling concrete value orientations in concrete work contexts. Rather than using a fixed and predetermined list of values considered to cover the public sector at large, we seek to explore the (widest possible) range of concrete value orientations as brought forward by public professionals themselves. We narrow this down further by looking at values of public craftsmanship: key values of a context-specific and professional nature that public officials deem relevant to their specific work context.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, we explore and map the value orientations that characterize public craftsmanship according to professionals in the public sector prison service. Second, we analyze the principal value categories of public craftsmanship to which these value orientations can be assigned and what patterns of prioritization can be detected within such a homogenous professional group. Third, we assess whether this analysis indicates a more – or

less— shared value understanding than one would typically expect from the rather one-dimensional use of value labels in overarching policy frameworks and scientific studies. The remainder of the chapter follows the structure of these three questions of value interpretation, prioritization and convergence. In the next paragraphs, we address them theoretically, explain the methodology of research and analysis and then report the empirical findings on each aspect. The central research question that we answer is: *what value orientations do public professionals have towards public craftsmanship and how convergent are these orientations?*

2.2 A Bottom-Up Approach to Sense-Making by Public Professionals

Rather than simplifying things, adding the public dimension to the values concept further complicates a clean line of theory and research (Van der Wal & Van Hout, 2009). Values are usually abstract constructs, often considered hard to grasp or measure, but so are the confines of what *public* is (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Beck Jørgensen & Rutgers, 2015). According to Rutgers (2008, 2015) studies on public values tend to have a built-in ambiguity because they often omit to clearly, let alone unambiguously, define what they understand public values to be, and are consequently about very different phenomena. We argue that, at the other extreme, those that explicitly attach clear-cut definitions to the individual values they use, methodologically harnessing a fixed interpretation of, for instance, loyalty or effectiveness, may also suffer from ambiguity issues, albeit of a different nature. Researchers might overlook the meaning their research subjects attach to values, whether in their personal view or in their work context. In this chapter, we approach values from the perspective of professions, regarding public professionals as frontline or street level workers with a shared occupation and expertise (cf. Lipsky, 1980; Tummers et al., 2015).

For the purpose of this study, we understand values as 'qualities that are appreciated for contributing to or constituting what is good, right, beautiful or worthy of praise and admiration', which as such are 'manifested through behavior and action' (De Graaf, 2003, p. 22). Public values, then, refer to values that directly relate to desired public sector conduct, processes and outcomes, or in Bozeman's words, to 'the principles on which governments and policies should be based' (2007, p. 13) and that are supposed to guide public decision making in all its aspects[1]. In the narrower context of public craftsmanship, we understand values as the key qualities that public professionals value in the context of, and towards, the object of their work (for example

[1] See the work of Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman 2007 for an elaborate account of the aspects to which the "public" in public values can refer

education or, in this study, detention). Such qualities may pertain to the qualities of individuals in the realization of public craftsmanship (for instance, treating detainees with respect), or to qualities of the governance process by means of which public craftsmanship can prosper (for instance, providing a safe work environment for employees in penal facilities).

Of necessity, a value contains a normative disposition, and obtains meaning from its observer: 'a value can be any concept that expresses a positive or negative qualitative (or evaluative) statement and has a 'motivating force', that is, it gives direction to people's thoughts and actions' (Rutgers, 2015, p. 5). Similarly, Van der Wal states that 'their meaning is derived not from the essence of the concept but from its usage […]: a meaning that constantly changes and differs from context to context' (Van der Wal, 2008, p. 21). Rather than treating values as abstract entities, 'we must remember that values first attain their actual significance in the concrete situation' (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012, p. 725). In her work on cross-cultural value interpretation, Yang adds that '[t]he study of values therefore largely relies on how people interpret the values, which includes the meaning of a value and how its importance differs from person to person, from case to case, or/and from culture to culture' (2016, p. 75). While scholars are warned to be aware of and to make explicit (the criteria of) their interpretations of values (Rutgers, 2008), the interpretations of the professionals that have to deal with values in daily decision making seems less prominently emphasized in empirical work.

In measuring public values, many empirical studies start from a predetermined set of values, and more importantly, a predefined set of values, specifying to respondents how the values in question are understood by giving them a brief description of each value (cf. Reynaers, 2014a; Van der Wal, 2008; Van der Wal & Yang, 2015). Although such pre-determined definitions are very useful for demarcation purposes in research and to produce reliable and face valid results, we argue that content validity may actually be at stake. Predetermination of values may distort the portrayal of reality since public officials may understand and explain such values very differently, or perceive them differently in different settings, contexts, situations, or periods of time (cf. Haque, 2011; Rutgers, 2015; Witesman & Walters, 2015; Yang, 2016). Potentially, then, research might offer an exaggerated and misleading image of value convergence. We aim to complement existing foci on value rankings and value preferences among public officials by giving an in-depth account of how public professionals themselves express values. We deconstruct abstract notions of 'good governance' and broad public values into more tangible, context-dependent, concrete descriptions of how values are embodied by professionals and how they matter most in the job at hand. In line with Steenhuisen's work (2009), this study harnesses

a bottom-up approach to values and explores at street level how professionals, in their own words, express the key qualities connected with their work. The way individual public professionals make sense of the values they bring to their work is the focus of the study. After all, as 'the room for interpretation of values is usually considerable […]. Surveys are generally poorly suited for capturing differences in interpretations, and […] uncover[ing] the multi-faceted interpretations in the time and space of public values' (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012, p. 725).

2.3 From Value Sets of a General Public Nature to the Specific Work Context

Studies that examine the normative role of public values in administrative reality can be grouped under the umbrella of what Beck Jørgensen and Rutgers (2015) call Public Values Perspective (PVP) research. Here, diverse approaches are connected by the generic view that processes of, and in, public administration are 'guided or restricted by public values and are public value creating: public management and public policy-making are both concerned with establishing, following and realizing public values' (Beck Jørgensen & Rutgers, 2015, p. 3). We would like to add that many public professionals at operational level are just as involved in creating public value. They willingly act as craftsmen: they possess the skill, motivation and commitment to pursue quality-driven work in a sociable way – that is, by focusing on mentoring, knowledge transfer and setting standards in such a way that they are comprehensible to the lay person as much as to expert colleagues (Sennett, 2008, pp. 248-249). They 'equally make and repair' and 'in turning outward, they hold themselves to account and can also see what the work means to others' (Sennett, 2008, pp. 248-249). In doing so, they are the ultimate agency for handling, shaping, and transmitting values in practice.

Different bodies of literature prompt us to focus on values in specific work contexts and these inform our framework of public craftsmanship. Street-level bureaucracy and policy implementation literature place a strong emphasis on the role of public employees in policy execution and on what practices they develop to translate policy or professional principles (Lipsky, 1980; Tummers, 2013; Tummers & Bekkers, 2014), but they generally fail to address the more normative question of whether public employees feel this constitutes *good* performance or not, and whether appreciative views differ among them. It seems fair to state that this category of literature is independent of public values literature (Tummers et al., 2015). Studies on public service motivation focus on what motivates public employee personally, pinpointing the set of values that drives the behavior of public sector employees (Perry, 2000;

Witesman & Walters, 2013), but they neglect broader considerations of what those employees believe their public performance should look like in its *optima forma.*

Lastly, and most closely related, much PVP research tends to use quite broad and generalized sets of values that are presumed to be applicable to all public professionals across the whole of the public sector. Commonly cited values are loyalty, accountability, transparency, democratic legitimacy, lawfulness and integrity, to name but a few (Paanakker et al., 2020). In 2009, Van der Wal and Van Hout noted that 'almost all authors (ideologically) assume that there is a distinct and consistent set of *public* values' (Van der Wal & Van Hout, 2009, p. 222). Of course much work has been done since, but the predisposition that 'one set of values with undisputed meanings' (Van der Wal & Van Hout, 2009, p. 227) exists, and can be used to characterize public sector conduct in general when conducting public values research across different governance settings and groups, still leads in many studies. Examples include Reynaers' (Reynaers, 2014a) set of five predefined values in four different case studies on public—private partnerships or Van der Wal and Yang's (2015) list of 25 predefined values in a questionnaire among Dutch and Chinese public administrators from different occupational fields. We are curious to see if restricting the focus to bounded professions produces values of a different or more differentiated nature. Therefore, in contrast, the approach of public craftsmanship explores the values that public employees deem relevant in the specific context of their professional lives.

Of course, the call for context-driven analysis of values in governance (and even from a professional angle) is not new. According to Rutgers (Rutgers, 2008, p. 109), public administration values only acquire their meaning in relation to the specific context they are found in, that is 'their very purpose in time and place'. Conventional wisdom holds that it is undesirable to use, impose or prescribe particular governance values as blueprints in very different national and cultural contexts when discussing quality of governance (Huberts, 2014; Van der Wal, 2016). Likewise, other authors state '[w]e know that public values are ultimately context-dependent and that classifications can only be exclusive and comprehensive in a given context (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012, p. 716) and 'there are no inherently prime values, or no indisputable self-evident truths' (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007, p. 373). However, relatively few studies however start from this notion as their main analytical focus.

Subsequently, and despite these acknowledgements, most studies proceed with attempts to systematically order the public values spectrum in multidimensional classifications from the belief they 'must be sorted to allow stringent analysis' (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012, p. 716). Long lists of universalistic approaches to (categories of) values are the result (Charles, De Jong, & Ryan, 2010; Haque, 2011). For instance, Huberts contends that the overall importance and meaning of his seven core governance values (democracy with responsiveness and participation, accountability and transparency, lawfulness, incorruptibility and impartiality, effectiveness and efficiency of process, professionalism and civility, and robustness) is essentially and inherently universal by nature, even if corresponding behavior and policies may differ slightly according to the specific context at hand (Huberts, 2014, pp. 213-214). Others strongly dispute the assumption of universality (Paanakker et al., 2020), as does this chapter.

There are many other generic value constellations: those based on public-versus-private spectra (Van der Wal, 2008; Van der Wal, De Graaf, & Lasthuizen, 2008), different value sources (organizational, individual, public, and so on, Van Wart 1998), different scopes of impact (such as democratic values and ethical values, Pollitt 2003), different modes of governance and corresponding organizational designs (such as user-focused values and rule-abidance values, Andersen et al. 2012), inherently different *types* of values (performance versus procedural values, De Graaf & Paanakker 2015, or Hoods' families of thèta, lambda and sigma values (1991)), and many other categorizations (see Rutgers, 2008). The most frequently referred to seem to be Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman's seven public values constellations, that include values associated with the relationship between public administration and politicians, values associated with intra-organizational aspects of public administration, and, the focus of our analysis, values associated with the behavior of public sector employees (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007, pp. 367-368). We add the perspective of public craftsmanship in specific professional work contexts to narrow this down further. To capture the full range of value orientations among public sector officials, an applied and work-specific approach that includes contextual *professional* values can add to our knowledge on which values matter most.

The professional angle is also touched upon by many scholars. For instance, Van Wart (1998) distinguishes the profession as one of the sources from which important public sector values emerge. More recently, Andersen et al. found professionalism to be one of seven key value dimensions in public sector organizational designs, consisting of *independent professional standards*, *having professional drive,* and *professional commitment as a motive* (2012, p. 721). Likewise, Beck Jørgensen and Rutgers found, in an empirical examination of central public

values in Dutch and Danish job advertisements from 1966 to 2008, that the value of merit, also verbalized as expertise or professionalism, 'is and continues to be the most important selection criteria, but the meaning of merit explodes in several directions' (2014, p. 59). Pollitt (2003, pp. 134-135) also explicitly identifies 'professional values' as a main category but restricts its meaning primarily to the singular interpretation of impartiality. In a similar vein, numerous studies mention 'professionalism' or 'expertise' as one value amongst many (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Huberts, 2014; Trommel, 2018; Van der Wal, 2008; Van der Wal & Huberts, 2008; Van der Wal & Yang, 2015). Definitions, again, typically delineate this value as 'acting in line with professional codes and standards' (Huberts, 2014, p. 213) or 'act[ing] with competence, skill and knowledge' (Van der Wal & Yang, 2015, p. 418), indicating that many different types of (sub) values may fit under this broad umbrella. None of these studies reveal what is precisely entailed by those interpretations of professionalism, or, to put it differently, what exactly qualifies as public craftsmanship.

2.4 Studying Public Craftsmanship Value Convergence

As argued, many public values studies focus on detecting, mapping and classifying public values, for instance in elaborate literature reviews, large civil servant surveys, or by means of case studies of their role in public—private partnerships (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Reynaers, 2014b; Van der Wal, Nabatchi, & De Graaf, 2015; Yang & Van der Wal, 2014). A smaller sample of studies concentrates on identifying and explaining value differences, most notably between public and private sector logics, between administrative morals in different countries, or a combination of both (De Graaf & Van Der Wal, 2008; Jelovac, Van Der Wal, & Jelovac, 2011; Van der Wal, 2008; Van der Wal & Yang, 2015; Yang, 2016).

Gradually, research on value differences is expanding to include more qualitative work on differences or conflicts between values *themselves,* and how public officials cope with conflicting value sets in their daily work practice (De Graaf et al., 2016; De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015; Koppenjan, Charles, & Ryan, 2008; Steenhuisen & van Eeten, 2008). In an empirical article on organizational values of Dutch government ministries and semi-autonomous executive agencies, Van Thiel and Van der Wal (2010) discuss differences within the public sector, juxtaposing very different types of organizations. In-depth research on value differences within more homogenous groups of public officials, and down professional lines of public craftsmanship, is scarce.

Whether to expect high or low value convergence within professions is unclear. There is no doubt that professional groups make up a large—and therefore not to be overlooked—part of public sector employees, and often share a common mode of operation and work ethos:

> *In Western Europe, the relevant group is often a profession; that is, an occupation with intra-occupational norms and specialized, theoretical knowledge in the given area. The professions enforce the professional standards (norms within the profession) via peer review, and the desirable is compliance with intraoccupational norms, making professional commitment very important* (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012, p. 717).

In this definition, norm diffusion and homogenization are key characteristics of a professional group. Whether a similar collective logic also extends to value orientations is less well understood. A few studies indicate that, in the public sphere, different actors may have different understandings of values (cf. De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015; Reynaers & Paanakker, 2016; Yang, 2016). For example, Yang (2016, pp. 78-79) found that Chinese and Dutch civil servants attached six different meanings to the value 'loyalty', including 'loyalty to the organization and colleagues' and 'loyalty to the country, to the political party, or to the laws and regulations'. Some clear patterns of divergence emerged with the majority of Dutch officials endorsing the first interpretation and Chinese ones the latter. Furthermore, interpretations also diverged within sub categories. Dutch officials interpreted 'loyalty to the superior' in terms of being loyal to 'the bigger picture of *the vision and mission of the organization'*, whereas Chinese officials understood 'superior' in terms of obedience and subordination to their manager (Yang, 2016, pp. 78-79). Finally, also within each of the two groups responses were scattered across the different meanings (Yang, 2016, pp. 78-79). Likewise, views on what public craftsmanship values precisely entail, or to put it differently, what it means to be a good civil servant, may differ from professional to professional.

Alternatively, theories of social learning and organizational socialization theory suggest that public officials, especially in smaller sub groups, are socialized into group norms and values (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Kohlberg, 1969), and this would suggest high value convergence (Chao et al., 1994; Feldman, 1981). Through enculturation processes, shared organizational values create internal integration but also guide external adaptation and are strong catalyzers of behavior in the work context (Paarlberg & Perry, 2007; Schein, 1985). Interestingly, Andersen et al. (2012) establish empirically that core value differences between public sector

organizations correspond largely to the professional focus of such organizations. They found that, compared to managers in regulating or administrating organizations, 'managers of service providing organizations had higher scores on professionalism (clan [mode of governance]) and user focus (market [mode of governance])' and '[i]n line with this, managers of lower-level organizations scored lower on balancing interests, rule abidance, and budget keeping and higher on user focus and professionalism compared to higher-level authorities' (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012, p. 725). In an empirical study among 182 city-level public administrators, Witesman and Walters also found that public officials use a limited number of well-defined context-driven values in their professional decision making: they selected specific subsets of values that were relevant to the specific work situations they were confronted with (2015, p. 90). Besides the suggestion that a distinct type of values could be deemed relevant in specific professions, the question arises of whether these values are assigned similar meanings or not. Even in the earlier cited work of Yang (2016), respondents generally attached no more than five different meanings to a value. Although these respondents represented public administrators in different policy domains (and hence, different occupational groups), could this demonstrate the occurrence of patterns that are indeed varied, but at the same time have a limited scope of variance? And would these value orientations be even more similar within more homogenous professional groups? This provides interesting leads for further research on the uniformity of public craftsmanship values. To date, the level of value convergence in specific work contexts in terms of demarcated professions, and among frontline workers specifically, remains an unexplored field of research.

2.5 Values and Craftsmanship in the Prison Context

In the literature on prison dynamics, the presence of strong values that underpin penal logic and point penal behaviour and practices in a clear direction is widely acknowledged. Many scholars stress how the incapacitation of detainees is inextricably tied to the prioritization of security at the expense of other goals of imprisonment (DiIulio, 1987; Sykes, 1958). In prisons, security as a value is linked to the deprivation of liberty and exertion of authority and tight control (Craig, 2004), and these are regarded as the core objectives of incarceration, 'for the prison constitutes a place of domination' (Liebling & Arnold, 2004, p. 442). Others contrast the focus on security values with their predominantly procedural nature (such as the strict enforcement of rules and regulations, control, order and stability, routine, authoritative action and coercion) with values of a relational nature (Liebling & Arnold, 2004; Molleman & Van der Broek, 2014). Liebling and Arnold (2004, pp. 435-442) assert that, in day-to-day prison practices, these so-

called harmony values are as essential – if not even more so – as security values, and relate to human dignity, respect, fairness and trust in detainee-employee interaction and relationships, as well as to detainees' personal support and development (see also Molleman & van Ginneken, 2015). They state that striking a balance between two such inherently different values, no matter how complicated, is the ultimate key to ensuring quality in prison performance (Liebling & Arnold, 2004, p. 442), and hence constitutes penal craftsmanship. Others, still, argue that rehabilitation of the offender has been part of the Western penal system for over a century, often as part of a humane form of punishment (Craig, 2004; Molleman, 2014). These three goals or values are also explicitly incorporated in the mission of the Dutch prison system, which reads: 'We ensure a safe and humane detention and work with our adjacent organizations and the inmate, towards reintegration' (Dutch Correctional Agency, 2009c). If, and how, Dutch prison officers mirror these abstract values in their views on craftsmanship is unknown.

Scientific studies on the real-life role of prison officers in the United States or the United Kingdom, for instance, produce long lists of required competences that indirectly reflect on craftsmanship in the penal domain (Gilbert, 1997; Liebling et al., 2010). They underline how much of prison work is about operating routines effectively, how prison officers share characteristics such as being resourceful, loyal, self-confident and proud, how complex it is to cater to the needs of a highly unpredictable group of beneficiaries, and how utterly important is the ability to balance security and discipline on the one hand and highly developed people-skills on the other (Liebling et al., 2010). Peacekeeping seems to be a recurring characteristic of penal craftsmanship: 'Being a good prison officer involves being good at *not* using force but still getting things done, and being *prepared* to use the various power bases officers can draw on when necessary' (Liebling et al., 2010, p. 205).

2.6 Research Methods and Analysis

To allow for in depth qualitative analysis of the way public craftsmanship is subjectively understood and characterized, we incorporate the results of semi-structured interviewing in a case study among Dutch prison officers (N=18). Because of the closed setting of detention facilities (which, in Goffman's (1968) words, would be characterized as total institutions), this research concerns a very specific and homogenous group of professionals. They are also *public* professionals, since all detention facilities in the Netherlands are fully publicly run. Respondents were working in the same penal facility in Amsterdam, the capital, with identical job descriptions (running the daily detainee programs and taking care of the detainees) and

highly similar target groups (male detainees awaiting the verdict on their case, prior to potential conviction), but at different departments throughout the facility (including those with special emphasis on heightened medication use or repeat offenders). Table 2.1 lists respondent characteristics. Men are overrepresented, which is a distinguishing feature of the prison officer population in general. Older employees with a considerable length of service are also overrepresented, an accurate reflection of this particular facility. Many of them have been working here their entire employable lives. All respondents were typical street level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980; Tummers et al., 2015), directly interacting with detainees, doing their work with a considerable level of discretion, and in charge of implementing and shaping prison policy on the frontline.

Table 2.1. Respondent Characteristics

		Prison officials (*N=18)*			Prison officials (*N=18)*
Gender	Male	15	Years of service	<10	2
	Female	3		10-15	6
Age	30-35	1		16-20	0
	36-40	2		21-25	3
	41-45	2		26-30	5
	46-50	4		>30	2
	51-55	4			
	56-60	5			

Using an inductive approach, interviewees were asked for their view on what constitutes a good prison official. To avoid any bias (towards certain types of values), we did not ask for specific values, but purposefully asked broad questions such as 'what does a good prison official look like?' to bring to the surface value orientations towards public craftsmanship. The word 'values' itself was avoided, as it proved too vague a concept for respondents. Several control questions were asked in order to eliminate socially desirable answers, for example, questions about perceptions of ideal penal policy, descriptions of the job of prison officer, and questions about when they felt they were doing their job well. Respondents were entirely free to elaborate and to raise topics themselves in response to, and in addition to, the questions. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim (131.706 words).

The data analysis consisted of a systematic content analysis through software-supported (MAXQDA) coding: a process of attaching distinct labels to data segments to organize, classify and conceptualize the interview material (Friese, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the belief that 'a properly developed code is more than just a descriptive label' (Friese, 2012, p. 94), the coding system was developed largely inductively, using two-stage coding to build categories from the bottom up (Bazeley, 2007; Friese, 2012; Kuş Saillard, 2011). During the first stage, open coding was applied to the data to explore and create subcategories of values that provide 'a good description of heterogeneity and variance in the data material' (Friese, 2012, p. 113). We united data segments with similar content into mutually-exclusive codes to create a methodological hierarchical coding system that reflects the data in all its facets (Friese, 2012, pp. 130-131). Next, we set out to find common denominators by renaming, modifying and integrating sub labels into larger overarching coding categories (Friese, 2012, pp. 130-131). 'Going back and forth between data and codes' (Weiss, 1994, p. 156), this validated version was applied to the data set at large and allowed us to grasp the subtleties of value orientations and compare them between respondents.

Concretely, this means that qualities as mentioned by respondents were inductively aggregated and classified into four main categories of values: humanity, security, reintegration, and task effectiveness. The overarching value categories are described thus:

- **Humanity** orientations refer to the idea that detainees are to be treated as humanely as possible, with a detention climate and staff approach that first and foremost sees the person behind the detainee.
- **Security** orientations contain the key notion that detention should first and foremost be executed safely and should be aimed at maximizing safety and security for both employees and detainees and at minimizing occurrences of aggression, violence and crime within the penal facility.
- **Reintegration** orientations were depicted as a direct investment in stimulating detainees' rehabilitation so as to obtain a life(style) free of criminal activity in the long term.
- **Task effectiveness** orientations can be defined as being granted the time and means to conduct everyday business effectively, without unnecessary unrest, distraction or time constraints getting in the way and salting the game.

These four values accurately and inclusively capture the common characteristics among the different qualities. With the exception of task effectiveness, respondents also named these more abstract, singular value labels spontaneously themselves. For example, the category 'humanity' features concrete value orientations such as 'personal care and support of detainees' and 'treating and approaching detainees with respect and dignity', but the word 'humanity' itself was specifically mentioned as a key quality of craftsmanship by respondents and included as a separate sub category ('literally mentioning 'humanity of detention' or 'humane treatment of detainee'').

In addition, prioritizations were analyzed. Respondents were not explicitly asked to rank or prioritize their orientations – rather we made sense of that in the analysis and coded rankings into their responses, depending on how much weight or emphasis the respondent put on the quality mentioned and its relationship to the other qualities mentioned. For instance, if respondents argued their work should mainly revolve around contact with detainees and getting to know them, and, that, in addition to this, security in the facility is also important, then 'humanity/personal contact with detainees' was listed as the number one ideal value orientation and 'security/security of detention' was coded as the number two ideal value orientation. This resulted in a top five or six of value orientations per respondent (very few respondents named more than six different value orientations), and these formed the basis of the findings reported below.

2.7 Findings

2.7.1 Craftsmanship Among Prison Officers: Prioritizations Alike, Varied Interpretations

Findings show that an impression of varying interpretations of craftsmanship is given initially. However, the overarching types of values they describe, and the prioritization of these overarching values, demonstrate a remarkably consistent pattern. The table below lists all value orientations mentioned by respondents in their ideal portrayal of prison work (table 2.2). It indicates which value orientations, according to respondents, *should* ideally play a central role in detention and the way it is organized and provided by the prison officers themselves. At aggregated level, three types of values stand out: humanity, security and reintegration unequivocally constitute the core of what prison officials feel public craftsmanship in the Dutch prison sector is about. The following sections discuss the variance of value orientations reported, patterns of prioritization, and the level of professional convergence respectively.

2.7.2 Variance of prison officers' value orientations

Humanity. The first set of value orientations is clustered into the category of *humanity* in detention provision (see table 2.2). As shown by the specific qualities mentioned, humanity refers to the idea that detainees are to be treated as humanely as possible, with a detention climate and staff approach that first and foremost sees the person behind the detainee. Value orientations in this category refer, without exception, to qualities in the individual professional and focus on how detainees should be approached.

In total, ten variations of this value cluster were coded. One variation stands out. First and foremost, prison officers state they ought to be there to handle individual requests for help and assistance, both practical (for example, with filling out forms or managing distribution of food, soap, or clothing at the department) and emotional (for example, putting stressful detainees at ease or referring inmates to social workers). *'You are some sort of spokesman for the detainees. They come to you with all sorts of requests for help […]. Basically, I am the filter for them to the rest of the facility'* (respondent 13). Besides such personal and tailor-made care and support for individual detainees, (the most frequently mentioned, with 15 out of 18 respondents mentioning it), the most important key quality of the prison officer is said to be the deployment of a treatment style towards detainees that is founded on respect and dignity (mentioned by 7 respondents) and empathy (mentioned by 5 respondents). Or, in the words of a respondent: '*c'est le ton qui fait la musique*' (respondent 5). This respondent provides the example of the quality of the first contact in the morning when waking detainees to go to labor. One can open the cell door by saying '*Good morning, time for labor, would you like to go to labor, did you manage to get some sleep?'* or by snapping '*Labor!*', which evokes an entirely different dynamic. Other respondents mention offering '*an almost tailormade detention climate*' by being sensitive to detainees' personal problems or stress and allowing an extra phone call or providing basic emotional guidance accordingly: '*But also […i]nsecure boys that don't know what to expect, for them I am a centerpiece to at least explain to them what is coming and how to cope with that'* (respondent 12*)* and '*I just approach them as fellow human beings and I do not approach them as a piece of dirt*' (respondent 7).

Table 2.2. Overview of prison officers' reported value orientations towards public craftsmanship

Public craftsmanship according to prison officers (N=18)		
Main value categories	*Value orientations*	*No. of respondents mentioning this*
Humanity (45)	Individual care and support of detainees (helping out practically and emotionally)	15
	Treating and approaching detainees with respect and dignity (being polite and acknowledging as fellow man)	7
	Literally mentioning 'humanity of detention' or 'humane treatment detainee'	6
	Treating and approaching detainees with empathy (being sympathetic to moods and behavior resulting from stress and personal problems)	5
	Motivational treatment	3
	Monitoring detainee behavior	3
	Personal one-on-one contact with detainees	2
	Treating and approaching detainees honestly (keeping one's promises)	2
	Stimulating detainees to assume personal responsibility in regulating prison life	1
	Belief in the ability of detainee to change	1
Security (26)	Security of detention and/or for detainees (reducing or preventing aggression, violence, unsafe atmosphere)	11
	Treating and approaching detainees from a disciplining perspective (setting clear boundaries to desirable and acceptable behavior)	9

	Security Awareness (managing tensions through contact)	4
	Security of Employee (keeping oneself and colleagues safe)	1
	Sentencing as punishment	1
Reintegration (24)	Changing mindset and behavior of detainee during detention	10
	Contributing to detainees' return to society	6
	Teaching detainee life skills (work, education, etc)	5
	Contributing to long term public safety	2
	Reducing recidivism	1
Task Effectiveness (9)	Ensuring daily peace and quiet	6
	Getting daily tasks done	3

Other value orientations in this category were mentioned far less frequently but are nevertheless evidently related to the provision of support and the style of treatment, such as the monitoring of detainee behavior and treating detainees honestly by not making false promises and by keeping one's word (each mentioned by 3 respondents), or personal one-on-one contact with detainees (mentioned by 2 respondents). Also mentioned explicitly 3 times was motivational treatment, a label for a prison-taught approach to detainees and based on motivational interviewing: 'Staff members who use this method encourage inmates to participate in activities, help them make plans for when they have served their sentence, and try to hold up a mirror to them' (Molleman & Van der Broek, 2014, p. 35). This does not mean other respondents found these value orientations irrelevant. Rather, it means they do not seem to consider them as a *key* indicator of public craftsmanship (or, at least, it did not come spontaneously to mind).

Being the first port of call and most important point of contact is a shared characteristic that runs across the value orientations centered around humanity. With that comes a perceived need and obligation to pay genuine attention, to use listening skills (letting detainees blow off steam) and to treat detainees as human beings rather than as mere criminals. In addition, prison officers

aim at yielding behavioral change by doing so, as is exemplified by the following quotes from respondents:

> *Well before my time they only hired prison officers that measured 2 by 3 meters and who only had to shut the door and open it and could just throw them inside. My tranche is selected on the bases of a more social interaction and talking and being interested. I do think there is the way of showing people, I mean detainees, like: if I behave…that is also an option. (respondent 11)*

> *Respect is the basis of everything, or else you can't get close or be around because you will be rejected. […] I treat people the way I want to be treated. If you go sour…. You just have to remain normal and friendly. If you stand broad-shouldered and give orders, it evokes aggression. They say: bugger off mate! What you give is what you get in return. (respondent 6)*

> *A good prison officer, well, provides care. A good prison officer, to me, is someone who has contact with the detainees regularly, who is often on the work floor, who hears and sees, the vibes I just mentioned, who can detect if someone is slipping off and anticipates in that: 'what's going on, this is not how I know you'. You know, who is eyes and ears on the floor. (respondent 9)*

Clearly, professional behavior based on humanity orientations represents an important exemplary role and spurs a give-and-take dynamic that is illustrative of penal craftsmanship. Here, important linkages with the other two key values of security and reintegration emerge and are discussed below.

Security. A second set of value orientations can be grouped around *security* of detention. Although many respondents do not stress security aspects as much as they stress humanity aspects, the majority describes it as an important conditional value. Security is a prerequisite of their work and should always be warranted and never be compromised: '*Yes that's very simple, that's guarding order, peace and quiet, and security within the facility, that's of course the slogan that comes first'* (respondent 13 in response to what the essence of the job of a prison officer is).

Five variations of security orientations can be identified from the data. Again, one specific orientation dominates: over half of the respondents (11 in total) specifically mention 'security of detention' as playing a role in their conception of ideal public craftsmanship. They emphasize

that this refers to the general notion of guaranteeing safety within the facility, meaning a safe environment for detainees during incarceration and the minimizing of incidents of aggression, violence and an atmosphere that is conducive to such incidents – only one respondent extends this focus directly to the safety of employees. This is as much a quality of the governance process (think of an adequate employee—detainee ratio or prison cell inspections to check for weapons or drugs) as a professional quality of the prison officers who, according to respondents, should actively steer on security. It is well captured by the value orientation of 'safety awareness' through which respondents report important spill-over effects from the safeguarding of humanity to the safeguarding of security: knowing one's detainees well (which includes clear humanity orientations such as close monitoring of behavior and anticipating (potentially) divergent behaviors by entering into dialogue) directly enables security to be preserved. Tensions are managed by means of contact and involvement. Although only 4 respondents mention this relational security explicitly, it was hinted upon by many others. Examples include:

> *What is security about? [..] About being on your own floor with the crooks you know, with the activity program you know. […] So security has to do with: how much contact and influence do you have with respect to your environment. […] Because if [the prison officer] feels safe, he also creates safety.* (respondent 14)

> *Security is not just doors open and shut or having 3 guys on the prison yard, but security is also: in what state does the detainee reside behind that door.* (respondent 5)

> *…. if that boy explodes and ends up in isolation while you could've also just talked to him. You will take away a lot of tension for such a person. […] listening to what he has to say, a bit of safety, protection. Seems odd to say, but that they feel at ease here, so to speak.* (respondent 1)

A second, often-mentioned security orientation relates to the behavioral disciplining of detainees. Almost half of the respondents perceive a disciplinary attitude towards detainees to be part of their craftsmanship, either as opposed to the treatment styles clustered under humanity, or as a complementary treatment style, necessary to obtain a healthy balance between loose and strict employee—detainee interaction. These respondents feel that a good prison officer sets clear boundaries to undesirable and unacceptable behaviour from detainees as a way

of disciplining them to behave more appropriately. The punitive character of detention permeates in this value orientation and is notably less clearly captured by the value orientations mentioned (for instance, sentencing as punishment is mentioned as an ideal feature only a single time). The disciplinary approach is well illustrated by the following quotes:

> *Crooks do not fear prison. Detainees have too much space to shit on the system. If I touch them they can sue me. I say: if you shit on me, I will shit on you, puke on you, etcetera. Then they know what time it is.* (respondent 6)

> *I am fairly rigid. I am fairly 'no' and as soon as you come to me and say 'I need to do this and this', then you can forget about it. You may ask politely 'can I, do you have some time for me' or whatever. I do not work for you. You are not the one that pays my salary, so I don't owe you shit.* (respondent 12)

Reintegration. The third set of value orientations towards craftsmanship is focused on efforts to reintegrate detainees into society. Although these value orientations resonate well with the humanity perspective, their character is clearly distinct. Certainly, reintegration efforts can be attributed to humane rather than restrictive and punitive detention climates. However, whereas humanity orientations here focus on the nature and quality of direct employee—detainee interaction and the types of attitudes adopted by prison officers, orientations clustered in the category of reintegration focus on the attainment of long-term effectiveness – the purposeful commitment to elicit change through detention. These values represent what prison officers' work is ultimately aimed at and is meant to accomplish. In the words of one prison officer: aim for detainees to '*come out better than they came in*' (respondent 5). Another stated: '*I believe just punishing is of no use. […] I believe that just locking up, that's not it. You have to do something with them*' (respondent 11). Hence, reintegration orientations are more outcome oriented than output and process oriented, and the value of reintegration not only represents a quality in the individual but also revolves around concrete governance tools to realize that objective.

As in the previous two categories, one value orientation predominates here: for ten respondents, detention is ideally characterized by aiding the reintegration of detainees through changing their mindset and behavior during detention. As mentioned, this pedagogical conviction is strongly related to the humane and disciplining treatment styles that were put forward. It was only coded

under ‘reintegration’ when respondents explicitly signaled that prison work should be about teaching, coaching, or even developing detainees to become better citizens. Descriptions remained rather abstract, but some examples were provided, such as teaching detainees discipline, providing a better daytime—nighttime routine, or a different perspective on the appropriateness of criminal behavior and how to make a living. Terminology such as contributing to ‘detainees’ return to society’ (mentioned by 6 respondents), ‘contributing to public safety’ (mentioned by 2) and ‘reducing recidivism’ (mentioned by 1) is very mainstream in penal policy and execution and was also mentioned in a rather abstract sense. Lastly, 5 respondents named the teaching of concrete life skills: giving detainees a course in Dutch language, teaching them a specific trade, or providing other types of training to smoothen their post-incarceration reintegration into society. In general, when talking about reintegration efforts, respondents referred to the use of institutionalized policy instruments such as in-house reintegration centers, in-house dispensing of psychological or psychiatric support, or involving chain partners to deal with post-detention matters such as housing, social security disbursement and employment.

Task effectiveness. The final set of value orientations is a relatively small one and was labeled ‘task effectiveness’. In contrast to humanity, security, and reintegration, this overarching label was not given a name as such by respondents. This category features two value orientations: 6 respondents named ‘ensuring daily peace and quiet’ in their ideal portrayal of the prison officer, and an additional 3 respondents named ‘getting daily tasks done’, which typically refers to clearly circumscribed tasks like conducting cell inspections, sending detainees to their activities on time, and conducting the weekly mandatory amount of mentor conversations with detainees. This particularly includes being granted enough time to manage those core tasks.

With respect to upholding peace and quiet on the floor, this was mentioned 5 out of 6 times in combination with security, in the expression well known to prison officers ‘*orde, rust en veiligheid*’ (order, peace and quiet, and security): a phrase taught to them as a guideline for performing their job and for creating the right climate on the floor. As an ideal of craftsmanship, it seemed to have relatively little concrete meaning to them and appeared to be more of an automated response than a sincere substantive characterization, other than as a means of avoiding unnecessary hassle and unrest on the floor that would have been a distraction from the job in hand. Besides the obvious relationship with security (unrest between detainees themselves or between employees and detainees can invert to insecurity), maintaining order

and peace and quiet may also refer to being organized in terms of having enough personnel on the floor and having at your disposal all the materials required to run the daily programs effectively (functioning showers, kitchen equipment, sufficient cleaning material, access to detainee files, being able to reach other in-house personnel when needed, etcetera). In both instances, the value orientations of task effectiveness have a short-term focus. They refer to managing concrete tasks in the prison officer's daily work context. As such, task effectiveness means short-term effectiveness and contrasts with the perspective of the reintegration category that centers on contributing ultimately to long term (partially post-)detention effects.

2.7.3 Patterns of Value Prioritization Among Prison Officers

Table 2.2 unequivocally shows that, overall, the three values of humanity, security and reintegration are referred to most frequently by respondents, in that order: together, the 18 respondents mentioned variations of these values 45, 26 and 24 times respectively. Although prioritization of these values differs slightly depending on the respondent, these three values are remarkably recurrent in each respondent's listing of the ideal values of public craftsmanship. The prison officials interviewed give elaborate accounts of the importance of humanity (160 coded segments), reintegration (57 coded segments), security (44 coded segments) and task effectiveness (34 coded segments), meaning that they gave numerous examples of how and why these values mattered in the daily practice of their work.

This is confirmed when accounting for the mutual positioning of these values. No fewer than 17 out of 18 respondents mentioned humanity as an ideal value: it was coded in the top 3 of all of these 17, and 13 respondents even gave it as their number one top priority value. Humanity orientations by far outnumber the others, which indicates that respondents clearly find humanity the most important value that the 'good' prison official ought to adhere to. Reintegration and security vie for second place, with no definite winner. Reintegration recurred as an ideal value among 15 out of 18 respondents, and for 11 of them it was in their top 3. Security was mentioned as an ideal value by 14 out of 18 respondents, and again for 11 of them, coded in their top 3. When looking at values coded number one, security related orientations were coded as the most important quality 4 times, and reintegration orientations only once.

The only exception to the pattern is task effectiveness, the value category representing the prison official's ability and – perhaps even more so – opportunity to get daily tasks done. This contains as many as 34 coded segments but occupies a far less prominent spot in the

prioritizations. Task effectiveness is coded in the respondents' top 3 only 4 times – the other 5 who mention it do so almost as an afterthought at the end of their enumeration of the key qualities of public craftsmanship. Its position is explained by the fact that the 9 respondents who mentioned it, mentioned it quite frequently and elaborately. And, as mentioned before, 5 of them quoted this as part of the fixed and automatically coming to mind line 'order, peace and quiet, and security' and seemed to attach far less priority to it in relation to some of the other value orientations.

2.7.4 Convergence in Variance: How Prison Officers Interpret Craftsmanship

If we combine our findings on which value orientations emerged and how they were prioritized by prison officers, we can address the second part of the research question on whether there is convergence of views on craftsmanship within a distinct group of public professionals. On one hand, the results yield an image of variance and, on the other, convergence within that variance.

1. Detainee care, safety and change are key and mutually interdependent

Our analysis illustrates that, despite a relatively large degree of variance in value orientations, respondents also have some obvious shared understandings of the ideal prison officer. On average, the main categories of values that were distinguished harbour 5 associated yet different value orientations, increasing to ten variations in the case of humanity orientations. Within the categories of humanity, security and reintegration however, examination of the relative positioning of orientations shows that, for each category, one particular orientation stands out. This reveals an interpretation of craftsmanship that fosters the individual care and support of detainees (humanity), keeping the detention environment safe for detainees (security), and changing detainees' attitudes and behaviour (reintegration). Coincidentally, these orientations happen to represent the most frequently mentioned single orientations too (by 15, 11, and ten respondents respectively). Hence, respondents spontaneously denoted a mix of different types of values but exhibited similarities in their emphasis of the *most* important key qualities. Many respondents also agreed on the interdependency of these values, with humanity as an important catalyser and breeding ground for security and reintegration, and named these three values in the same breath when describing the (aspirational) prison officer:

> *My job entails supporting and treating detainees well. That goes by ten [detainees] and is in the first place about security surrounding the detainees on your floor.* (respondent 2)

> *My job is just that I have to guarantee security and order and peace and quiet on the floor and that I provide guidance to the patients or clients in their say day-to-day concerns. Giving information on certain matters. [..] for them to be able to return to society. You should focus on the boys, on their future.* (respondent 18)

2. Humanity of detention has top priority

It is in the analysis of the values that underpin concrete orientations that convergence can be most clearly observed. Despite the multiple variations, prison officers' orientations could be clustered in no more than four overarching values - an extremely narrow and uniform scope considering the range of public values generally mentioned in PVP studies. None of the qualities cited by respondents fell outside the scope of the four categories of humanity, security, reintegration and task effectiveness: they captured exhaustively the (common characteristics of the) concrete qualities.

Furthermore, these four values were similarly prioritized, with humanity taking the ultimate lead as most important pillar of craftsmanship. Respondents prioritized either security or reintegration next, and almost uniformly put task effectiveness last (if they mentioned it at all). The clear majority of respondents maintained that a combination of some manifestations of the first three values characterized public craftsmanship in the prison sector, pointing to a clear commonality, albeit of a disparate nature due to different sub interpretations.

3. Different emphasis and different combinations

However, the level of convergence should not be exaggerated. None of the concrete value orientations was unanimously mentioned by all respondents, and of all value orientations mentioned, only three were mentioned by more than half of respondents. Apart from these three orientations of detainee care, safety and change, orientations were more scattered. They received far less uniform credit and were mentioned by 9 or (more often) far fewer respondents.

Despite the variations within the overarching categories sharing a common underlying value base, each does constitute a change of emphasis with potentially very different professional performance as a result. Orientations towards security differed most: envisioning security in terms of sentencing as punishment, putting the safety of employees first, or building security awareness through as much detainee contact as possible all constitute truly different meanings. Orientations towards humanity were more closely related. But even then, a humane treatment style primarily based on respect triggers slightly different behavior from one based primarily

on honesty or empathy (for example, being polite does not necessarily mean never breaking promises, and one can be very honest and straightforward without showing any empathy). Of course, such orientations can also exist alongside each other, or even complement each other. Finally, with respect to reintegration efforts and task effectiveness, far less divergence was found. Essentially, reintegration efforts can be reduced to two interpretations: a quality of prison officers themselves to engineer change within the detainee, or a quality of the detention process to organize detention in a way that assists the detainee to get to grips with his post-incarceration life through in-house training and with the help of relevant external chain partners. Task effectiveness seems to contain the most convergent orientations and refers to the coherent notion of there being not too much chaos and having sufficient time to fulfil the daily tasks of a prison officer.

In addition, there can be different combinations of value orientations that may further obscure the illusion of a highly uniform interpretation of craftsmanship. For instance, individual care and support of detainees was outlined by the vast majority of respondents, yet very different treatment styles were suggested to describe how this support was to be provided. Some advocated a disciplining perspective founded on the display of authority and preservation of distance towards detainees, others opted for an emphatic approach founded on sheer equality and purposeful employee—detainee proximity and levelling. Several respondents also recognized that the concept of a homogenous penal craftsman was not feasible, and some explicitly said this was undesirable: '*There is no such thing as the ideal prison officer, rather you need a mix of people, and people themselves are also a mix of various aspects'* (respondent 14).

2.8 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter examined value orientations and consequent value convergence towards public craftsmanship among frontline professionals in the Dutch prison sector. It concerns the classification of meanings and the way corresponding value orientations are expressed to fit public officials' own ideas and the professional framework of craftsmanship. In their conceptions of ideal craftsmanship, prison officers exhibit both similarities and differences.

First, the prison officers demonstrate remarkable convergence on a more aggregated level of abstraction and prioritization, that, in addition, reflects well on the Dutch penal mission. Clearly, prison officers have internalized the values that underpin it and mirror them in their conceptions of good craftsmanship. Respondents adhere to the same (types of) values of

humanity, security, reintegration and, to a lesser extent, task effectiveness, and prioritize them in a similar way. Contrary to much prison literature, reintegration is a distinct category alongside direct interaction-oriented humanity orientations, and task effectiveness was identified as another category. Rather than security, humanity triumphs as most important determinant of craftsmanship. This may be considered characteristic of the Dutch penal climate, which, in comparison with some other countries, puts a notably strong emphasis on humane treatment in relation to repressiveness, punitiveness and retaliation. Security and reintegration were cast as the second most important things in good job performance, followed by task effectiveness as a much smaller category.

Interestingly, few of the standard public values we usually find in PVP studies surfaced among prison officers in the Netherlands. Values such as integrity, professionalism, lawfulness or responsiveness, which are associated with the behavior of public sector employees and their relationship to citizens, for instance by Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007, p. 361), were simply not mentioned as such by our respondents when reflecting on public craftsmanship in prisons. Arguably, some of these values, such as honesty and transparency, were brought into other value orientations, for example, an honest treatment style towards detainees, but only in a way that was applied to the distinct context of prison work. At the very least, it indicates that the prison service has a vocabulary of its own that is less compatible with the terminology of general public values research. What is more, it accurately reflects the logic and language of the penal profession and how this relates to characterizations of doing the job well. As such, in reflecting on the general context of the professions, the values of public craftsmanship would seem to offer a more conclusive picture of which values matter most in the specific profession under study.

Second, prison officers demonstrated a convergent perception of value interdependency. The symbiotic relationship between the values of humanity and security was confirmed, but their inherently conflicting nature was not. Rather, respondents report a positive interdependence in which the safeguarding of humanity directly and inevitably leads to more security, and to a better consolidation of reintegration efforts. In addition, high levels of task effectiveness directly enable prison officers to properly pay tribute to those three core values. Finally, the clear majority of respondents mentioned at least three types of values in combination. Hence, none of the four main values of penal craftsmanship is a stand-alone value: evident interlinkages exist between them and they are to a large extent mutually influential and reinforcing.

Lastly, far more divergence was found in the sub levels of value orientations. When mapping the concrete specifications of ideal qualities, a relatively large variation was seen. Interpretations of how security is to be safeguarded differed most substantially, followed by differences in emphasis on the humane treatment of prisoners and the achievement of reintegration. It is on these specific qualities that prison officers concretely base their behavior. They are highly contextualized and detailed accounts of good craftsmanship and demonstrate the uniqueness of individual prison officers, or at least of different types of prison officers, possibly impacted by factors such as age, character, or years of service. Prison officers differed in the emphases they put on specific qualities, in the way they combined qualities within each category and in the way they combined qualities from different categories. This may produce very different behaviors.

This variance suggests that the one-dimensional use of overarching value labels, often prominent in scholarly debates and policies, does poor justice to the complex professional (in this case penal) reality and those navigating it. It represents a call to move away from currently dominant sets of values that focus on macro level governance to apprehension of the meaning of values in the specific work context, and from broad, predefined and prearranged value sets to concrete articulations of values and recognition of the disparate nature of their actual application. The perspective of public craftsmanship might offer some interesting leads. It sets out to address and absorb the crucial values in a given public profession – values that may not be generalizable to the public sector at large but are essentially shaping the public job at hand and determine how the public employee thinks, acts and performs.

Future research into the scope of craftsmanship values is needed, both with respect to a larger and more diverse sample of prison workers and in comparison with other types of professions. Is the prison officer unique in the limited scope of values that are put center stage and the disparate nature of the specific qualities attached to those values? Or is this dynamic endemic to the bounded spaces of all professions? Does it go for all professions that there are dozens of different approaches in practice to the implementation of these values? Another interesting locus for future research is how values might converge within the hierarchy of positions, how the values of street level workers compare with their immediate superiors and senior managers. As professional colleagues, do they adhere to the same types of values and hold similar ideas on corresponding qualities of craftsmanship? Finally, more empirical work needs to be done on the effect on professional practice of the views on public craftsmanship that are held. How do

these views translate to public performance, and if there are strongly divergent views on what craftsmanship entails, does this have a negative effect on public performance?

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CHAPTER 3

VALUES OF PUBLIC CRAFTSMANSHIP:

THE MISMATCH BETWEEN STREET-LEVEL IDEALS

AND INSTITUTIONAL FACILITATION IN THE PRISON SECTOR

Abstract

Public craftsmanship, as the normative prescription of a myriad of public values, is receiving renewed attention. This study aims at empirical insight into how such abstract principles acquire practical meaning in specific professional settings, and how they are practically facilitated on the shop floor. We use an explorative case study among Dutch prison professionals (*N*=32) to contrast perceptions of ideal values and practices with perceptions of institutional facilitation at street level. In the case of prison officers, the institutional context of the prison was found to substantially restrain rather than support the ideals that professionals attach to good street-level craftsmanship. The study's theoretical contribution is to show craftsmanship as uniquely localizing the normative underpinnings of good work. Empirically, the findings show how an unyielding neo-liberalist administrative practice can hamper the potential of public craftsmanship and is likely to have negative impact on staff commitment and successful public service delivery. We end with implications for the further examination and development of public craftsmanship in public administration theory and practice.

Keywords: public values, craftsmanship, street-level performance, professionalism, value management

3.1 Introduction

Recent debates have reinvigorated discussion on "the art of the public profession" as a craft, and normative prescriptions of a myriad of public values that relate to general public sector work and behavior have been put forward ('t Hart, 2014; Kunneman, 2012; Rhodes, 2015). Yet it remains unclear how such abstract principles relate to good working practice within specific

professional settings and how much leeway they are institutionally afforded in concrete street-level practice. Through empirical assessment we seek to explore and further develop the meaning and potential of public craftsmanship in public administration theory and practice and to gain more insight in the street level application of public values to real life practices. We understand public craftsmanship to encompass the skills and values that represent an internalized motivation and competence for quality-driven work: the desire, skill and commitment "to do a job well for its own sake" (Sennett, 2008, p. 9) that serves particularly well to reflect street level professionals and the tangible nature of the tasks they perform, but also their experiential knowledge, and the malleable nature of their service delivery.

Empirical research on how public craftsmanship can be understood, in particular from a values perspective, is lagging behind. But street level professionals absorb and transmit values on a daily basis. They do so in a continuous interplay with the organizational system they are embedded in and influenced by (Noordegraaf, 2007), also proactively influencing it themselves: the way values manifest themselves in street level craftsmanship and how these professionals handle their work shapes the bureaucratic reality of policy implementation (cf. (Caswell, Kupka, Larsen, & Van Berkel, 2017; Hupe, Hill, & Buffat, 2016; Lipsky, 2010; Stewart, 2006; Tummers et al., 2015). Through their management of values, we claim that, in street-level contexts, public professionals are craftsmen who make, repair and actively craft policy.

Studying the decisive influence of the institutional environment as well as the importance of values, that, in this context, may or may not be at stake in professional conduct or craftsmanship is of particular importance. The public profession is becoming increasingly complex in an era of globalization, digitalization, changing work standards, and technologies, fragmented division of professional labor, managerialism-induced regulations and reforms, distrust and polarization, and an ever more demanding and assertive citizenry (Noordegraaf, 2016; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Van de Walle, 2011). While some argue the pervasive nature of new public management reforms is primarily to blame, others question the assumption that public professionals are merely voiceless victims (Boin, James, & Lodge, 2006; Van Loon & Noordegraaf, 2014). According to Trommel (2018) for instance, professionals seem to be absorbed by the target-oriented governance systems they themselves co-produce and sustain, working less from an intrinsic motivation of dedication and compassion. Likewise, Noordegraaf argues that

contemporary knowledge societies are "full of barriers" to strong professionalism and professional autonomies, but stresses that the neo-liberal climates that are often blamed for this, are just one factor among many (2007, p. 763). Professionals may experience this institutional complexity impairing craftsmanship values in practice.

The important question arises as to how conducive to expressing their craftsmanship values – or how restraining of it - the institutional context of the organization appears to be to these professionals, but also of what public craftsmanship means to professionals in specific public settings in the first place? Are these understandings convergent in terms of the values they describe, or are they rather very diffuse? The main research question for this study is: *What ideal conception do street level professionals have of good craftsmanship on the shop floor and how do they perceive the institutional context of the organization to accommodate or restrict their ideals?*

We address this question by contrasting perceptions of ideals (analyzing the underlying values that attach to professionals' subjective perception of good working practice) with perceptions of institutional facilitation (comparing these ideals with the values they see expressed daily in their organizations by means of the institutional paradigms, policies, tools, instruments, and management behavior they encounter). Other than theory on person-organization fit (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007), we do not focus on how organizations attempt to align newcomers with their goals, and how this functions as a possible outcome of the organizational socialization process (Moyson et al., 2018; Peng, Pandey, & Pandey, 2015). Rather, we look at value congruence the other way around: the extent to which public professionals perceive their professional context to correspond to *their* ideal, rather than how they match or can align themselves with the ideals of the organization and its institutional context.

To gain more insight on this topic we use an exploratory case study among professionals in the Dutch prison sector that exemplifies the dynamic of complex craftsmanship development in an equally complex context of institutional pressures. In the Netherlands, prison officers perform a variety of complex practical and psychological tasks on rehabilitation, detainee care and support, and (social) safety control, and must balance inherently conflicting values in their daily

work with detainees. This requires unique hard *and* soft skills, acquired through training but *also* largely on the job, that they exercise with a high degree of discretionary authority in a rather *contrarian* institutional structure of hierarchical decision making and a powerful chain of command. Furthermore, it is a sector in which craftsmanship may be under more and more pressure because of large scale cut backs and reforms that arguably lead to a hollowing out of the profession (Inspectorate Justice and Security, 2017) and cause prison officers to strike (OmroepWest, 2016; Roerdink, 2017).

3.2 Ideals of Public Craftsmanship: Values and Skills

We lay the foundation for public craftsmanship in a reconciliation of the literature on professionalism with that on public values, arguing they have some clear but unexplored intersections on what the nature of such "good work" is. From scholarly debates on professionalism we borrow the focus on skills and practices, and we take the focus on values from public values research. We examine public craftsmanship ideals as the underlying values that attach to professionals' subjective perception of good working skills and practices.

If we regard professionalism from the perspective of craftsmanship, classic professionalism focuses a-normatively more on the *skill* (what professionals do) than on the related *values* of good work (the more abstract end goals professionals want to achieve). The literature on professionalism in the public sector is rich and continues to expand (Freidson, 2001; Noordegraaf, 2016). The idea is that processes of "controlled content," for instance by means of formally organized selection, monitoring, education, and training, "structure and regulate occupational practices" (Noordegraaf, 2007, p. 762) in a way that strengthens the quality of the profession and of its service delivery. Such classic conceptions of professionalism "as the occupational level of specialized, theoretical knowledge combined with the existence of firm intra-occupational norms" (L. B. Andersen & Pedersen, 2012, p. 46) may create an external locus of control for professional skill development. It may reinforce instrumental conceptions of professionals as a homogenizing force of technical-rational intra-occupational socialization, where the development of skills is seen as part of an isomorphic process that leads to the institutionalization of perhaps internalized (Teodoro, 2014), but by any means *enforced* professional norms and behaviors. As Rhodes states: "Indeed, existing lists of skills are about which skills the public servant *ought* to have in the era of NPM, not descriptions of the skills that public servants deploy in their everyday lives" (2015, p. 642). Hence, much of the work on

professionalism focuses more on the tangible formalized skills - especially on the externally manufactured and monitored ones - than on the subjective and normative underpinnings of those skills.

In contrast, public values research may attract criticism for being too abstract when considered from a craftsmanship framework. In attempting to get to grips with what qualifies governance as "good," public values debates center on which general public values matter and which general public values officials adhere to, which value bases determine officials' public sector motivation, and how officials deal with dilemmas induced by conflicting values (cf. (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012; De Graaf & Meijer, 2018; Kjeldsen, 2014). Few studies link this focus on the "good" to street level practitioners in terms of what the skills and practices of good work actually look like in administrative practice. Our study is thus a first step in mapping the values that underpin conceptions of public craftsmanship, and the way they relate to concrete professional practices, skills, and institutional constraints in the organization.

In this narrower context of public craftsmanship, we define values as the key qualities that public professionals esteem in the context of, and towards, the object of their work, for example education or, in this study, detention. Such qualities may pertain to skills, or to the qualities of individuals in the realization of public craftsmanship, for instance, treating detainees with respect, or to practices, qualities of the governance process by means of which public craftsmanship can prosper, for instance, providing a safe work environment for employees in penal facilities. Public craftsmanship, then, is understood to encompass both the skills and practices as well as the values that represent an internalized motivation and competence for quality-driven work: the desire, skill and commitment "to do a job well for its own sake" (Sennett, 2008, p. 9).

There are two reasons that combining skills and practices on the one hand, and values on the other, into one perspective of craftsmanship may enrich our understanding of the complexities, the importance, and the uniqueness of the public function at the frontline. Craftsmanship values are different from professional values, and also have a different focus from public values. First, they shift the focus to a different type of expertise, and second, they shift the focus to street-level administration and hands-on work.

3.3 Shifting the Focus to a Different Type of Expertise

Other than professional values, craftsmanship values express a different type of expertise – one that serves particularly well to reflect the experiential knowledge of street level professionals and the malleable nature of their service delivery. To call something a craft rather than a profession is to accept the importance of a different type of knowledge and way of acquiring expertise. Classic professionalism focuses on (the control of) good work by means of formal education, theoretical specialization, and top-down norm enforcement. By contrast, much of the specialized knowledge public administrators need is tacit, non-systematized, and versatile (Barnard, 1938; Polanyi, 2009; Rhodes, 2015). According to Rhodes, in many occupational settings, the work of the public administrator is better understood as a malleable art: a profession that is learned on the job, for a large part informally and through experiential knowledge (2015, p. 642). A good craftsman, Sennett argues, is always "judging while doing" (2008, p. 296): they "equally make and repair" and "in turning outward, they hold themselves to account and can also see what the work means to others" (2008, pp. 248-249). As such, craftsmanship offers a language through which to appreciate the complexities and uniqueness of the public profession: it "has no one best way" and, next to on the basis of formal knowledge, skills are often developed on the ground by "passing on practical beliefs and practices" (Rhodes, 2015, p. 642). It constitutes an emphasis on practical beliefs and practices rather than theoretical guidelines, and, through trial and error, on a continual quest to find contextualized and tailor-made "best ways" rather than on protocolled work ("muddling through" in the words of Lindblom (1959), or "artistic, intuitive processes" in the words of Schön (1983, p. 49)).

This means we understand public craftsmanship to represent professional work that is versatile rather than fixed, building not just on theoretical (transfer of) knowledge in the formal sense, but – importantly – also on practical and experiential (transfer of) knowledge in the informal sense. In addition, this differing emphasis is particularly representative of the often-tangible nature of the work of professionals at the street level and brings us to the next point.

3.4 Shifting the Focus to Street Level and Hands On Work

Distinct from public values, craftsmanship values have a different focal point and shift the focus to administrative practice. This serves particularly well to reflect street-level professionals and

the tangible nature of the tasks they perform. Much of the study of public values theoretically and empirically constitutes a focus on values in the wider public sector, or amongst administrators in the higher echelons of policy development or management (cf. (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012; Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015; Holmberg et al., 2009; Huberts, 2014; Reynaers & Paanakker, 2016; Van der Wal, 2016; Van der Wal & Yang, 2015; Yang & Van der Wal, 2014). Broad values such as desired accountability, lawfulness or effectiveness are understood to pertain to general public sector conduct, processes, and outcomes (or in Bozeman's words, to "the principles on which governments and policies should be based" (2007, p. 13)) and are supposed to guide public decision making in all its aspects[2]. The limited amount of studies on the public office as a craft agree in the scope and definition of public values. For instance, Rhodes discusses generic values such as stewardship and political nous that ought to guide top administrators' behavior (2015, pp. 642-644), and, among public managers, 't Hart contends that generic values such as transparency, accessibility, and reliability are key values of the craftsmen of the future (2014, pp. 36-37). Unlike values of such general nature, the conception of public craftsmanship that we propose opens up space to pinpoint values in specific professional and occupational spaces. Moreover, it indicates values that are descriptive of the hands-on work delivered at street level.

In doing so, our perspective also shifts the focus to individual professionals: to the way individual professionals frame and interpret relevant values in good work. As such, it constitutes one way of reducing the conceptual confusion that is paramount in public values research (Beck Jørgensen & Rutgers, 2015; Van der Wal, 2011), and, as values only acquire meaning in the specific context in which they are found and used (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012; Rutgers, 2015; Yang, 2016), powerfully aids understanding of the irrefutably normative nature and contextual relevance.

3.5 A Common Understanding of Penal Craftsmanship Values or Not?

When theorizing on the degree of street level consensus on craftsmanship and on a conducive institutional environment for craftsmanship in the organization, we need to consider what is

[2] See the work of Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman (2007) for an elaborate account of the aspects to which the "public" in public values can refer

known on professional convergence in general, and on the uniformity of penal values in particular.

Conceiving values from a value pluralism perspective indicates that dealing with values in volatile and overcrowded policy spaces is demanding and not straightforward (Michael W Spicer, 2010; D. Thacher & M. Rein, 2004). Yet, it is often assumed to represent the daily reality of on-the-ground decision making (Koppenjan et al., 2008; Oldenhof et al., 2014; Steenhuisen, 2009). In the prison context, the practical difficulty of doing justice to a multitude of values is widely recognized. Prison officers' work is characterized by a balancing of multiple and often conflicting values (Liebling & Arnold, 2004) that challenges the unambiguous execution of good craftsmanship. According to Spicer value balancing is especially relevant (2009, p. 539) in contexts "where practitioners are often called upon to grapple with and make judgements about value conflicts, […] and where their actions are often, either explicitly or implicitly, coercive in character and affect a large number of people" - prison officers' work pre-eminently represents such a context.

In penal literature, the most commonly mentioned values said to be inextricably allied to detention are the values of security, humanity, and rehabilitation (DiIulio, 1987; Foucault, 1977; Molleman, 2014). These three goals or values are also explicitly incorporated in the mission statement of the Dutch prison system that reads: "We ensure a *safe* and *humane* detention and work with our adjacent organizations and the inmate, towards *reintegration*" (Dutch Correctional Agency, 2009c). Prison officers are expected to endorse these values, but the values are inherently different in many respects (Boin et al., 2006). For instance, striking a balance between the repressive nature of security and the relational nature of humanity demands different tactics when translated to craftsmanship: "Being a good prison officer involves being good at *not* using force but still getting things done, and being *prepared* to use the various power bases officers can draw on when necessary" (Liebling et al., 2010, p. 205). This value complexity may threaten a common understanding of public craftsmanship among prison officers.

This potential problem for a uniform framework of craftsmanship values is partially obviated by the socialization effect of professional logics: professionals conform to identical and highly institutionalized professional norms (L. B. Andersen & Pedersen, 2012) that generate normative isomorphist processes through professional selection and socialization (Teodoro, 2014). As such, the definition of the skills involved in good work is shaped and controlled by and within the professional group itself: "Because the services that professionals deliver often require specialized knowledge, the profession benefits from everyone adhering to the same norms, and therefore steers the behavior of the professional through education, socialization, and internal regulation" (Van Loon en Noordegraaf, 2014, p. 208). In the public sector, Freidson explains, this pertains to the expectation of professionals becoming socialized to "an ideology that asserts greater commitment to doing good work than to economic gain" (2001, p. 127)." The converging effect is likely not only to pertain to skills and norms, but, importantly, also to values. As Perry and Paarlberg indicate, values, too, serve as a homogenizing framework and "provide a common understanding of the correct way of thinking and acting" within organizations (2007, p. 39).

3.6 Examining Institutional Facilitation in the Organization

Even if conceptions of craftsmanship are uniform within street-level occupations, this does not mean those ideal conceptions are institutionally facilitated in the organization in an equally uniform sense. Moreover, since the terms of imprisonment are susceptible to political or societal swings, in practice the aims, tasks, demands and context of prison work are subject to frequent renegotiation of values. Within the framework of craftsmanship, this means prison officers can be faced with a highly volatile administrative practice (Liebling et al., 2010). This signals how complex institutional environments may constrain value attainment, and hence, public craftsmanship, but this we still know little about.

The institutional facilitation of public craftsmanship in the organization, which constitutes the second part of our research question, remains under-researched. The values public professionals aspire to may be at odds with their perceptions of what actually plays a role at street level in the complex bureaucratic reality that is restrained by moral complexity, lack of time, resources, political will or bureaucratic inaptitude. Different institutional paradigms, policies, tools, instruments, behaviors, and management dynamics, acknowledged by the local dynamics in the

organization, may or may not facilitate craftsmanship on the shop floor. It simply is a given that "all good things cannot be pursued at once" (Grindle, 2004, p. 525). Numerous studies reveal that front-line public professionals may sense a lack of their own involvement and significance, and how, at the implementation stage, they experience alienation from its guiding policies (Tummers, 2013). This may result in, or contribute to, decreased willingness to implement policies, to stress and low job satisfaction, and to coping strategies such as routinization behavior, emotional detachment from clients, rule breaking, or work-related cynicism and complaining (T. Evans, 2013; Lipsky, 2010; Tummers et al., 2015; Tummers & Den Dulk, 2013). Such issues suggest little room for street level ideals in practice, and even show the institutional context in the organization functioning to undermine craftsmanship.

3.7 Research methods and analysis

3.7.1 Research methods, object and respondent characteristics

In order to empirically assess street level perceptions of craftsmanship and its institutional facilitation in the prison, this study employs a qualitative approach by means of two case studies among prison officers. To obtain "rich descriptions and explanations for processes in identifiable local contexts" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 1), in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 32 respondents in two penal facilities in the Netherlands, in 2014 and 2015 (N=18 and N=14 respectively). Both groups work within the same overarching penal policy programs and policies, share identical job descriptions, and attend to very similar target groups of adult male detainees.

In addition, we employed participatory observation and, for two months, accompanied prison officers on their day, evening and weekend shifts. As well as giving a far better understanding of prison dynamics, factors and terminology, this allowed for the selection of a diversified and seemingly representative pool of respondents in terms of age, gender, length of service and attitude to the job (for instance, pessimistic or optimistic, repressive or emphatic): 25 male and 7 female prison officers, between 30 and 65 years old, and with a length of service ranging from 5 to more than 30 years (see table 3.1). Although men, and particularly middle-aged men, are overrepresented, this represents prison officer population in the Netherlands accurately, as well as the populations at both facilities.

Table 3.1. Respondent characteristics

		Prison officials (*N=32)*			**Prison officials** (*N=32)*
Gender	Male	25		5-10	4
	Female	7		10-15	7
				16-20	5
	30-35	1	**Years of service**	21-25	4
	36-40	2		26-30	9
Age	41-45	7		>30	3
	46-50	9			
	51-55	5			
	56-60	7			
	61-65	1			

As professionals working at street level, prison officers are a suitable representation of the type of craftsmen we set out to research. Typical of *street-level* work, the work of prison officers entails the shaping of prison policies through the frequency, nature and effectuated impact of their interaction with detainees. In the Netherlands, prison officers are granted substantial professional decision-making authority "in the support, motivation, and stimulation of detainees, in the intervention in aggressive behaviors and crisis situations, in the individual support of detainees as mentor, in the informing of detainees, and in the drafting of detainee (behavioral) reports" (Dutch Correctional Agency, 2009b).

This also signals the unique and complex *professional* skillsets that Dutch prison officers, as true craftsmen, acquire, partially through their common professional (in house) training and partially learnt on the job. This unique skillset sets them apart from the security guards that are prison officers in many other countries. In the Netherlands however the core staff in prisons consists of two distinct groups of personnel: security guards who control all movements into, within and out of the penal facility, and prison officers who are assigned and trained to undertake a range of responsibilities in detainee care, providing motivation, and facilitating and fostering behavioral change among detainees, which includes core competencies such as "sensitivity" to (their own role in) other people's feelings and needs, and "professional integrity" (Dutch Correctional Agency, 2009b). Prison officers furthermore share a professional code of conduct – prescribing desired professional behaviors, and giving detailed guidance on

work-related dilemmas and risks, for example, dealing with contraband, the appropriate use of force, prohibited forms of contact with detainees and their families, and their reporting obligations (Dutch Correctional Agency, 2016). The detailed job descriptions that the Dutch Correctional Agency issues show how prison officers thus develop a very specific and much broader professional expertise (see box 3.1).

Box 3.1. Professional tasks required of a prison officer (Dutch Correctional Agency 2009a)

The work of prison officers involves: 1) intake and information, for instance contributing to advice on detainee placement plans; 2) guarding and security, for instance ensuring compliance to safety regulations; 3) support, for instance promoting a good living and working climate, as well as self-awareness and responsibility among detainees; 4) care, such as providing basic social and psychological care and referring detainees to appropriate medical or psychiatric specialists; and 5) reporting and information transfer, for instance drafting behavioral reports; or, in the case of a senior position, promoting expertise, and supervision.

3.7.2 Interview questions

In the absence of an objective measure for determining "the amount" of craftsmanship, interviewees were asked for their subjective perceptions of good craftsmanship. As the word "values" proved too vague a concept for respondents, and to avoid any bias towards certain types of values, respondents were purposefully asked concrete questions such as "what does a good prison official look like?" to bring to the surface ideal qualities of public craftsmanship, or "what does the current penal vision constitute in practice?" to disclose perceptions of (room for) public craftsmanship in the institutional environment of the organization. Several control questions were asked in order to eliminate socially desirable answers, for example, descriptions of the job of prison officer, and questions about perceptions of ideal penal policy, about treatment styles towards detainees, and about when they felt they were doing their job well and what they disliked about their job in practice. Respondents were entirely free to elaborate and to raise topics themselves in response to, and in addition to, the questions. Interviews lasted approximately 1 hour and were recorded and transcribed verbatim (234.869 words).

3.7.3 Data analysis

The data analysis consisted of a systematic content analysis through software-supported (MAXQDA) coding: a process of attaching distinct labels to data segments to organize, classify, and conceptualize the interview material (Friese, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the belief that "a properly developed code is more than just a descriptive label" (Friese, 2012, p. 94), the coding system was developed largely inductively, using two-stage coding to build categories from the bottom up (see (Bazeley, 2007; Friese, 2012; Kuş Saillard, 2011). During the first stage, open coding was applied to the data to explore and create subcategories of qualities that provide "a good description of heterogeneity and variance in the data material" (Friese, 2012, p. 113). This includes uniting data segments with similar content into mutually-exclusive codes to create a methodological hierarchical coding system that reflects the data in all its facets (Friese, 2012, pp. 130-131). The next step was to find common denominators by renaming, modifying and integrating sub labels into larger overarching coding categories (Friese, 2012, pp. 130-131). "Going back and forth between data and codes" (Weiss, 1994, p. 156), this validated version was applied to the data set at large and allowed for grasping the subtleties of perceptions of craftsmanship, for comparing these across respondents, and for comparing ideal conceptions with conceptions of organizational facilitation. For the sake of providing a manageable overview, the analysis presented includes only qualities that were mentioned by at least five respondents.

Concretely, this means that qualities as mentioned by respondents were inductively aggregated and classified into five main categories of values and one category of practical impediments that exhaustively capture and include the (common characteristics of) the qualities of craftsmanship mentioned by respondents: humanity, security, reintegration, efficiency, task effectiveness and task negativity. The nature of their content will be detailed in the results section that follows.

3.8 Findings

3.8.1 Prison Officers' Ideal Conceptions of Craftsmanship

Table 3.2 lists the key qualities that respondents associate with their ideal conception of craftsmanship in prison work for both cases collectively, because, interestingly, cross-case

comparison did not render any significant differences between the two cases. These qualities represent ideal type characterizations of very tangible and profession-bound norms and guidelines for action. They constitute a set of professional activities unique to detainee care, or, in the language of craftsmanship, a required set of unique *skills and practices* to deliver good penal work. They should not be mistaken for nonexistent or untenable ideals that have little to do with actual practice: participatory observation confirmed that the ideals mentioned are closely aligned with the practical activities prison officers perform on a daily basis.

Some variance can be detected in the diversity of qualities and in the different combinations that prison officers mention: they not all name all the qualities, nor are they each mentioned to the same extent. From observation it was also learned that, broadly speaking, there are two different types of prison officers: the "soft" ones that prioritize empathy, respect, close contact, and understanding in their work with detainees, and the so-called "hardliners" that work from the conviction that authority, repression, disciplining and distance is key. This distinction, and the usefulness of having the two groups on the shop floor, was also confirmed in the interviews with respondents. Of course, this results in different types of and emphases in craftsmanship.

However, the data displays remarkable consistency when aggregating these concrete qualities to the more abstract *values* they describe. Again, different respondents place different emphases, but on the aggregated level, this renders a highly convergent image of prison officers subscribing to a common core of four key values: public craftsmanship in the prison sector is about safeguarding the central values of humanity, security, reintegration efforts and task effectiveness (variations of these values were mentioned 88, 45, 39 and 15 times respectively). Interestingly, these four core values are surprisingly commonly understood, both within and across both cases, and signal an exceptionally high convergence of street level perceptions of penal craftsmanship.

First, as demonstrated by table 3.2, **humanity** orientations represent the most important pillar of craftsmanship, according to respondents. They refer to how detainees should be treated. This category fosters the idea of a prison officer who is there to cater to the needs of detainees, with a detention climate and staff approach that first and foremost sees the person behind the

detainee, and involves treating detainees with empathy, respect and dignity, honesty, and maintaining personal one-on-one contact with detainees – mentioned by 14, 14, 10, and 12 prison officers respectively. To a large extent, this humane approach is also institutionalized, for instance through training on detainee treatment styles, and reflected in daily practice in, for example, the official mentoring role each prison officer has with a couple of detainees. Safeguarding humanity was reported to have important spill-over effects to the other key values that typify craftsmanship.

Table 3.2. Ideal values of public craftsmanship according to prison officers

Public craftsmanship: ideal values according to prison officers (N=32)		
Value categories	*Qualities of craftsmanship*	*No. of respondents mentioning this*
Humanity (88)	Individual care and support of detainees: helping out practically and emotionally	26
	Treating and approaching detainees with empathy: being sympathetic to moods and behavior resulting from stress and personal problems	14
	Treating and approaching detainees with respect and dignity: being polite and acknowledge as one's fellow man	14
	Personal one-on-one contact with detainees	12
	Treating and approaching detainees honestly: keeping one's promises	10
	Literally mentioned "humanity of detention" or "humane treatment of detainee" without specifying its exact meaning	6
	Monitoring detainee behavior	6
Security (45)	Treating and approaching detainees from a disciplining perspective: setting clear boundaries to desirable and acceptable behavior	17

	Security of detention and/or for detainees: reducing or preventing aggression, violence, unsafe atmosphere	16
	Security awareness: managing tensions through contact	7
	Security of employee: keeping oneself and colleagues safe	5
Reintegration (39)	Changing mindset and behavior of detainee during detention	18
	Teaching detainee life skills: work, education, etc.	8
	Contributing to detainees' return to society	7
	Discharge support in cooperation with chain partners: arranging housing, social security disbursements, etc.	6
Task Effectiveness (15)	Ensuring daily peace and quiet: a well-structured day without unnecessary unrest, distraction or time constraints	15

Second, **security** orientations contain the key notion that detention should first and foremost be executed safely and should be aimed at maximizing safety and security for both employees and detainees and at minimizing occurrences of aggression, violence, and crime within the penal facility. Besides the need for a balanced approach to detainees, which may include a more strict and severe disciplining treatment style on occasions (mentioned by 17 respondents), respondents mainly report the importance of relational security. Knowing their detainees well enables the prison officer to detect and anticipate potentially divergent behaviors: "*contact is our first safety line*" (respondent 27).

Third, respondents put equal emphasis on **reintegration** efforts as a key quality of penal craftsmanship. Reintegration orientations are depicted as a direct investment in stimulating detainees' rehabilitation so as to obtain a life(style) free of criminal activity in the long term. Prison officers feel that craftsmanship in their work aims at bringing about behavioral change through interaction with detainees (mentioned by 18 respondents), and there are already many institutionalized ways in which they are required to foster this, for instance by stimulating

detainees to take in-house rehabilitation courses and psychological assessments. Others stress that more should be done, for instance by teaching detainees life skills (mentioned by 8) or by organizing better discharge support in cooperation with chain partners (mentioned by 6). In the words of one prison officer: "*I believe just punishing is of no use. […] I believe that just locking up, that's not it. You have to do something with them*" (respondent 11). This pedagogical conviction is strongly related to the humane and disciplining treatment styles that were put forward. It was only coded under "reintegration" when respondents explicitly signaled that prison work should be about teaching, coaching, or even developing detainees to become better citizens.

Clearly, the three values that the sector officially recognizes as key penal values are convergently internalized at street level. However, prison officers seem especially informally rather than formally socialized into these official values: they accentuate how, in their own behavior, they intuitively seek to enact and advance the informal skills and practices attached to them, rather than mentioning or appreciating the formal tools and mechanisms that the sector has set up to express these values.

Next to the informal interpretation and expression of the formally advocated values, an interesting additional value of street level sense-making was identified: the fourth and final cluster of "**task effectiveness"** represents a much smaller cluster, which is mainly explained by the far fewer variations that this cluster contains. Yet, 15 out of 32 respondents signal this as an important element of penal craftsmanship. Task effectiveness orientations relate directly to an enabling environment and can be defined as being granted the time and means to conduct everyday business effectively.

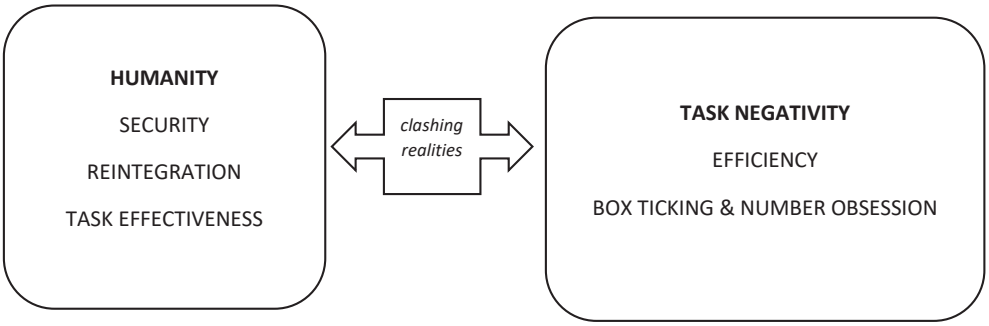
3.8.2 Prison Officers' Perception of the Institutional Facilitation of Craftsmanship

When reflecting on how conducive street level practice is to craftsmanship, prisons officers paint a grim picture. Very little of what they regard as ideal can be seen in the institutional conditions they observe in practice: although we found many examples of institutional measures that facilitate these values, respondents perceive room for reintegration, humanity and security to be almost negligible (see table 3.3). Security is exempted from the table altogether, and

almost the only mention of humanity was in the context of creating more autonomy for detainees by shifting responsibilities to them, which some respondents consider a very negative institutional policy because they feel it decreases security or fear it will gradually put prison officers out of business. The few respondents that acknowledge the theoretical aims of the system with respect to reintegration efforts often say that they witness little facilitation of it in reality: "*There IS a clear vision within the Dutch Custodial Agency and we all know what we are here for, but […] that is a paper reality and in practice […], on cooperation on resocialization, I don't see it getting off the ground*." (respondent 30)

What remains is an analysis of a penal institutional climate that is quite negatively informed by "task negativity", efficiency measures and a strongly negative and judgmental conception of task effectiveness as box ticking and number obsession (see figure 3.1). In the perception of respondents, these are clear facilitation problems that have a mitigating influence on thriving craftsmanship.

Figure 3.1. Prison officers' ideal conceptions of craftsmanship versus prison officers' perceptions of the institutional facilitation of craftsmanship in the organization



Rather than a value, the largest cluster "task negativity" represents practical impediments and facilitation problems: a range of (practical or moral) obstacles that prevent craftsmanship from

reaching its full potential and characterize the current penal vision in terms of negative attitudes towards the actual institutional context. It includes overall frustration with the job (10), too much work pressure (mentioned by 9 respondents from one facility only), poor communication within the facility and between prison officers on the floor (8), uncertainty among employees about future job prospects due to cutbacks (6), workplace rotation due to shortage of staff (6), and excessive administrative tasks (5). No less than 26 out of 32 respondents indicate task negativity as a core component of the institutional context of street level practice. Together, they mention some form of task negativity 44 times.

Table 3.3. Accommodation of craftsmanship in institutional practice according to prison officers

Institutional facilitation of public craftsmanship according to prison officers (N=32)		
Categories	*Experienced institutional focus*	*No. of respondents mentioning this*
Task negativity (44)	As overall frustration with the job	10
	Too little time/too much work pressure	9
	Poor communication within the facility	8
	Uncertainty about future job prospects due to cut backs	6
	Workplace rotation	6
	Excessive administrative tasks	5
Efficiency (36)	Cutbacks	24
	Personnel cuts	7
	Mobility of personnel	5
Reintegration (13)	Change mindset and behavior of detainee during detention	7
	Return to society	6
Task Effectiveness (10)	Box ticking and number obsession	10
Humanity (7)	Detainee given responsibility	7

The second most frequently mentioned institutional restriction on street level practice is a major focus on efficiency in the current prison vision. Over two-thirds of respondents consider some sort of negative efficiency measure to be the key focus in the current penal climate. Prison officers explain how they feel the system is predominantly aimed at cutbacks (mentioned by 24 respondents), including severe personnel cuts (mentioned by 7), or the moving around of personnel over different departments and facilities (mentioned by another 7). Moreover, 14 of them insist it is undoubtedly the number one focus. Respondents were very clear in their condemnation of what are, in their view, excessive cutbacks: "*Everything's got to be cheaper and shorter and quicker with less personnel. As little expenses as possible. It is a blow of demotivation.*" (respondent 13)

Finally, the meaning of task effectiveness is completely altered: as an ideal value of craftsmanship it referred to getting tasks done in a structured and well-paced environment, but in the context of institutional facilitation respondents perceive only a negative form of task effectiveness. They explain how a rigid performance measurement system shifts the focus to "box ticking only": targets have to be achieved for their own sake, with the content and quality of the action required to meet the target mattering less. One third of respondents stress that they see their managers as suffering from goal displacement rhetoric and number obsession, demanding unrealistically high numerical targets, for cell inspections or the frequency of mentor conversations and the number of topics addressed during those talks, for example. Prison officers say they feel forced into producing false and meaningless reports:

> "*It is a purely quantitative measurement, it has nothing to do with quality. […] What we are pushed towards by our managers is primarily that we achieve the number, because that is what they are judged on, and then I think: well, that is of no use at all. I'd rather have one good cell inspection than 20 phonies.*" (respondent 30)

> "*They only check: is there a report [on how the detainee is doing]? Yes, on to the next detainee. So they are only ticking boxes. […] Not that there's anything in there, but they count as being drafted, all blank documents. That is our reality."* (respondent 14)

Overall, existing formally developed institutional measures to aid the manifestation of key penal values are not considered as playing any significant role in the expression of the craftsmanship ideals that prison officers subscribe to. Perception of the facilitation of penal craftsmanship in institutional practice characterizes the current policy vision negatively, together with the corresponding institutional context of the organization. The dominant perception is that the presence of a vast range of institutional impediments together form a highly restraining environment for the advancement of penal craftsmanship.

3.9 Discussion

Extending the importance of these findings beyond the prison context and taking into account their limitations, several valuable lessons for the advancement of public values research and praxis can be taken from the above analysis and can further our understanding of what public craftsmanship is about.

First, conceptualizing public craftsmanship as the way concrete professional skills and institutional practices tie in with overarching values proves to be a useful and parsimonious tool in bringing to the surface the values that matter to frontline officials in street level practice. This also reveals how, through lived experiences, those values acquire practical meaning in specific professional settings. Methodologically, such bottom-up examination of "doing the job well" enacts the observation that aspirational values associated with "doing good" are always contextual (Rutgers, 2015). It offers a built-in contextuality that allows respondents to speak in their own professional jargon and helps them to more easily articulate what matters to them normatively. Of course, some values such as humanity and security may be transferrable to other service sectors with a comparable service type, such as field military personnel, street level police officers or paramedics, but the distinct skills and practices described to enact these values will differ significantly from the reality and logic of the penal system. For public values research, it clearly indicates the added value of a craftsmanship perspective and underlines the importance of examining values, and value attainment, in the context of the workplace and through the eyes of the people on the shop floor.

This was exemplified in finding that the values respondents mention in this study differ quite significantly from the values that public values literature generally puts forward in that they are very specifically tailored to the unique tasks professionals perform for the specific type of beneficiaries they serve. Nevertheless, and paying due regard to their own unique prioritizations and compilations, they reveal themselves in a surprisingly convergent way, and offer scant acknowledgement of existing institutionalized means in favor of personal professional realization and interpretation. This indicates some interesting areas for further research into the commonality of street level understandings of craftsmanship values in specific professions:

Proposition 1: Street level professionals convergently identify and comprehend a set of values of public craftsmanship unique to their public service sector, but place different emphases on the associated professional skills and practices.

Proposition 2: Street level professionals are more informally than formally socialized into craftsmanship values and tend to more strongly appreciate the enactment of craftsmanship ideals through their own individual, informal and intuitive behavior than through the use of formal institutionalized tools and measures.

Second, the findings call for greater attention to be paid in public values research to practical institutional contexts and their impediments. The "full" manifestation of a value depends on the combination of qualities of persons and qualities of the governance processes. In our study, for instance, reintegration is about prison officers seeking to change behavior in one-on-one interaction with detainees, but is also about institutional facilitation of chain partner cooperation and detainee skills training. Future research across different service sectors and service types will be needed to account for variance in organizational and institutional culture and in institutional facilitation. But there is often a clash in reconciling intrinsic motivations and values with systems that are geared towards instrumental outcomes, a clash that public professionals across service domains in the public sector potentially recognize and share.

Here, the craftsmanship perspective clarifies the nature and context of value interdependency and conflict. With value pluralism and value balancing in street level penal craftsmanship

having essential importance, the classic prison dichotomy of humanity versus security was less evident. This is due to positive interdependency and the spill-over effects of values, and was represented only in minor disputes that prison workers settled amongst themselves. Conflicting values were found to include more complex contradictions such as efficiency undermining security, or compliance with performance measurement regimes demoralizing reintegration and humanity efforts, suggesting that the greatest conflict is *not* between different co-existing values, but between ideal conceptions of craftsmanship and the perceived institutional reality on the floor.

Proposition 3: In the context of craftsmanship, the gravest conflicts are not between different co-existing craftsmanship values, but between personal, intrinsic, moral values of good work and institutionally enforced instrumental values.

Respondents perceive an institutional reality of unwavering neo-liberalist management and performance measurement as undermining their craftsmanship severely and directly. This seems to confirm Sennett's notion that the work of craftsmen "can never be completely perfected and is often impaired by social and economic conditions: 'schools may fail to provide the tools to do good work, and workplaces may not truly value the aspiration for quality' " (2008, p. 9). And even at a time when new public management is said to be in decline (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2005; Pollitt, 2015), it supports the fear that managerialism in professional contexts, be it in prisons or in other public domains, creates many barriers to good craftsmanship. Professional realities cannot be reduced to standardized protocols, and the classic narrative of New Public Management might demand an alternative (De Vries & Nemec, 2013; Overeem & Tholen, 2011). To respondents, such neo-liberal performance rhetoric, in which "professionals have become part of large-scale organizational systems, with cost control; targets; indicators; quality models; and market mechanisms, prices, and competition" (Noordegraaf, 2007, p. 763), in practice leaves little room for streel-level ideals. Public craftsmanship might provide a new narrative that does better justice to the need to establish a dialogue between the systemic environment of numerical control and the lifeworld of intrinsic values. From this analysis we derive three further propositions:

Proposition 4: In the context of public craftsmanship, value attainment at street level is put most at risk by a restraining institutional environment of target-oriented and performance-induced managerial control and reform.

Proposition 4a: These institutional impediments prevent street-level professionals from putting into practice their own conception of craftsmanship: they raise practical implementation problems that impede street-level craftsmanship and result in mounting frustration, exit behavior and the experience of moral dilemmas among street-level professionals.

Proposition 4b: Synchronizing institutional profiles to facilitate the leading values in craftsmanship among street-level professionals will enhance their willingness to implement policy tools and instruments and will increase positive workplace perceptions.

Of course, doubts can be raised about the tenability, veracity or even righteousness of relying on street-level perceptions and how accurately they describe street level reality. For instance, public professionals may exaggerate the presence and impact of the neo-liberalist focus and can be blind to rival explanations of the forces that may be reconfiguring professional work (Noordegraaf, 2016). Furthermore, public professionals can develop negative and self-serving craftsmanship conceptions whose pursuit may harm the public good or professional ethic altogether (Adams & Balfour, 2009; Noordegraaf, 2007). However, even if public professionals' subjectivization of "good work", and the environment conducive to it, contradicts political or societal expectations, or constitutes a perceived administrative reality only, it nonetheless directly and drastically informs how they think and how they deliver their public function. As such, it is a reality to be taken seriously into account.

3.10 Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights about a potentially high commonality in the conception of craftsmanship at street level and about how street-level professionals are likely to suffer from a discrepancy between ideal craftsmanship and real-life institutional conditions. In this case study on prison officers, it was shown that their ideal craftsmanship aims at fostering humanity, security, reintegration, and to a lesser extent task effectiveness, and has very little to do with the shop floor environment as they perceive it, where rigid performance management, excessive efficiency measures, and practical impediments predominate. The findings show how this

mismatch between the lifeworld of intrinsic values and a contrarian systemic environment of unwavering numerical control and performance rhetoric can function to create negativity in staff and thwarts policy implementation.

This article has generated a set of propositions for future research into the conception of public craftsmanship and its facilitation at street level. With this research still in its early stages, future studies must examine these dynamics of craftsmanship, and their impact on street-level practice in terms of policy execution, value adherence, and the job experience of public personnel, in a range of frontline public professions, and must raise the level of generality in these findings across different service types and service sectors.

We conclude that public craftsmanship is sustained by the successful synchronization of specific qualities in individual craftsmen (personal qualities) and institutional governance settings structured to facilitate such personal skills on the shop floor (institutional qualities). When, for instance, external political or financial pressures make institutional synchronization unfeasible or undesirable, professionals should be equipped to voice their concerns, to understand how policy programs and tools (set out to) tie in with their craftsmanship values, and to learn how they can mold their professional practice to uphold craftsmanship values as well as possible. Here, policymakers and public managers have an important role to play in value acknowledgement and communication. Equipping public professionals to critically assess how and why (as well as why not) they can embed their personal qualities in a sometimes-thorny institutional context, will aid the creation of a conducive environment in which they can deliver on their shared values of craftsmanship.

PART 2

VALUE CONVERGENCE AND MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT LEVELS

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CHAPTER 4

PERCEPTIONS OF THE FRONTLINE CRAFT: ASSESSING VALUE CONVERGENCE BETWEEN POLICY MAKERS, MANAGERS AND STREET-LEVEL PROFESSIONALS IN THE PRISON SECTOR

Abstract

From the unique perspective of perceptions of the frontline craft, this study examines value convergence between policy makers, managers and street-level professionals (N=55). Toxic stereotyping between staff levels, exacerbated by restrictive organizational conditions, are shown to overshadow positive value convergence from socialization processes. In this Dutch prison study, public officials are consistently biased to believe that management above them prioritizes targets (values that support the organization) over content (values that serve prison inmates). This explains how *perceived* role and value differences impact the actualization of shared values in public service delivery much more negatively than the actual differences.

4.1 Introduction

A growing body of literature is taking what Beck Jørgensen and Rutgers (2015) call a "Public Values Perspective (PVP)", outlining the public values that uniquely characterize the public sector. Taking a generalist view of the public official, many of these studies map the role and relevance of values in public governance on an aggregate level (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Huberts & Van der Wal, 2014; Perry, De Graaf, Van der Wal, & Van Montfort, 2014; Wang & Wang, 2019). Values are commonly understood as "qualities that are appreciated for contributing to or constituting what is good, right, beautiful, or worthy of praise and admiration" (De Graaf, 2003, p. 22), with public values referring to desired and praiseworthy public-sector conduct, processes and outcomes (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007). Fewer studies address how such rather general and abstract values apply to professional ideals and practices of good work at implementation level, and how, within specific domains of public service delivery, such values are similarly or differently perceived and expressed from policy level down to shop floor (Paanakker, 2019, 2020).

To address this gap, we examine how values relate to and can be seen from the perspective of frontline "craft". That is, we examine perceptions of craftsmanship to see which values they describe, with craftsmanship referring to the application of the concrete skills, knowledge and practices that, according to public officials, are needed to deliver good work in street-level public service delivery. As such, we inductively derive value patterns from the key qualities that public officials deem relevant in the context of frontline work and its objective (in this case, the concrete public service delivered) (Paanakker, 2019, 2020), and we conduct explorative research into if and how public officials that operate at different hierarchical levels, but in the same public sector domain, have a shared notion of frontline craft and the values that attach to it. To examine convergence or divergence in the values that describe such street-level craftsmanship this article selects the Dutch prison sector as a case study and discusses the central research question: *How convergent are value perceptions of street-level craftsmanship between policy makers, managers and street-level professionals in the Dutch prison sector, and what explains mutual perceptions between them?*

In doing so, this article aims to advance public values research in two ways. First, it aims to scrutinize the level of value convergence from the perspective of professional sectors. The observation that values are likely to be perceived very differently in different cultural and organizational settings, situations, or periods over time, is widely shared (Haque, 2011; Rutgers, 2015; West & Davis, 2011). Recent studies also provide empirical substantiation of such differences in value interpretation (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012; Reynaers & Paanakker, 2016), but focus primarily on value differences between organizations or between individuals (Van Steden et al., 2015; Van Thiel & van Der Wal, 2010; Yang, 2016). As of yet, studying how values work "along the lines of the confined and decisive professional logics of bounded policy domains" (Paanakker & Reynaers, 2020, p. 252) is less prominent in public value scholarship. The question of value divergence between policy makers, managers and professionals working in the same policy domain remains underresearched.

For that purpose, the degree of value convergence or divergence is conceptualized, in this study, as the degree to which values are similarly or differently *identified*, *understood* and/or *expressed* from policy level down to shop floor. This includes three specific dimensions: value identification (which values are seen to matter to craft), value understanding (the perception of

how values ought to be expressed in concrete craftsmanship behaviors), and value prioritization or enactment in practice (which values are actually (seen to be) emphasized in practice, and how). From the sliding scale implied in its definition, it follows that strong value convergence refers to the perceived similarity of value approaches to frontline craftsmanship, held by the policy advisors, organizational managers, and street-level professionals in the sector. Strong value divergence refers to the misfit or incongruence between such values approaches of policy advisors, organizational managers, and street-level professionals.

The second contribution of this article is to sharpen the focus on the role of public values in the concrete work context of frontline public service delivery. It situates the public values debate in street-level discourse by examining the values that describe each level's perception of what frontline craftsmanship is about. We explicitly do not aim to build a conclusive theory of what street-level craftsmanship is or ought to be. Our aim lies more modest in offering an explorative examination of how various actors themselves, whether at policy-making, management, or street-level, hold similar or different value perceptions to craftsmanship in frontline public service delivery, and why (not).

In so doing, this article builds on recent scholarly work that revives the study of craftsmanship in the public domain. Implicated in this perspective is that many of the values realized in street-level professions are not solely dictated by formal education and standardization, theoretical specialization, and top-down norm enforcement (Paanakker, 2019), like literature on professionalism tends to suggest (Freidson, 2001; Noordegraaf, 2007). Rather, adopting a craft perspective to street-level values is about acknowledgement that good work is versatile rather than fixed, and builds strongly not only on theoretical but also on practical, experiential knowledge that is learned on the job (Paanakker, 2019; Rhodes, 2015; Van Steden, 2020). Regarding the public office as a craft honors the skilled intuition, continuous reflection and often implicit, unarticulated and action-oriented knowledge that quality of work in public service delivery alludes to (Polanyi, 2009; Sennett, 2008; Van Steden, 2020). This is why, through respondents' concrete descriptions of the skills, knowledge and practices associated with good work, we consider values from the bottom-up as constructed and expressed by respondents themselves.

With a total of 55 in-depth interviews with policy makers, managing directors, middle managers, and street-level prison officers in the Dutch prison sector, this study offers a unique insight into differences and similarities in value perceptions of craftsmanship from the policy-making level to street-level execution. The Dutch prison sector provides an exemplary case study because street-level prison work in the Netherlands qualifies as a craft *pur sang:* unlike in many other countries, the position of prison officers is not one of minimal commitment to providing basic security. Dutch prison officers perform a variety of highly complex tasks in terms of social safety, and detainee care, welfare, mentoring and reintegration, and obtain a high level of professionalism and discretion in their work (Molleman, 2014). Moreover, as it implements a comprehensive new policy program while at the same time closing down facilities and applying other severe austerity measures, the Dutch prison system provides an interesting context of organizational change, in which (the renegotiation of) values of good work explicitly surface (Stewart, 2006).

In the sections to come, we discuss competing expectations of convergence and divergence based on a literature review of value understandings and group dynamics (specifically, literature on professional socialization, role differences and normative isomorphism). From empirical findings of *perceived* rather than actual divergence between staff levels, further insights are derived on conflicting value sets, trans-positional bias, toxic stereotyping, and the exacerbating influence of cutbacks and reforms, the latter found to cause the glorification of quantifiable managerialism and the externalization of content – at the expense of street-level values.

4.2 Value Understandings and Dissemination

To study how different public sector levels may perceive frontline values similarly or differently, it is key to assess how values disseminate throughout a given group of actors. Insightful studies include studies on value attainment and value dilemmas in specific sectors such as hospitals and public transport (e.g. De Graaf et al., 2016; Jaspers & Steen, 2019; Oldenhof et al., 2014; Reynaers & Paanakker, 2016; Steenhuisen, 2009). The latter set of studies show the unique mix of values that play a role in specific professions, and how the meaning of values of a more general nature is transformed to fit the specific professional context. Reynaers and Paanakker, for instance, demonstrate how role differences may be determinative for value understanding: their study in the prison sector outlines how public

procurers and private operators, due to the nature of their function, may interpret and act upon identical values very differently (2016, p. 13). How, then, may organizational roles *within* the public sector hierarchy impact on value perceptions of frontline craftsmanship? Two different views that argue quite the opposite may be distinguished.

4.3 Organizational Role Differences Minimize Value Convergence?

The first perspective of relevance is the vision of role theory, which would indicate stark differences between the role, norms and values of different groups throughout the organizational hierarchy. Traditionally, bureaucracies are comprised of operators, managers and executives: "those whose work actually justifies the existence of a given organization", those "who coordinate the work of operators to achieve organizational goals" and those "responsible for maintaining their organizations" (Wilson 1989 in Frederickson et al. 2012, 53). Evidently, such different organizational roles bring along different tasks and expectations – observable role conflict is therefore to some extent inevitable (Tummers, Vermeeren, et al., 2012). But this also gives rise to different work logics.

From a classic perspective, managers operate on a different level in terms of content and scale – the manager steers and organizes the provision of services, the professional delivers those services (T. Evans, 2011; Freidson, 2001). With the purpose of "managerializing" the work practices of the professional, the manager is there to monitor, regulate and steer professional activities by spreading quantifiable standards and corporate models (Noordegraaf, 2007; Noordegraaf & Schinkel, 2011). In this view, the performance-driven manager is classified as relatively alien to the content-driven rationale of the professional (Van Bockel & Noordegraaf, 2006). The higher the level of management and the greater the number of roles a manager takes on "the greater the tendency to seek generalizations, overall solutions, programmed solutions, one-size-fits-all answers" and "to search for one generalizable efficiency – often a short-term efficiency at that" (Frederickson, Smith, Larimer, & Licari, 2012, p. 108). This suggests managers and professionals may place different emphases on values at street level, or may pursue different values altogether.

Such classic conceptions of the distinction between the manager and the professional are increasingly called into question, as the art of management has undergone a serious professionalization process and "manager" seems to have become an occupational category of its own (Noordegraaf & Schinkel, 2011, p. 115). Conversely, professionals throughout the public sector seem to move more easily into (and out of) management positions and tasks, creating fuzzy distinctions between the *hybrid professional,* on the one hand, and the *professional manager* on the other hand (Noordegraaf, 2007, 2016; Noordegraaf & Schinkel, 2011; Van Bockel & Noordegraaf, 2006).

Nevertheless, different organizational logics seem to persist in practice due to different types of work activities. One could even argue that the amalgamation of the professional and the managerial role further complicates organizational unity and unequivocal role differentiation, and exacerbates the complexities of the inherent underlying differences that have never really disappeared. Perhaps not surprisingly, for some line managers their role overload negatively impacts their view of values and the conflicts between them: in a study in the health care sector, Oldenhof, Postma and Putters found that "middle managers appear to experience value conflicts more intensely and more concretely than executives do" (2014, p. 57).

In addition, Frederickson et al. describe how role differences can spur *perceived* differences rather than *actual* differences, and this can have grave impact on organizational functioning: "role theorists have consistently demonstrated that role occupants […] tend to misperceive the role expectations of others [which] results in excessive managerial caution and organizational inertia" (2012, p. 108)." Misperceiving the role expectations of others, specifically of other staff levels in the organizational hierarchy, may lead to a misunderstanding of their value focus in street-level craftsmanship. These insights raise the question if, as a result from role differences in the institutional hierarchy, different levels of actors have strongly diverging value perceptions of street-level craftsmanship.

4.4 Professional Socialization Optimizes Value Convergence?

Alternatively, studies on professional socialization tend to argue the opposite and claim that professionals are bound by shared norms that are decisive "steerers" of professional conceptions

of craftsmanship and how this should be achieved. Bureaucrats are said to adhere to professional norms when making their decisions and developing their attitudes towards policies (S. C. Andersen & Jakobsen, 2016; Teodoro, 2014). According to Andersen, the sociology of professions starts with the necessity of professional convergence because this will guarantee professional behavior in line with the established professional quality standards: "the existence (and enforcement) of formal and informal professional norms is an important part of being a profession" (2009, p. 82) as it "will lead professionals from the same occupation to behave and perform similarly, regardless of their sector and incentives" (2009, p. 80). Extensive professional socialization may create homogenization effects that cause normative isomorphism within and among professional organizations and converge organizational values and behaviors (Teodoro, 2014).

Another converging effect stems from the organizational consolidation of professional norms. When professional norms become heavily institutionalized, this may cause managers and professionals alike to develop a shared organizational identity (L. B. Andersen & Pedersen, 2012). This would suggest many similarities in craftsmanship views throughout a given institutional hierarchy, especially considering the blurring of responsibilities when street-level professionals move into positions of (middle or even higher) management.

Scholarly studies on organizational values indicate how this logic of professional convergence may be extended beyond the norms – and the skills, knowledge and practices associated with those norms – to include associated *values*. Organizational values have an important role in internal integration, but also in external representation and performance (Schein, 1985; Weiner, 1988), for instance in the interaction with clients or citizens. Through processes of attraction, selection and socialization, employees adjust to and are actively integrated by organizations, revealing a tendency to unify the preferences and motivations of employees throughout the organization and to align employee values with organizational goals (Kjeldsen, 2014; Moyson et al., 2018). Such value alignment holds important implications for the organization's strength and effectiveness (Jensen, Andersen, & Jacobsen, 2018). According to Paarlberg and Perry (2007, p. 390):

> Values provide a common understanding of the correct way of thinking and acting on strategic issues and opportunities facing organizations […]. Individual values that are congruent with an organization's values may strengthen an employee's identification with the organization and ultimately provide employees' meaning, direction, and a sense of what is distinctive about the organization […].

In their empirical study on organizational value management, these authors found that formal management systems are important instruments for fostering value alignment in organizations (Paarlberg & Perry, 2007). Interestingly, they, too, emphasize the role of middle managers – not as sources of hybridity and conflict, but in terms of the key role they embody in using such formal management systems to integrate the organization's strategic practices with employee values (Paarlberg & Perry, 2007, p. 387).

In sum, theory on professional socialization implies that value perceptions of street-level craftsmanship are likely to be convergent. The assumption based on these insights would be that professionals do not only work within the same type of public service delivery and for the same type of beneficiaries, but are also actively socialized to adopt the same client logic, ideals and values. This would translate to the way they perceive frontline craft, irrespective of the exact position they hold. As such, it raises the question if, as a result of professional socialization, different levels in the institutional hierarchy are prompted to adopt highly similar value perceptions of street-level craftsmanship.

4.5 Values under Pressure in the Dutch Penal Sector

This section briefly explains the public setting in which the research took place, and the role of values therein. In the Netherlands, the prison sector's mission of "providing a safe and humane detention in which, together with chain partners and detainees, we work towards reintegration back into society" (Dutch Correctional Agency, 2009a, p. 10) articulates the three core values of humanity, security and reintegration. In many Western contexts, these three values are believed to represent the essence of detention, with the critical observation that, in practice, they exemplify a precarious balance as they can conflict in many respects (DiIulio, 1987; Liebling & Arnold, 2004; Molleman, 2014).

To better embody its' mission, the policy department of the prison sector rolled out a new policy program (called the *Prison System Modernization Program)* from 2010 onwards. The Modernization Program centered on the behavioral motivation and rehabilitation of the detainee, greater self-efficacy for the detainee in the system and stronger collaboration with chain partners with the aim of reducing recidivism (Dutch Correctional Agency, 2009c). At street level, this program spurred a new way of service delivery for penal facilities and their staff to implement, with more focus on employee-detainee interaction, psychological motivation, and multi-disciplinary consultation and monitoring.

At the same time, the prison sector committed itself to an elaborate set of austerity and organizational reform measures to improve efficiency –yet another value-, mostly to meet capacity issues due to a declining demand for cell capacity and a restrictive political-financial mandate. This included the phased shutting down of penal facilities, increased staff mobility and cutting management layers (Dutch Correctional Agency, 2009a).

The prison reform was truly kicking in and austerity measures were in full force when data for this study was collected in 2014 and 2015. By then, there was criticism, and stories of disappointment, work overload, exodus of staff and the critical financial status of the sector were permeating to the outside world, including their potential deleterious side-effects for the sector's unanimity and for public service delivery on the ground (Inspectorate of Justice and Security, 2017; OmroepWest, 2016; Roerdink, 2017). Previous empirical research on Dutch prisons has pointed out that street-level prison officers struggle with this in their everyday work, revealing a potential mismatch between espoused policy values and the values expressed in organizational practice (Paanakker, 2019).

4.6 Research Methods and Data Collection

Data collection consisted of a two-month period of participatory observation (spread over 75 hours), in two penal facilities and across eleven different departments, an analysis of relevant policy documents, and a total of 55 in-depth semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted on four different staff levels: (1) prison officers (N=32), (2) middle managers (N=9) who head one or two detainee departments and the corresponding prison officer staff, (3) higher

management (N=8) consisting of managing directors (the number represents the entire staff of managing directors and deputy directors of each facility) and, (4) policy advisors (N=6) working at "headquarters" at the Ministry of Justice and Security. The two facilities differed in geography and size (north-west and south-east, urban and rural, large and small) and detention phase (detainees awaiting the case on their verdict and convicted detainees), but attended to the same detainee population (adult males) and employed prison officers with identical task descriptions and work conditions. Both facilities were under the same pressure to implement the new program and its policy tools, and to realize drastic employee and budget cuts – with a highly similar impact on prison personnel in terms of staff mobility, uncertain future job prospects, and negativity and frustration among staff. As the analysis produced no significant differences in the outcomes of the two facilities, we do not distinguish between cases when reporting the findings.

From the participatory observation a diversified and seemingly representative pool of respondents in terms of age, gender, length of service, and attitude to the job (for instance, pessimistic or optimistic, repressive or emphatic) was arrived at. For instance, among the interviewed prison officers and middle managers (N=41), 33 were male and 8 female, aged between 30 and 65 years with an average age of 44, and had an average of 19 years of prison service (ranging from less than 5 years to over 30 years, with many having worked there their entire employable lives). Managing directors and policy advisors had comparable age ranges, but one third was female, and among policy advisors considerably less years of service in the sector. Although men, and particularly middle-aged men, are overrepresented, this represents prison staff population in the Netherlands accurately, as well as the populations at both facilities.

As part of a larger project on public craftsmanship, interviews lasted approximately 1 hour and were recorded and transcribed verbatim (411.954 words). The analysis in this article is of two straight forward questions from the larger interview set: (1) when does a prison officer do their job well and what objectives should prison officers pursue in their daily work, and (2) and, in your opinion, what do middle managers / prison managers / policy advisors judge is good work by prison officers? The first question was put to all respondents. Depending on the respondent, the second question was slightly adapted to make inquiries into the views of the other groups –

for example, policy advisors were asked to reflect on the craftsmanship views of middle managers, prison managers, and prison officers respectively. To avoid value bias and to prevent too high a level of abstraction for respondents, specific values were not asked for and the word "values" was excluded from interview questions all together. Instead, we collected detailed stories on what frontline craft is about, as expressed and understood by respondents themselves. From the bottom-up analysis of the concrete skills, knowledge and practices that respondents attach to frontline craft, we inductively inferred value patterns, and compared them between respondent(group)s on the types of ideal values identified (value identification), the meaning attached to these values (value understanding) and what emphasis was put on these values in practice, and how (value prioritization or enactment).

Hence, values were coded into the data in the analysis stage. The data analysis consisted of a systematic content analysis through software-supported (MAXQDA) coding: a process of attaching distinct labels to data segments to organize, classify and conceptualize the interview material (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using two-stage coding to build categories from the bottom up , in the first stage the initially open codes were combined in data segments with similar content to produce mutually-exclusive codes and create a methodological hierarchical coding system (Friese, 2012, pp. 130-131) that reflects the heterogeneity and variance of the concrete skills, knowledge and practices that respondents attach to the penal craft on the ground. Examples of such concrete qualities include "treating and approaching detainees with empathy (being sympathetic to moods and behavior resulting from stress and personal problems)" and "changing mindset and behavior of detainee during detention", or concrete characterizations of craft restrictions, such as "cutbacks" and "number obsession and a focus on box ticking".

Table 4.1. The subcategories of concrete craft-related skills, knowledge and practices per value

The concrete skills, knowledge and practices on the bases of which the value categories are built	
Main value	Sub codes: the skills, knowledge and practices that define craft

HUMANITY	Individual care and support of detainees (helping out practically and emotionally); Personal one-on-one contact with detainees; Treating and approaching detainees with empathy (being sympathetic to moods and behavior resulting from stress and personal problems); Treating and approaching detainees honestly (keeping one's promises); Treating and approaching detainees with respect and dignity (being polite and acknowledging as fellow man); Monitoring detainee behavior closely; Literally mentioning "humanity of detention" or "humane treatment of detainee"; Care for employees (helping each other out and sincere attention for the well-being of employees); Motivational treatment (a prison-taught approach based on motivational interviewing); Feeling responsible for detainees' well-being; Personal and tailor-made approach to individual detainees; Acting with integrity towards detainees and colleagues
SECURITY	Security of detention and/or for detainees (reducing or preventing aggression, violence, unsafe atmosphere); Security awareness (managing tensions through contact); Security of employee (keeping oneself and colleagues safe); Sentencing as punishment; Treating and approaching detainees from a disciplining perspective (setting clear boundaries to desirable and acceptable behavior)
TASK EFFECTIVENESS	Getting one's daily chores and tasks done; Doing one's basic chores and tasks well (in line with penal mission); Box ticking and number obsession ("getting the numbers right"); Ensuring peace and quiet at detainee units; Preventing reputational damage; Getting employees to be as submissive and compliant as possible
REINTEGRATION	Contributing to detainees' return to society; Changing mindset and behavior of detainee during detention; Reducing recidivism; Discharge support in cooperation with chain partners (arranging housing, social security disbursements, etc.); Contributing to public safety by keeping criminals of the street; Teaching detainee life skills (work, education, etc.)

In the second stage, common denominators were sought by renaming, modifying and integrating sub labels into larger overarching coding categories (Friese, 2012, pp. 130-131). In this step of the analysis, the concrete aspects of craftsmanship, as mentioned by respondents, were inductively aggregated and classified into the overarching value category they described – for instance, "treating detainees with empathy" was categorized under the value "humanity" and "cut backs" under the value "efficiency". Table 4.1 provides a complete overview of the main value codes and the sub categories of corresponding skills, knowledge and practices they cover, and shows how the value categories were built. Respondents mentioned these more abstract value labels frequently themselves as well, with the exception of "task effectiveness", a value that the analysis below designates as an important complementary street-level value. Finally, '[g]oing back and forth between data and codes' (Weiss, 1994, p. 156), this validated version was applied to the data set at large (to both interviews and policy documents) and allowed the subtleties of craftsmanship conceptions and the values they represent to be grasped, and a comparison between different staff levels made.

4.7 Findings

In line with the two-fold research question, actual values (respondents' own value perceptions of what constitutes the penal craft) are reported first, followed by the mutual perceptions of each other's views on the penal craft. This section presents a weighted analysis of how respondents judge the importance and centrality of specific values to frontline craft, and shows how the divergence is not in the actual value perceptions, but in the *mutual* perceptions, and is specifically strong with respect to what other levels are stereotypically seen to focus and steer on (i.e. more in value prioritization and enactment than in value identification and understanding).

4.7.1 Intergroup Differences on Values of Craftsmanship

The picture of the skills, knowledge and practices needed at street level painted by the different groups of prison sector staff, is quite uniform and represent four key values: their work ought to revolve around safeguarding and expressing (1) *humanity* and (2) *task effectiveness*, then (3) *security*, and, to a significantly lesser extent, (4) *reintegration*. As table 4.2 shows, the value

patterns are highly similar for each group. From this set of four key values a few important observations can be inferred.

First, the comparison of value patterns demonstrates a strong level of convergence on value *identification*, or the types of values that are seen to matter to craft. The image of penal craftsmanship at street level mirrors well the three core policy values of humanity, security, and reintegration that represent the sector's mission. All groups consistently attribute aspects related to these values to good craftsmanship on the shop floor, although it should be noted they do so in varying degrees: a vast majority of 47 out of 55 respondents (85%) sees humanity as a prime value, security is perceived to be key by 25 respondents (45%) and occupies an overall third place, and reintegration is emphasized only by 11 respondents (20%).

Second, the interpretations of the skills, knowledge and practices that underlie these three values are highly similar, and show a very compact internal convergence per value. This demonstrates there is also a strong degree of convergence on value *understanding*. For instance, humanity is predominantly composed of providing individual care and support to detainees (helping them out practically and emotionally) and other craft-related skills and practices such as treating detainees with respect and empathy. Security is uniformly understood as the key notion that detention should be executed safely: it should be aimed at maximizing "hard" safety and security for both employees and detainees by minimizing occurrences of aggression, violence and crime within the penal facility. But many also add the importance of "soft" security in disciplining detainees into appropriate, respectable and polite behavior, as well as the usefulness of maintaining good relationships with detainees to detect tensions and manage them accordingly. Reintegration is convergently regarded as contributing to the detainee's return to society by changing the mindset and behavior of the detainee during detention (to stimulate them to obtain a life(style) free of criminal activity). Although reintegration is an important policy value, surprisingly few respondents include in their explanation of craftsmanship at street level what is, compared to the other core values, the more abstract nature of reintegration efforts.

Table 4.2. Views on street-level craftsmanship compared

Views on street-level craftsmanship compared **(N=55)**			
According to **policy advisors (N=6),** street-level craftsmanship is about:		According to **managing directors (N=8),** street-level craftsmanship is about:	
Humanity	83% (5)	Humanity	88% (7)
Security	50% (3)	Task effectiveness	88% (7)
Reintegration	33% (2)	Security	75% (6)
Task effectiveness	33% (2)	Reintegration	38% (3)
According to **middle managers (N=9)**, street-level craftsmanship is about:		According to **prison officers (N=32)**, street-level craftsmanship is about:	
Humanity	89% (8)	Humanity	84% (27)
Task effectiveness	67% (6)	Task effectiveness	72% (23)
Security	67% (6)	Security	31% (10)
Reintegration	11% (1)	Reintegration	16% (5)
Per group, the table displays the percentages and number of respondents of the group emphasizing (sub) variations of this value (in terms of the skills, knowledge and practices that relate to it) as a key component of street-level craftsmanship			

Third, "task effectiveness" was added as a complementary value category to capture the skills, knowledge and practices describing the extent to which street-level professionals can perform their daily administrative and organizational tasks. While task effectiveness is not a policy value that institutional documents center on, evidenced by the absence of anything of a similar notion in prison policy documents in document analysis, it emerges as a clear value in street-level practice. Altogether, craftsmanship aspects related to task effectiveness were emphasized by 69% of respondents (38 out of 55). It represents the second most important value of the penal craft – though not for policy advisors who highlight it much less. Interpretations differ slightly from (a) "ensuring daily peace and quiet at detainee units" (a well-structured day without unnecessary unrest, distraction or time constraints, including the absence of safety incidents and clashes between or with detainees), to (b) "getting one's daily chores and tasks done" (crossing the daily activities of detainee care off their list), and (c) "doing one's tasks well" (prison officers acting in line with the overall prison objectives of the penal mission). However, they do show a pattern of consistent variations within the different groups. Managing directors

of the facilities as well as policy advisors place more emphasis on acting in line with the penal mission, whereas middle managers and prison officers stress "getting one's daily chores and tasks done" and "ensuring daily peace and quiet at detainee units".

Despite some differences in emphasis within or between values, the views of the different groups are remarkably consistent when comparing them with each other on an aggregate level: respondents alike conjointly put forward a compact set of no more than four values they feel constitute the street-level penal craft.

Fourth and conversely, the interviews reveal that the seeming value convergence is however more powerfully explained by the fact it has a theoretical character only: ideologically, staff agree on the normative meaning of penal values, but different levels view the attainment of these values in real life practice quite differently. This indicates a shared value identification and understanding, and, in theory, perhaps even a shared value prioritization, but diverging value enactment in practice. Both by managers and street-level prison officers, the way values are translated to practice is supported to a much lesser extent:

> The big complaint you always hear from prison officers: people at headquarters are just randomly making things up. And that is not in tune with what we do in practice (respondent 7, managing director).

> …that is a paper reality only and in practice I feel it does not work that way. […] The implementation […] only manifests itself in performance indicators. We have to comply with those norms, because that thing is for that bag of money (respondent 53, prison officer).

4.7.2 Mutual Perceptions and Stereotyping With Respect to Values of Craftsmanship

In contrast to the seeming relative convergence of the actual views of the different groups, the mutual perceptions of each other are characterized by divergence, conflict and stereotyping.

The divergence is most powerfully explained by a very strong perceived divergence on value prioritization and enactment, but distinct differences can also be detected in the types (identification) and meaning (understanding) of values that are attributed to other staff levels than one's own. Interestingly, street-level prison officers are most positively evaluated: respondents from other staff levels think the perceptions of prison officers best resemble their own views on craftsmanship (as previously defined in the set of four values that respondents ascribe to). Policy advisors are seen to have the most deviant street-level beliefs.

When comparing the aggregated scores per value –that is, including how much emphasis respondents put on the (sub)variations of craft-defining skills, knowledge and practices that underpin these values–, in respondents' own value perceptions vis-à-vis their value perceptions of each other, quite different value patterns emerge. As table 4.3 shows, humanity drops significantly in the list of important values and is now analyzed to rank third place. Other striking changes are that "efficiency" enters the value patterns as a new, fifth, value, and that task effectiveness is seen as the prime value focus of other levels emphasize with a truly major distance to the other values in the ranking. Altogether, respondents mention concrete categories of skills, knowledge and practices that relate to task effectiveness 187 times. In comparison, (sub) variations of humanity, or efficiency, are mentioned 55 and 18 times respectively (see table 4.3). As table 4.4 shows, this value pattern is confirmed when breaking the value patterns down per respondent group.

Table 4.3. Comparing own views and mutual views

Comparing aggregated scores of own views and mutual views per value **(*N*=55)**	
Own views of the penal craft	Mutual views on each other's perceptions of the penal craft*
1. HUMANITY *(71)* 2. TASK EFFECTIVENESS *(52)* 3. SECURITY *(39)* 4. REINTEGRATION *(14)*	1. TASK EFFECTIVENESS *(187)* 2. SECURITY *(63)* 3. HUMANITY *(55)* 4. REINTEGRATION *(21)* 5. EFFICIENCY *(18)*

The frequencies in parenthesis represent how often respondents emphasized (sub) variations of this value (in terms of the skills, knowledge and practices that relate to it) as a key component of street-level craftsmanship
*Out of 165 cross perceptions, 5 are missing (1 one policy advisors, 3 on middle managers and 1 on prison officers)

The high frequencies for task effectiveness also reveal, for this particular value, a high degree of divergence on value understanding: the different, and heavily clashing, interpretations different groups use to create rigid stereotypes of each other, which alter the meaning of this value. In the mutual perceptions on managers, task effectiveness harbors truly different additional meanings of box ticking, reputation management and organizational paralyses that change the connotation of the value altogether into an exceptionally negative one. The principal focus of managers, whether at policy level, director level, or middle management level, is thought to lie on one of these negative conceptions of task effectiveness, and excessively so, at the direct expense of other values that relate to craftsmanship (see table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Comparing how different staff levels view each other

Mutual perceptions on street-level craftsmanship: comparing how the different staff levels view each other **(N=55)***			
Policy advisors are believed to value: (N=49)		**Managing directors** are believed to value: (N= 47)	
Task effectiveness	78% (38)	Task effectiveness	85% (40)
Reintegration	16% (8)	Security	26% (12)
Efficiency	16% (8)	Humanity	21% (10)
Security	16% (8)	Efficiency	15% (7)
Humanity	6% (3)	Reintegration	4% (2)
Middle managers are believed to value: (N=46)		**Prison officers** are believed to value: (N=23)	
Task effectiveness	87% (40)	Task effectiveness	65% (15)
Humanity	43% (20)	Security	65% (15)
Security	26% (12)	Humanity	65% (15)

Reintegration 8% (4)	Reintegration 17% (4)
*This table displays 165 cross-perceptions from a total of 55 respondents. In line with the distribution of respondents over the respective groups, *N* differs slightly per group. 49 respondent views on policy advisors (PA) = MD(*N*=8) + MM(*N*=9) + PO(*N*=32) 47 respondent views on managing directors (MD) = PA(*N*=6) + MM(*N*=9) + PO(*N*=32) 46 respondent views on middle managers (MM) = PA(*N*=6) + MD(*N*=8) + PO (*N*=32) 23 respondent views on prison officers (PO) = PA(*N*=6) + MD(*N*=8) + MM(*N*=9)	
Per group, the table displays the percentages and number of respondents of the group judging (sub) variations of this value (in terms of the skills, knowledge and practices that relate to it) to represent other levels' key focus on street-level craftsmanship	

When looking at mutual perceptions, in general, managers are not judged favorably, specifically not on their value prioritization and enactment. Regardless of the hierarchical layer they occupy, prison employees are consistently biased to believe that management above them prioritizes targets over content. This image of task effectiveness in the interpretation of "getting the numbers right" is seen to create a mentality of box ticking and number obsession, and is further intensified when moving up the hierarchy. Through the way they manage their personnel in practice, with a perceived overemphasis on trivial check lists, quantifiable targets, and other performance indicators that barely scratch the surface of good work, managers create the impression that they care much less about humanity, security and reintegration.

Positioned at the top of the hierarchy, the most negative stereotyping is directed against policy advisors at headquarters. According to the other levels, policy makers have an understanding of frontline craft that focuses mainly on a negative form of task effectiveness (according to 78% of respondents), and to a lesser extent efficiency (16%), at the expense of their focus on reintegration (16%), security (16%) and humanity (only 6%). Specifically, 59% of respondents feel policy advisors impose an interpretation of task effectiveness as box ticking and number obsession, and 33% feels it is headquarters' primary focus to "prevent reputational damage" by averting negative media attention, with no consideration of the quality of the tasks or services involved:

> Everything, in the end, is about the numbers. (respondent 19, middle manager)

> At headquarters, the focus on numbers is now so strong that […] the type of content of the Modernization Program is suppressed. (respondent 7, managing director)

> Not too many incidents [and media coverage], because that is what stresses them out. (respondent 14, managing director)

Just like headquarters, managing directors and middle managers are judged to have an overemphasis on task effectiveness in their value prioritization and enactment (by 85 and 87% respectively). However, respondents do not merely ascribe negative interpretations of task effectiveness to these management layers: one-fifth perceives managing directors to value craftsmanship that focuses on "getting daily tasks done", and one-third perceives middle managers to have this as their focus. Compared to policy advisors, they are also perceived to put more emphasis on humanity and security, and middle managers yet more favorably than managing directors (see table 4.4). Yet, the negative perceptions clearly outweigh these cautiously positive interpretations.

53% of respondents perceive managing directors to primarily focus on task effectiveness as "box ticking and number obsession", and 50% attributes this focus to middle managers: "*it is about managing by distance and: you better provide the numbers"* (respondent 23, middle manager). Moreover, with regard to these two groups of organizational managers just over one-third of respondents describes another negative type of task effectiveness emerges that was coded as "getting employees to behave as submissively and compliantly as possible". It exemplifies a manifestation of organizational paralysis that demands employees to "*above all, not step out of line*" (respondent 44, prison officer) or "*always be the best boy in the class*" (respondent 52, prison officer). In a most minimal interpretation of craftsmanship, these respondents felt in-house management greatly appreciates, and often over appreciate, employees to be endlessly loyal and obedient, even when raising their voices was felt to be justified and in the interest of maintaining the quality of the craft or of the provision of detention itself:

> They are only happy when you never fall sick, do not think independently but just do as you are told and don't by any means stand out because you cause trouble (respondent 37, prison officer about their managing directors).

The specifications of the value of efficiency, too, reveal an image of suggestive stereotyping of colleagues higher up the hierarchy. Interestingly, efficiency is considered a concern of higher management only, outside the sphere of influence or sphere of interest of street-level prison officers and middle managers, and in a predominantly negative fashion. To the 16% of respondents that mention efficiency, policy advisors and managing directors use the reform agenda of the Modernization Program as a fig-leaf for the implementation of cutbacks and personnel cuts. It is seen as an instrument of headquarters and managing directors of facilities to push through austerity measures that lower costs ruthlessly – at the expense of other street-level values: "I think they couldn't care less, really, I think headquarters is like 'well if we do not get too much shit from the executive people, it is all fine by us' [..] and then in the cheapest possible way" (respondent 47, prison officer).

The fieldwork clearly indicated this negative stereotyping is a function of the difficult circumstances of the sector at large, both financially and in terms of the continuous reforms. In the looming fear of losing their job, of being transferred, or of having to change the nature of work routines, employees, from managing directors to prison officers, tend to project their dissatisfaction on the layer above them. Respondents devote a considerable amount of time to talking about failing management and the perverse effects of the cutbacks and reforms, and it is often the first issue they put forward when discussing the craftsmanship views of their superiors. In addition, the mocking tone when speaking of superiors and their lack of commitment to the penal mission and to the advancement of key prison values in particular, suggests a built-in inclination to shift the blame of failing reform efforts upwards. These attribution effects to higher levels span the entire executive branch, from managing directors toward the ministerial policy advisors above them, but particularly from prison officers toward the middle managers, managing directors and policy advisors above them, and middle managers toward the managing directors and policy advisors above them. Suspicion is high, and the

practice of questioning the genuine intentions of superiors omnipresent. The larger the hierarchical gap, the more suspicion proliferates.

4.8 Discussion

Our findings indicate that, in theory, different staff levels have a relatively shared ideological notion of the values that matter in street-level craftsmanship: respondents throughout the prison hierarchy identify the same set of very specific and profession-bound core values to be important. It also shows a considerable match between the values that express the policy and the street-level values deemed important for good public service delivery. This substantive convergence on value identification and value understanding seems to result from a specific type of professional socialization: through institutional measures, employees adjust to and are actively integrated by organizations. Institutionalized socialization is discernable in the convergent identification, understanding, and in the actual views also for a large share in the prioritization of humanity, security and reintegration, indicating that prison sector staff are strongly professionally socialized into the prime policy values of penal craftsmanship. In addition to the extensive in-house training penal staff receive, the overwhelming flow of information stemming from the Modernization Program reforms may very well have played a role too. Prison employees at all levels received training, information charts, policy reports, and dealt with plentiful new tools and instruments geared towards further institutionalization of these values in the organization. This confirms theories of organizational value management (Paarlberg & Perry, 2007) and organizational socialization (L. B. Andersen & Pedersen, 2012; Moyson et al., 2018; Teodoro, 2014): these logics remedy professional socialization between different staff levels and optimize value convergence on street-level craftsmanship throughout the institutional hierarchy.

Importantly however, the normative impact of the socialization effect should not be blindly attributed to formal institutionalization only. As this study shows, normative isomorphism on value identification and interpretation is likely to stem to a large extent also from non-institutionalized socialization through close interaction in informal professional practices and behaviors. For instance, street-level task effectiveness – not an official policy value and not found in any formal institutional document or steering mechanism – was identified as an important shared value of practice. Moreover, the research shows that all observed values very

accurately describe the concrete street-level skills, knowledge, and practices prison officers deal with on a daily basis, and have dealt with throughout their careers. The core values *de facto* translate existing practices of street-level craftsmanship into the abstract principles these practices embody, and as such are also developed and advanced from the bottom up just as much as they are enforced top-down. Clearly, street-level professionals leave a strong mark on the normative consideration of good work in their domain. As "conservers of institutional norms and practices" (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2012, p. S16), street-level professionals are seen as craftsmen who make, repair and actively craft policy through specific, profession-bound sets of values that have a strong homogenizing effect – not only among themselves, but also higher up the hierarchy.

There is notably less collaborative notion of how to practically attain the abstract values of the penal craft – that is, less agreement in terms of managers' value prioritization and enactment in practice. Articulating good work at street level reveals tensions between aspirational ideals and organizational practice, between the lifeworld of intrinsic motivations and the systemic world of instrumental measurement, with divergent ideas on how to put sufficient emphasis on and how to transform the ideological foundations of values to practice (Paanakker, 2019). Values that serve the inmates are lost in values that serve the organization.

In terms of causes, role differences start to play a part. A strong *stereotyping* of role differences is observed that leads to stronger *perceived* than actual value divergence throughout the institutional hierarchy, specifically with respect to value prioritization and enactment, but in the case of task effectiveness also with respect to value understanding, and in the case of efficiency also with respect to value identification. The dominant agenda of reform measures (perceptions of overcomplicated and performance measurement-induced policy changes) and austerity (perceptions of uncaring cutbacks and financial and personnel management) was found to exacerbate role and value differences between different staff levels, and, consequently, mutual misperceptions on how to foster good work at the frontline. In the perception of all levels of the executive branch, this agenda leads to the unjustifiable glorification of quantifiable managerialism by their superiors. It creates a dynamic of personal survival in the job that is best served by plainly and numerically meeting the performance targets set by the echelons of higher management. This externalizes content and makes it inferior and subordinate to measurable

output, something that has little to do with honoring key public service values and delivering good work. It also supports emerging literature that indicates that intense reform sequences (Wynen et al., 2019) and regulatory policy changes "constraining the work conditions of frontline public service providers can indeed produce lasting negative motivational effects" (Jensen, Kjeldsen, & Vestergaard, 2019, p. 1).

Value divergence is not perceived to constitute inevitable and instrumental role differences that benefit organizational structure and productivity: it is perceived as an undesirable reality that functions to undermine rather than support good frontline work. *Perceived* differences impact mutual understanding, cooperation and partnership much more negatively than the actual differences. The conclusion that the executive worker , as well as executive work itself, suffers from experienced value divergence suggests value convergence is an asset to harmonious and productive organizations. Based on our case study, we expect higher convergence on frontline values of good work, especially with respect to value attainment, to better facilitate cooperation on public service value realization on the ground, to promote job satisfaction and reduce work stress, to mitigate street-level alienation from policy, and to encourage the quality of public service delivery.

Further examination is needed of these expected effects on public service delivery, and of the role that (different types of) public managers play in reducing or sustaining value misperceptions and successful or failed value attainment in public organizations. And, even if misperceptions are partially imaginary, what coping strategies for different types of value divergence do professionals develop? To learn whether other public domains suffer similar dynamics from value divergence, and under what conditions, future qualitative studies into other professional occupations and policy fields are encouraged.

4.9 Conclusion

Throughout the prison hierarchy, the context of austerity and performance-induced reform was found to accentuate role and value differences between different groups in the organizational hierarchy, and to exacerbate transpositional stereotyping into a deeply rooted toxic organizational dynamic. These perceived differences overshadow the actual convergence in

displayed views of craftsmanship achieved by institutional and non-institutional professional socialization. Primarily, respondents appear to be systematically biased to believe that management above them prioritizes targets over content, and measurable output and efficiency (those values that support the organization) over intrinsic values of good work (those that serve prison inmates).

Clearly, defining what craftsmanship is, is a shared process of discovering how different staff levels in the organizational hierarchy view themselves as well as each other. Failure to recognize and institutionalize this creates harmful stereotyping throughout the policy domain, preventing key values from being expressed in street-level practice. Such shared deliberation is best facilitated when ongoing informal socialization processes at street level are the starting point for a common set of core values along the policy chain, and, also, for the careful common coordination of how to implement these ideas in individual public organizations.

Despite theory on hybrid professionals or professional managers, this case study shows a clear dichotomy between the perceived managerial logic that accompanies cutback management and neoliberalist reform, and the professional logic that favors quality improvement of service delivery on the shop floor. The key to truly realizing values of craftsmanship at the street level, is overcoming perceived role differences by closing the perceived value gap between management and the shop floor and restoring mutual exchange and trust in value understandings.

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CHAPTER 5
VALUE CONTEXTUALITY IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY: AN ANALYSIS OF STREET-LEVEL CRAFTSMANSHIP AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS[3]

Abstract

This contribution questions the idea of value universalism and demonstrates that the actual meaning of good or ethical governance is context dependent - as are its constitutive values. To illustrate this point, Huberts' value framework on integrity and quality of governance is contrasted to two empirical case studies that demonstrate the contextuality of values in two specific settings of public service delivery: street-level craftsmanship and public-private partnerships (PPPs). Findings show that values do not work along the lines of the systematic frameworks public administration scholars come up with. They work along the lines of personal interpretative repertoires, and, on an aggregate level, along the lines of the confined and decisive professional logics of bounded policy domains.

Key words: Good governance, value contextuality, value universalism, public service delivery.

5.1 Introduction

Some suggest that the values that constitute good or ethical governance are universal (Grindle, 2004; Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2006). This contribution questions this assumption and empirically demonstrates that the actual meaning of good or ethical governance is context dependent - as are its constitutive values. Although many acknowledge the contextuality of values and value attainment (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012; Rutgers, 2015; West & Davis, 2011), only a handful of contributions on public governance examined this empirically. Some comparative studies address value contextuality in relation to cross cultural values among administrators (Van der Wal & Yang, 2015; Yang, 2016), whereas other consider it while scrutinizing value attainment and value dilemmas in specific sectors (De Graaf et al., 2016; Jaspers & Steen, 2019; Oldenhof et al., 2014; Reynaers & Paanakker, 2016; Steenhuisen, 2009). These studies demonstrate that the importance of values differs per profession and that the general meaning of values is adjusted to the context of each profession. It has been

[3] This article appeared in a different form in a liber amicorum for Leo Huberts (De Graaf, G. (ed.). 2019. *It is all about integrity, stupid*. Boom: The Hague).

demonstrated, for example, that role differences determine the way in which values are understood. Public procurers and private contract managers cooperating within the same project adhere different understandings to the same value (Reynaers & Paanakker, 2016).

The observation that only a small portion of public values research empirically examines value contextuality forms the starting point of this contribution. Whereas public values research tends to pay limited attention to concrete street-level practices, research on professionalism often neglects the role of values as well as the way in which values are given meaning in practice (for instance by means of learning on the job and tacit knowledge) (Paanakker, 2019). In this article, we therefore scrutinize what constitutes good governance for different types of professionals and how they act upon this notion in two specific public service delivery, namely, street-level craftsmanship and public-private partnerships (PPPs).

5.2 Good Governance in terms of Values

Over the last few decades the concept of *good governance* has permeated public sector theory and practice around the globe (Huberts, Maesschalck, & Jurkiewicz, 2008). Achieving and safeguarding a certain standard of quality of governance is increasingly emphasized.

Scholars adhere different meanings to the concept of quality of governance. To some, it is about impartial government (Holmberg et al., 2009; Rothstein & Teorell, 2008). Others conceptualize it as the integrity of governance (M. Evans, 2012; Huberts, 2014). To Woods (2000) quality of governance implies that a minimum of public services should be provide, and yet to others it refers to various complementary values (Bovens et al., 2007, 2012; Perry et al., 2014). What all contributions on the nature of good governance have in common is that they implicitly or explicitly relate it to the concept of values. Since the year 2000, scholarly attention to the role of values has considerably increased in the public administration field (Van der Wal et al., 2015), for example in meta studies on the diversity and scope of public values (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Wang & Wang, 2019), in the specific examination of public service motivation (Jensen et al., 2018; Perry, 2000; Witesman & Walters, 2013), or in public-private debates (Reynaers, 2014b; Van der Wal, 2008).

Since the mid 1990s, the work and inspiration of Huberts spurred and deepened the development of this body of literature (Fijnaut & Huberts, 2002; Huberts, 1998, 2007, 2014; Huberts et al., 2008; Lawton, Huberts, & van Der Wal, 2016). Huberts has a very prominent

and distinct focus, which culminates in the self-declared mission of his book entitled The Integrity of Governance: "[W]e should take integrity of governance more seriously in governance practice and theory" (2014, p. 198). He argues there is no more important topic in the study of public administration than "to position integrity (higher) on our agendas" (2014, p. 198). His scholarly record is a living illustration of this conviction, and the many scientific and applied studies he conducted, by himself or with others, the many academic courses he taught, to students and practitioners, and his comprehensive involvement in policy debates and development has resulted in an intellectual debate and administrative practice on the integrity and quality in governance that is rich and continues to expand.

Many will recall one of his favourite quotes - "It's all about integrity, stupid"-, cited in scholarly work, but also frequently referred to at conferences, during presentations for policy practitioners, and in classrooms. He understands integrity as an umbrella theme of essential importance, irrespective of the type, stage or process of good governance that is under scrutiny. Nevertheless, Huberts has always emphasized that integrity forms an integral part of, and is irrefutably connected to, a wider conception of the quality of governance and the many values it harbours.

This is exemplified by the definitions he puts forward. He defines integrity as "a characteristic or a quality that refers to accordance with the relevant moral values and norms" (2014, p. 203). Likewise, quality of governance refers to conformance with values, albeit also those with a perhaps less explicit moral dimension (2014, p. 223). Huberts characterizes this a close and complex relationship, and stresses that, most of all, it depends on the context (place, time and person) which values are deemed morally important and which ones are not (2014, pp. 223-226).

According to Huberts (2014, p. 204), "Moral values, norms, laws, and rules lie at the heart of integrity analysis." In this definition, a value is understood to constitute "a belief or quality that contributes to judgments about what is good, right, beautiful, or admirable and thus has weight in the choice of action by individuals and collectives". By contrast, the "more specific ´norm´ tells us whether something is good or bad, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly". Combined these parameters "answer the question ´what is the right thing to do?´" and, importantly, specifically do so for types of behaviour (2014, p. 204).

When extending this focus on behaviours to his broader conception of governance processes, Huberts explains how studies on values in the public sector often focus on two phases: the input

phase on the one hand, and the output phase on the other (2014, pp. 201-203). Studies on the role of values in the outcome phase are scarcer, but, as Huberts argues, studies that focus on the throughput phase demand our specific attention (2014, pp. 201-203). Therefore, he favours a perspective that builds on a "system model of governance" that incorporates these four phases (input, throughput, output and outcome) altogether (2014, p. 202). The procedural aspects of governance processes are just as important, if not more, to the safeguarding of values and its concomitant achievement of quality of governance (2014, pp. 201-203). Procedural integrity that pays due regard to other, related values of governance might be a core ingredient to the successful recipe of good governance. Here, Huberts acknowledges that integrity co-exists and interacts with a variety of other values (and, likewise, integrity violations may come at the expense of a variety of values), that together constitute a central framework of the quality of governance. He considers the following seven values to be central values of governance (2014, p. 213):

1. *"democracy with responsiveness and participation"—paying attention to social preferences and with the involvement of actors having an interest (including citizens);*
2. *"accountability and transparency"—being open, honest, and willing to account for behaviour;*
3. *"lawfulness"—respecting laws and rules;*
4. *"incorruptibility and impartiality"—acting in the public interest instead of self-interest or other inappropriate partial interests;*
5. *"effectiveness and efficiency of process"—acting capably in agenda-building and preparing, taking, and implementing decisions;*
6. *"professionalism and civility"—acting in line with professional standards and standards for (inter)personal behaviour; skilfulness (expertise), civility and respect, neutrality and loyalty (including confidentiality), and serviceability for civil servants; and reliability, civility, and trustworthiness for politicians; and*
7. *"robustness"—being stable and reliable but also able to adapt and innovate.*

5.3 Value Universality or Contextuality in Governance

Given that these values are identified to pertain to governance processes in a broad sense, it is no surprise they constitute rather broad and generic categories. This triggers the questions of 1) how such generic values apply to concrete organizational settings, 2) to what extent the same set of values applies across a sector as varied as the public sector and, 3) whether individual

values or value clusters differ among different domains, occupations, level of decision-making responsibility or specific type of public service delivery.

In addressing this important question of value uniformity, Huberts touches upon the major philosophical debates of value relativism, universalism and pluralism (2014, p. 214). In essence, they represent the following different viewpoints respectively: (1) values only acquire their worth in the specific context they are viewed and used in (relativism); (2) values are, at least to some extent, characterized by a universal validity, irrespective of time, place, person and circumstances (universalism); and (3) values are not only co-existent and co-dependant but also incommensurable – that is, they inherently conflict and the pursuit of the one always is at expense of the pursuit of the other, which makes the management of conflicting values a key characteristic of governing (pluralism). This line of reasoning applies well to public administration contexts. In public governance, a wide range of values, such as honesty, effectiveness, efficiency, integrity and lawfulness are intrinsically valued (De Graaf, 2015). Therefore, in theory, each and every one of them deserves to be pursued to its full capacity. However, in administrative reality this is a sheer impossible task, and every time the right balance between values needs to be struck, it is contingent on the specific situation (De Graaf, 2015). Huberts settles his position in between a pluralist and a universalist point of view, and states to be "sceptical of value relativism" (2014, p. 214). In explaining his position on the tenability of the value panorama he identified, his position tends to lean more towards a universalistic point of view:

> To put it simply, values, as well as their prioritization in relation to each other, are, of course, constructed in context, so the meaning of incorruptibility and efficiency and their importance among other values will differ between, for example, governance in an Indian village and governance in the wealthy metropolitan areas of the world. To use or even prescribe the same criteria and policies in both contexts would thus be unrealistic and counterproductive. Yet I nevertheless doubt whether a poor Indian villager and a New York yuppie differ that much in their views on a governance system in which the private profit of their "governor" dominates over public interest. Hence, universalistic values on governance do seem to exist. The poor farmer and the yuppie prefer incorruptibility above corruptibility, even though they are part of systems and contexts that will—understandably—lead to very different types of behaviour. (Huberts, 2014, p. 214)

Despite the acknowledgement of contextual differences on how values are enacted or prioritized, Huberts seems to appeal to a certain global commonality in value comprehension and value understanding. Perhaps not of the type of behaviour and the substance of the policies to enact them, and perhaps not of the extent to which they are prioritized over others. But, at the very least, his explanation discerns that the importance of the values he propagates, and to a lesser extent their foundational meanings, will be globally recognized and aspired to.

Analysing two different case studies, this study reflects on the tenability of Huberts' value panorama of seven central governance values and will examine this position for two different types of public contexts. These two case studies will put values in context along the lines of two specific administrative types of public service delivery: street-level craftsmanship and PPPs.

5.4 Case Study I: Public Craftsmanship at Street Level

Lately, viewing the public office as a craft has gained renewed attention, both in the Dutch context ('t Hart, 2014; Paanakker, 2020) and beyond (Kunneman, 2012; Rhodes, 2015). In his sociological exploration of the concept, Sennett defines craftsmanship as an internalized motivation and competence for quality-driven work: the desire, skill and commitment "to do a job well for its own sake" (Sennett, 2008, p. 9). Translating this conception to the public domain of governance, Paanakker conceptualizes public craftsmanship at street level as the by public professionals internalized skills, practices and values to deliver good work (2019), and that reflect the tangible nature of the tasks they perform, their experiential knowledge, and the malleable nature of their service delivery (Lipsky, 1980; Polanyi, 2009; Rhodes, 2015).

To gain insight into the street-level application of public values to real life practices, Paanakker examines *street-level craftsmanship* by assessing how public values matter to public professionals in the context of, and towards the object of, their work (i.e. the concrete public service they deliver). From a range of studies in the Dutch prison sector, three points that provide further insight into the contextuality of public values at street level can be highlighted.

First, research into street-level craftsmanship signals how public professionals identify core values that differ significantly from the generic values that public value literature often puts forward. Values that are traditionally attributed to officials in the public sector at large, such as lawfulness, accountability, loyalty and efficiency, do not recur in professionals' conceptions of good work at street level. In the case of prison officers for instance, respondents

idiosyncratically emphasized humanity, security, reintegration and task effectiveness as key values (Paanakker, 2019, 2020). Although these values may be transferable to street-level professions who also have to balance care tasks with maintaining order and/or safety, such as police officers and ground military personnel, or perhaps even paramedics, the concrete practices and skills associated with the enactment of such values are likely to be very different. Craftsmanship values are argued as being unique to the professional logics, realities and beneficiaries of the street-level context in question – as is the interpretation of the associated necessary skills (Paanakker, 2019). This shows how the street-level context determines the identification of highly contextual values of what it means to deliver good work, but also how, *within* professions, this goes hand in hand with a remarkably high commonality in value understanding and interpretation -informally among street-level professionals themselves.

Second, the comparison of how different staff levels understand craftsmanship values portrays a further refutation of value universality. Interestingly, policy makers, prison directors, prison middle managers and street-level prison officers qualify good work at street level rather convergently. However, research among 55 respondents of different penal staff levels indicates that, regardless of the hierarchical layer they occupy, public officials "are consistently biased to believe that management above them prioritizes targets over content" (Paanakker, *forthcoming*, p. 1). Managers were perceived to impose a craftsmanship framework that interprets values solely in terms of the performance culture of unwavering neoliberal and numeric managerial rhetoric. This toxic stereotyping between staff levels was even shown to overshadow positive value convergence on account of socialization processes (Paanakker, *forthcoming*). Here, the mutual perceptions staff levels have of each other paint a rather grim picture that underlines the complexity of value interpretation – and perhaps the impossibility of conceiving values at street level as fixed qualities with a common meaning and understanding.

Finally, the study into craftsmanship shows how value alignment is very much dependant on a range of practical constraints at organizational level. Administrative realities can be thorny and counterproductive to the realization of public values. In the prison context, austerity and reform measures were shown to severely hamper the potential of craftsmanship values at street level. They create a gap between the lifeworld of intrinsic moral values of good craftsmanship and the systemic world of instrumental values, administrative constraints and numerical control (Paanakker, 2019). Implementation problems include time constraints, lack of personnel, the inaptitude of policy paradigms, and of the concrete policy tools and instruments they are translated in to do justice to values of good craftsmanship. Problems of implementation also

includes the omission to adequately equip professionals to "voice their concerns, to understand how policy programs and tools (set out to) tie in with their craftsmanship values, and to learn how they can mold their professional practice to uphold craftsmanship values as well as possible" (Paanakker, 2019, pp. 27-28). They pinpoint a mismatch between the values, ideals and motivations of street-level professionals and a contrarian institutional facilitation of such ideals in the organization. Such facilitation problems explicate how contextuality is not only a key determinant in terms of value interpretation, but also of value enactment – a perhaps obvious observation that is still limitedly taken into account in debates on public value scope and solidity.

5.5 Case Study II: Public-Private Partnerships

Value contextuality not only implies that the meaning or importance of specific values is context dependent, it also suggests, as the analysis of PPPs will demonstrate, that the strategies adopted by professionals to promote or safeguard values that are considered important in terms of good governance are context dependent.

PPPs that combine public and private actors, form a peculiar context in which public and private values or moral standards meet and, supposedly, sometimes clash. Several scholars suggest that private sector values and moral standards are different from public sector values and moral standards.

As a result, some consider the cooperation between the public and private sector or the incorporation of private sector management techniques, problematic. Box (1999, p. 19), for example, argues: "[T]here remains a sense that something is wrong [...] something about running government like a business does not feel right." Others wonder whether public values are at stake in the "public-private equation" (Bevir, 2010; Frederickson et al., 2012; Rhodes, 1996) and stress the importance, following contractual governance principles and agency theory, of strict control from the public principal of the private agent (Zheng, Roehrich, & Lewis, 2008).

In an attempt to assure that private actors behave in accordance to values and norms considered important by public procurers, traditionally, attention has gone out to formal control mechanisms such as legal binding contracts, performance monitoring, and the use of economic incentives or penalties. Several studies (Reynaers, 2014b; Reynaers & Parrado, 2017) demonstrate, however, that the actual use of such mechanisms help but certainly not guarantee value alignment. In that respect, a project member of a Dutch PPP argued:

> I can guarantee you, the contract doesn't matter. You can have a very bad contract and great people and your project becomes a success. Or you can have a perfect contract with terrible people and your project will be a disaster. (interviewee cited in Reynaers (2014a)).

Aware of the limitations of formal control mechanisms, many, following relational governance, suggest that, in order to align values and behaviour, and to avoid opportunism from either side, attention should be paid to informal, relational aspects of the long-term cooperation too and that, trust, rather than distrust, should guide public-private interactions (Granovetter, 1985). In relation, and because of sometimes conflictive and opportunistic behaviour, the Dutch government recently developed a "market vision" entitled "Together with the Market". This document describes a shared vision of the relationship between market and procurer based on "open and transparent communication between parties without opportunistic behaviour" (Dutch Ministry of Finances, 2016/2017, p. 15).

So, what can one do to safeguard values and to understand value contextuality in the specific context of PPPs? Assuring value alignment, it seems, goes further than simply writing, signing and monitoring legal contracts. Complementing contractual and relational governance (Poppo & Zenger, 2002), hence, seems fundamental. Public procurers should pay attention to the "soft", relational or informal aspects of the collaboration as they seem equally important when it comes to safeguarding values. Furthermore, it takes two to safeguard values and to promote good governance. Public procurers and private market parties should cooperate in that sense just as they do with respect to the technical or quantitative project output. Finally, safeguarding values and quality of governance, requires attention from the very beginning to the very end of the contractual cooperation.

Apart from the contextuality of the strategies adopted by professionals to promote good governance, the meaning of the values that constitute good governance in PPPs is context dependent too. The traditional meaning and important adhered to values such as accountability, for example, changes in the context of PPPs. Some argue, for example, that traditional conceptualizations of accountability cannot be used as a measure for evaluating accountability in a non-traditional context (Bovaird, 2004; Bovens, Schillemans, & 't Hart, 2008; Rhodes, 1997). Likewise, Elliott and Salamon (2002, p. 38) argue that traditional definitions of accountability ought to be replaced by pluralistic understandings of the concept of accountability. Empirical contributions indeed demonstrate that accountability and transparency mean something different in the context of PPPs when compared to traditional

bureaucratic organizations. For example, hierarchical accountability is replaced by horizontal accountability and input transparency is replaced or accompanied by output and outcome transparency (Reynaers, 2014a; Reynaers & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2015).

5.6 Conclusion

The case studies demonstrate that values do not –at least not by definition, if at all – work along the lines of the systematic frameworks we as public administration scholars come up with. They work along the lines of personal interpretative repertoires, and, on an aggregate level, along the lines of the confined and decisive professional logics of bounded policy domains.

In relation to the question of to what extent Huberts´ value framework relates to specific types of administrative service delivery, our case studies on the identification and attainment of values in street-level craftsmanship and in PPPs function as brief but clear illustrations of how values only acquire meaning in the specific context they are used in, and stress how value frameworks are only useful when their universality is not overestimated.

For example, in the context of PPPs, the questions of accountability, lawfulness, incorruptibility and effectiveness and efficiency, seem highly important. Professionalism, robustness and democracy, however, seem to be of less importance. In the context of public craftsmanship at the frontline, professionalism, expertise and effectiveness are of special importance, but only from the translation to specific profession-bound values that describe the nature of the concrete service delivery on the work floor. A sub-value like loyalty remains unmentioned, as do the other values of democracy, accountability, lawfulness, incorruptibility, efficiency and robustness. Hence, it can be concluded that the values of Huberts´ value framework are neither universal nor completely relativistic. Depending on the specific governance setting and type of service delivery, some values seem to be highly important, whereas other values are hardly considered or completely ignored. This implies that, to define what values are considered important in specific contexts and practices, Huberts´ generic value framework, might require adaptation. While some of the values put forward by Huberts may still be relevant for a specific context, others might disappear and be replaced by new values.

In this context, Huberts' claims that *what* values are important, and *how* they matter, depends to a large extent on who is governed: "Managing the values in context in accordance with what

the public considers good governance is, in the end, the proof of the pudding for actual [good or bad] governance" (2014, pp. 225-226). In addition, it is not only about who is governed, but principally also about *who governs* and the *how of governing*.

In order to create good governance, in the public-private context as well as in the street-level context, one needs formal as well as informal mechanisms that address those values that are considered important. Value contextuality can be visible in interpretation differences between different types of actors, or in practical facilitation problems in sometimes-thorny administrative contexts. Underacknowledging this complexity and failing to address it adequately by means of open and transparent communication cripples governance processes and outcomes. In the end, value management is about the quality of the interaction between those who govern, and, in addition, about how they structure governance processes to pay tribute to central public values in context.

PART 3

THE EFFECTS OF VALUE DIVERGENCE ON PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter has been submitted as an article to a public administration journal, in its current form.

CHAPTER 6

PUBLIC VALUES IN THE FRONTLINE: THE EFFECT OF VALUE DIVERGENCE ON PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN A CASE STUDY OF THE DUTCH PRISON SECTOR

Abstract

A growing body of literature addresses the complexity and diversity of the nature of public values in public service delivery at the frontline, including how street-level officials deal with conflicting values in their work. We know less about how value conflicts between different public sector levels of policy, organization and implementation affect delivery of services. Using an extensive case study in the Dutch prison sector (*N*=55), this article finds that value divergence between management and frontline workers juxtaposes the numerical focus of instrumental values (effectiveness and efficiency) with the public service focus of intrinsic values (humanity, task effectiveness, security, and reintegration). Value divergence is shown to increase problems with implementation of intrinsic values, leading to sub-optimal value realization in public service delivery. Surprisingly, value divergence does not necessarily cause street-level workers to experience moral dilemmas. Street-level workers were found to use coping strategies of *cognitive distancing (indifference)* to ignore their superior's values, or, from a deep-seated sense of loyalty and adaptive capacity, *bureaucratic flexibility* to circumvent the most undesirable effects of value divergence. Based on our findings we discuss the implications and the need for further exploration of value divergence in public sector organizations and offer propositions for future research.

6.1 Introduction

Recognition of the complexity and diversity of the nature of public values in public service delivery at the frontline is as ancient as the discipline of Public Administration itself. The conviction that practicing administration is not a value neutral activity (Ringeling, 2017; Waldo, 1948) has become practical wisdom, and a rich and ever growing body of literature has examined how public professionals experience and deal with often conflicting values in their work (De Graaf et al., 2016; Hupe et al., 2016; Lipsky, 1980; Oldenhof et al., 2014; Steenhuisen & van Eeten, 2008; Stewart, 2006; Tummers et al., 2015). Such studies provide useful insights

into the way public professionals (frontline or street-level workers with a shared occupation and expertise, see Lipsky, 1980; Tummers et al., 2015) such as police officers, nursing personnel and teachers manage and realize values and deal with value conflicts. Current studies connect the parameters of good work at street-level first and foremost to the settlement of conflicts between different co-existing values in public service delivery.

We know less about the effects of value divergence in the public sector. Rather than how street-level workers cope with multiple conflicting values, the focus here is how public service delivery at implementation level is affected by convergent or divergent interpretation and enactment of values at different levels: the levels of policy making, organizational management, and street-level implementation. *Value divergence* is conceptualized as the degree to which throughout the professional domain, public values are similarly or differently identified, understood, and prioritized or enacted in practice. This explicitly includes both espoused and enacted values (Schein, 2004; Van der Wal, 2008).

From the scale of divergence implied in this definition, it follows that *value convergence* refers to the perceived similarity of value approaches held by policy advisors, organizational managers, and street-level professionals in the sector, whereas *value divergence* refers to the perceived misfit or incongruence between the value approaches of policy advisors, organizational mangers, and street-level professionals in the sector. Numerous empirical studies provide evidence for the importance of context for value divergence, showing how public values correspond to the type of organization the official works in (L. B. Andersen et al., 2012; Van Steden et al., 2015; Van Thiel & van Der Wal, 2010), the type of position held (De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015; Reynaers & Paanakker, 2016) or even the type of work situation encountered (Witesman & Walters, 2015). The urgent question is if and how such indication of value divergence, rather than convergence, influences public service delivery at street level.

Approaching values as the "key qualities that public officials deem relevant in the context of their work and its objective (in this case, the concrete public service they deliver)" (see also Paanakker, 2020, p. 184), we examine the impact on frontline public service delivery if values do *not* converge within the professional hierarchy of positions. To address this unexplored field of research, we present a case study of the Dutch prison sector, in which, regardless of their

position, penal officials perceive a large gap between their own value conceptions of good work and those of their superiors. In analyzing the impact of this value imbalance, we explore the question: "*What effects on public service delivery result from value divergence in the Dutch prison sector?"*

In the remainder of this study we discuss the insights on value divergence that can be gained from current public values research, the set-up of our empirical study, and the effects that arise from the analysis of our field observations, interviews (*N*=55), and document analysis. From this analysis we derive propositions for future research to further examine and explain the patterns of value divergence that critically affect service delivery in public sector organizations.

6.2 Theoretical Background

Given the inherently pluralist nature of values, value divergence between different sets of actors seems not only possible, but perhaps also probable. According to Berlin (1992, p. 12) values conflict not only within individuals, but also between cultures and culture groups, or "between you and me." As Spicer explains, such conflict may come with serious challenges: "This multifaceted character of value conflict is important, because it means that value conflict presents individuals or groups with not simply a moral problem, but also a political problem" (2001, pp. 509-510). And more importantly, "practitioners are often called upon to grapple with and make judgments about value conflicts, when making policy decisions, and where their actions are often, either explicitly or implicitly, coercive in character and affect a large number of people" (Michael W. Spicer, 2009, p. 539). The impact of value conflict on public service delivery is significant and immediate. The pursuit of an important value in governance inevitably limits the pursuit of other values. For example, Okun (1975) showed in his classic work that equality and efficiency necessarily conflict with each other in public policies.

In trying to realize the values that are intrinsically important to public organizations, these values conflict and cause dilemmas. Easy as it is to applaud specific values - who is against integrity, democracy, or efficiency? - and set these values down on paper as a code of behavior, it is much harder subsequently to act in line with all of them. In daily practice, multiple public values that are all desirable in themselves will conflict in such a way that choices have to be made (De Graaf & Meijer, 2019; De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015). Likewise, values can conflict

because different public sector levels attach different meaning or different priority to them. This is how we view value divergence in this study.

Value conflict, in itself, is not a problem; value conflicts, including the ones that originate from differing interpretations at different organizational levels, can bring forth change for the better by prompting alertness and innovation. However, value conflict may also give rise to moral dilemmas, which arise when (a) two or more values cannot be realized at the same time (De Graaf, 2015, 2016) and (b) actors are forced to opt for the realization of one value at the cost of other value(s) (Vink, Tummers, Bekkers, & Musheno, 2015). As can be learned from Lipsky's seminal (1980) study or later the work by Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2003), value conflict is unavoidable in public service delivery. Even when value conflicts present street-level actors with a moral dilemma, this is a fact of life in response to which street-level workers develop a wide variety of coping mechanisms (Loyens & Maesschalck, 2010; Vink et al., 2015).

Yet, there is a danger that value conflicts lead to a state of *paralysis*, to *ineffective* governance, and to *undesirable* outcomes where important public values are lost. This covers moral issues as well as possible practical constraints such as lack of time, or insufficient resources with which to adequately address values in implementation. Here, we study an empirical case to see whether these pathologies, of thorny moral dilemmas on the one hand, and practical implementation problems on the other, are indeed manifested when there is value divergence between different levels in the public sector.

From other disciplines, such as psychology and organizational science, we can derive insights into the potentially large effects of value divergence. Organizational theory on personal and organizational (Kristof, 1996) – rather than public – values extensively shows that value congruence within organizations generates positive effects on, for instance, moral efficacy and moral voice (Lee et al., 2017) and job satisfaction, organizational identification and trust, and intent to stay in the organization (Edwards & Cable, 2009). For this reason organizations seek to actively socialize organizational members into their value system (Moyson et al., 2018). Conversely, value incongruence between the individual and the organization causes employees to experience stress, discomfort and a range of negative work attitudes and behavior, including higher turnover intention, and lower job satisfaction, lower engagement and lower productivity

(Vogel et al., 2016). Although our study focuses on a different type of values and level of analysis, similar dynamics and pathologies may occur from value divergence in public sector service delivery.

Value conflicts in governance take many forms and exist at different levels: individual (public actors), governmental (institutions), policy formation (allocation of values), and governance (the process). In a rare approach of value comparison throughout a specific professional domain, our case study explicitly takes into account these different levels and their representatives. We are interested to see what the effects are on implementation levels when conflicts arise between street-level workers and actors on different levels of management who share the same professional focus in terms of target group, type of public service delivery and, at least in theory, a shared mission to work towards shared objectives. To this end, we will focus on those conflicts that "become manifest as a felt problem for individuals" (D. Thacher & R. Rein, 2004, p. 461), especially when they present a challenge for *justification* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; who stress the differences in rationalities that actors can have in a dispute. Justifications have to follow rules of acceptability). In these attempts to justify value choices may lie important pointers of value differences and divergence between different sets of actors, as justification forces actors to collectively support and explain the value focus adopted. As Thacher and Rein explain:

> When only a single overriding goal has primary relevance for policy making, it is clear what kind of argument a policy actor needs to offer to justify her actions: she must show that the choice she made is the best way to achieve that single overriding goal. But when multiple and conflicting values are relevant, it is not clear what kind of argument is needed to vindicate her decision. In addition, she will need to justify her choice to pay more attention to one value at the expense of the others, or offer an alternative reason for her decision. (2004, p. 461)

The need to justify value conflict may also bring forth its own strategies for making sense of inter-actor divergence and may demand that public officials develop coping strategies unique to the handling of value divergence.

6.3 Methods And Heuristics

6.3.1 Data Collection

In this study an *explorative* and inductive research strategy is used (De Graaf, 2005; De Graaf & Huberts, 2008; Eisenhardt, 1989; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A multiple case study design focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989; Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Robert K. Yin, 1989) in order to generate theory in the shape of propositions (Gersick, 1988; Harris & Sutton, 1986). This method is fitting when not much is known about the phenomenon that is researched, or when the phenomenon is so complex that neither the variables nor the exact relationship between the variables is fully definable (Hoesel, 1985). This last aspect is of specific importance in our research.

A case study in the Dutch prison sector was conducted to offer some first steps in exploring the effects of value divergence on public service delivery. Data collection consisted of a triangulation method of participatory observation (spread over 75 hours of day, evening and weekend prison officer shifts across eleven different departments), document analysis (policy documents, ministerial memos, organizational reports and newsletters, inspection and evaluation reports), and a total of 55 in-depth semi-structured interviews.

To account for interorganizational differences, data was collected in two different penal facilities that differed in geography and size (north-west versus south-east, urban versus rural, large versus small) and detention phase (detainees awaiting their verdict and convicted detainees). Other than that, the cases share many characteristics. Both facilities attend to a detainee population of adult males and employ prison officers with identical task descriptions and work conditions. Both facilities deal with the same pressure of coping with severe employee and budget cuts, and both facilities endure drastic reorganization measures with very similar consequences for prison personnel (one was in the process of being shut down completely, the other was in the process of merging with another facility).

In terms of policy content, both were implementing a new Modernization Program that put more emphasis on prison officers being responsible for behavioral motivation and the rehabilitation of the detainee, stimulating greater self-efficacy among detainees, and stronger collaboration with chain partners with the aim of reducing recidivism (Dutch Correctional Agency, 2009c). This Modernization Program set out to improve the realization of the sector's

mission of "providing a safe and humane detention in which, together with chain partners and detainees, we work towards reintegration back into society" (Dutch Correctional Agency, 2009c, p. 10). This mission reflects the sector's core values of humanity, security, and reintegration: a set of three intrinsic and inherently conflicting values of detention that exemplify a precarious balance and represent the core objective of detention in many Western contexts, including the Netherlands (Craig, 2004; DiIulio, 1987; Liebling & Arnold, 2004; Paanakker, 2020).

Interviewees were selected from four different staff levels (*N*=55): 32 prison officers, nine middle managers (heading one or two detainee units and their staff), eight managing directors (heading the facility, including deputy directors) and, finally, six policy advisors working at "headquarters," the Ministry of Justice and Security. Together, the number of middle managers and managing directors interviewed represents the full higher management team of each respective facility, and a large part of their lower management team. One third of respondents were female and two-thirds male, with an age range of 30-65 years, an average age of 44, and an average of 19 years of prison service. Years of service ranged from less than five years (some prison officers, and most of the policy advisors) to more than 30 years (for many prison officers and middle managers this accounted for their entire employable lives). The overrepresentation of men, and particularly middle-aged men, represents Dutch prison staff population accurately, as well as the populations in both facilities.

Interview questions were posed to respondents from all levels in the same way. To avoid any bias toward certain types of values or value interpretations, we did not ask for specific values, but aimed to describe value(pattern)s as mentioned and expressed by respondents themselves. The first set of questions included questions on whether respondents perceive value divergence. In line with our definition, we queried divergence on three dimensions: value identification, value understanding, and value prioritization or enactment in practice. Respondents were shown a pyramid depicting the four different penal levels under consideration and then asked to reflect on the values that different staff levels deem important and how they might enact such values. This included such questions as: In your opinion, to what extent does the penal sector have a shared vision on the values the sector stands for? Between which staff levels do you perceive views to clash the most, and how does this show? Between which staff levels do you perceive views to be the most aligned, and how does this show? To what extent do you feel different

levels have different interpretations or understandings of values? To what extent do you feel different staff levels have differing views on how to enact values in practice? This generated patterns of mutual value perceptions that could be used to contrast the views of the different levels.

The second set of questions started with an open question on how respondents perceive that the value divergence they witness impacts the way prison officers carry out and experience their work at street level. Our questions were directed at all respondents, including the ones from the policy and management arena, and asked them to reflect explicitly on the impact on implementation level. As participatory observation and document analysis revealed the occurrence of many practical implementation problems and potential moral dilemmas, we added follow-up questions on these specific effects. With respect to practical problems, we asked: Do you feel the divergence that you, or other levels, witness causes practical problems on the shop floor? With respect to moral dilemmas, we added: Do you feel the divergence you, or other levels, witness results in incompatibility with prison officers' own ideas about delivering good work? Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim (411,954 words) and lasted approximately one hour. The interview items were also items in our observation and document analysis protocols.

6.3.2 Heuristics

To find patterns in research data, Eisenhardt (1989, p. 541) suggests using cross-case techniques that "force investigators to go beyond initial impressions, especially through the use of structured and diverse lenses on the data" to establish "a theory with a close fit with the data." In this study a software-supported (MAXQDA) systematic content analysis was conducted using the strategy of two-stage coding (Bazeley, 2007; Friese, 2012). This means the coding system was developed largely inductively, "going back and forth between data and codes" (Weiss, 1994, p. 156). During the first stage of open coding, subcategories were explored and created to provide "a good description of heterogeneity and variance in the data material" (Friese, 2012, p. 113). In the second stage we established common denominators by renaming, modifying, and integrating subcategories into larger overarching value categories to build a methodological hierarchical coding system of mutually exclusive codes (Friese, 2012, pp. 130-131). This validated version was used to code the data set at large and allowed us to compare

respondents on value perceptions and attainment, their individual and collective interpretations of value divergence, and perceptions of a range of organizational effects, and to explore relationships between value divergence and outcomes in frontline public service delivery by analyzing (quotes matrices derived from) code co-occurrence and code relations.

From this analysis, patterns (in the form of propositions) were derived, which were then juxtaposed with the empirical data. This inductive process was repeated many times before the final analysis was written. In the remainder of this article the results of the study are presented. Direct quotes from the interviews are presented in italics. The propositions are compared with relevant literature.

6.4 Results

6.4.1 The Severity and Manifestation Level of Value Divergence Between Prison Officers, Management and Policy Advisors

From the analysis of value divergence among different levels in the prison sector, it becomes clear that respondents throughout the sector perceive a high level of value divergence. This perception spans the entire prison hierarchy, from policy advisors, managing directors, and middle managers to prison officers at street level. With the exception of one managing director who perceived mostly convergence, this constitutes 54 out of 55 respondents (98%). Four policy advisors see only subtle differences in the value approaches of different staff levels (7%). According to these policy advisors, this is an inherent feature of value divergence that does not affect good implementation negatively: abstract policy values permit and perhaps even require a certain "couleur locale" (policy advisor 4) in implementation. The remaining 50 respondents describe the value divergence as large, grave, and problematic (91%).

Table 6.1 displays where, according to respondents, the experienced value divergence manifests itself. We consider the three dimensions of value divergence: value identification (which values matter), value understanding (how the meaning of these values is interpreted), and value prioritization or enactment (which values are actually emphasized in practice). From the 54 respondents who describe value divergence, all are of the opinion that value divergence is *most* evident, and most pressing, with respect to policy implementation – that is, on the dimension

of value prioritization and enactment in practice. They agree that views conflict most on how to prioritize values in street-level practice (what values should take precedence there) and on how to address and realize values in implementation (which concrete policy tools and measures should be used).

Within this pattern, two views can be distinguished. 58% of respondents (32 out of 55) perceives that the divergence lies not in the shared interpretation of key values, but in their enactment in practice. They believe there is a shared belief in ideal values, but stress that the reality where values are actually prioritized and given shape in practice is a different one:

> On paper, we all agree to the same [values] I think. But whether that is also conveyed in similar ways is another issue. (Prison officer 3, facility 2)

> In theory, it is a most beautiful story and they make it look outstanding. However, its practical implementation is incredibly compromised. (Managing director 2, facility 1)

This describes the most dominant view of a perceived similarity in value *identification*, but a perceived mismatch between different levels in value *prioritization and enactment*. On top of that, the other 40% of respondents (22 out of 55) perceive value divergence in both value identification *and* value prioritization and enactment. They believe the different levels pursue truly different values, aspirationally and in practice. Higher (policy and management) levels tend to see slightly more similarity in ideal values. Among prison officers the distribution is fifty-fifty (in both facilities).

Table 6.1. Displaying dimensions of perceived value divergence per staff level

Where respondents see value divergence as manifesting itself **(N=54)***	
Divergence in value prioritization and enactment, but not in value identification	**Divergence in value identification as well as in value prioritization and enactment**
Policy advisors (4) Managing directors (5) Middle managers (7) Prison officers (16)	Policy advisors (2) Managing directors (2) Middle managers (2) Prison officers (16)
Total: 32 (58%)	**Total: 22 (40%)**

*Rather than divergence, out of 55 respondents one respondent (a managing director) perceived value *convergence* only

We find no notable divergence on the third dimension of value understanding. Although respondents attribute the values they mention to different levels, they mention the same number and types of values and attach largely the same meaning to them, as will be discussed below.

6.4.2 The Nature of Value Divergence Between Prison Officers, Managers and Policy Advisors

After having addressed its severity and manifestation level, the next question is about the nature of the experienced value divergence. Which values clash, and how? Table 6.2 displays the values that respondents identify, what they understand them to mean, and how they feel the values are distributed over the different respondent groups in terms of prioritization. Here, a distinct dichotomy arises between a set of (positive) intrinsic values that serve prison inmates, and a set of (negative) instrumental values that support the organization. Clear and consistent value patterns emerge per level, and beyond. Respondents clearly relate the intrinsic values to street-level prison officers, and, interestingly, to their own value approaches, but relate the value approaches of each level above them to instrumental values. These value patterns also emanate from the document analysis, and are affirmed by field observations.

In the eyes of managing directors, middle managers, and prison officers alike, the focus of their superiors is limited to the two instrumental values of effectiveness and efficiency. The role of effectiveness in terms of rigorous and quantitative performance measurement "that has nothing to do with quality" (prison officer 12, facility 2) is so negative that we label it here as "number obsession." Efficiency has an equally negative connotation: in this case study, respondents reduce its role and meaning to disproportional general cutbacks, and specifically personnel cuts, with a strong undermining impact. In the words of prison officer 13 (facility 1): "*Everything has to be cheaper and shorter and quicker with less personnel. As few expenses as possible."*

This instrumental or numerical focus comes at the expense of the core intrinsic values that prison officers at street level seek to realize. Respondents convergently characterize the intrinsic

values as covering the three mission-driven values through which the sector advocates putting detainee care and support center stage (humanity), a safe environment free of aggression, violence and crime (security), and fostering behavioral change among detainees (rehabilitation), but also as including a fourth value we labeled "task effectiveness." This represents being granted the time, means, and peace and quiet to conduct daily administrative and organizational penal tasks effectively at street level (daily recurring tasks such as writing detainee reports, distributing meals and other assets, conducting cell inspections, and managing the program with daily detainee activities such as labor, showering, recreation time, cooking, etc). (see table 6.2).

Table 6.2. Meaning and distribution of two opposing sets of values over respondent groups

		Policy advisors	Managing directors	Middle managers	Prison officers
Instrumental values that support the organization	**Effectiveness as number obsession**: the notion that penal practice is only aimed at enforcing quantifiable targets of performance measurement that demands and creates a box ticking mentality at the expense of the quality of the service delivery				
	Efficiency: the notion that penal practice is only aimed at the realization of severe employee and budget cuts				
Intrinsic values that serve prison inmates	**Humanity**: the notion that detainees are to be treated as humanely as possible, with a detention climate and staff approach focused on providing inmates with individual care, practical and emotional support and tailor-made coaching, including treating them with empathy, respect and dignity				
	Security: the notion that detention should be executed safely, aimed at maximizing safety and security for both employees and inmates, and at minimizing occurrences of aggression, violence, and crime within the penal facility				
	Reintegration: the notion that detention should be a direct investment in stimulating inmates' rehabilitation, and their return to society, by changing the mindset and behavior of inmates during detention so as to obtain a life(style) free of criminal activity in the long term				
	Task effectiveness: the notion that daily administrative and organizational tasks of detainee care should be completed effectively in an environment of peace and quiet, and with sufficient time and resources				

In effect, the clash constitutes a value imbalance between the different levels in the values to which they give emphasis. The value divergence is stereotypical and follows clear hierarchical lines: irrespective of the hierarchical level, respondents perceive the layers above them to prioritize targets and cutbacks over content (see also Paanakker, *forthcoming*). The higher the sector level, the more it is seen to have an overemphasis on number obsession and cutbacks. Policy level and implementation level are perceived to operate at two extremes of the spectrum of penal values, in particular by managers and prison officers. This is depicted in table 6.2.

The managing directors who are in charge of running a facility emphasize that the number obsession and cutbacks are enforced by headquarters above them. However, to middle managers and prison officers, managing directors and those at policy level are described as "teaming-up" to prioritize the measurability of performance and cut backs over other work values.

> ….middle managers and prison officers are of some sort of commonality because they are so close to that shop floor, to the crooks, and the directors and especially policy officials are quite far from the reality. (Managing director 4, facility 2)

> To score at headquarters with good numbers is more important [to the direction] than the content of those numbers. (Middle manager 4, facility 1)

The most negative perception of policy level is found among street-level prison officers, followed closely by their perception of higher management. Prison officers feel strongly that policy advisors and managing directors, and to a lesser degree also middle managers, are sucked into the institutional logic of measurable outputs, performance, and lean management – at the expense of supporting the prison officers in safeguarding intrinsic values in the primary process of detainee care. Many managing directors, and even middle managers themselves, acknowledge this reality.

> Yes, well, we do not pay attention to those prison officers. That sounds stupid. But the one we manage are the middle managers. And they did their job well if the prison officers don't dodge work, achieve their results… Yes that is what is all about, that we can see in our numbers that [everything] is done sufficiently. (Managing director 3, facility 1)

> I call it a paper vision. As long as you did your cell inspections on paper and on paper your urine checks, that is what is checked. As long as it is in the computer, they are satisfied. (Middle manager 2, facility 1)

6.4.3 Policy Implementation Problems

The reported value divergence creates a number of implementation problems in this case study. The instrumental values of efficiency and effectiveness are strongly emphasized in prison practice, resulting in high pressure on the four intrinsic values of prisons – humanity, safety, reintegration, and task effectiveness. The focus on severe efficiency measures on the one hand, and on effectiveness through performance measurement on the other, create their own negative dynamics in the prison frontline.

Number Obsession Shifts the Focus from Content to Box Ticking

Because of the overemphasis on effectiveness in terms of measurability (the so-called number obsession) there is less time for prison workers to realize intrinsic values. If prison officers spend a lot of time on reporting, it comes at the expense of fully realizing both humanity and security. Because of this, prison officers spend less time on the floor with inmates and have less opportunity to have each other's back when one of the two (they work in pairs) is behind the computer. More attention to humanity and building good relationships with the inmates, means less tension for and between detainees, and between prison officers and detainees, and is thus an important tool to warrant safety. A managing director explains how delicate this balance is in the closed world of the prison:

> If security is not there, there is nothing. It means you cannot motivate inmates, cannot offer a proper humane treatment. If they are not safe, they will arm themselves, so to speak. They will withdraw to their cells. […] All kinds of tricky dynamics occur. If you don't have that basis, if you don't have security, you have nothing. (Managing director 1, facility 2)

The number obsession experienced does not only divert prison officers' time and attention from addressing the needs and safety of the detainee, but also creates an institutional environment, a

systemic world, that operates to the glorification of measurable outputs and undermines the professional autonomy of prison officers. In this rhetoric, the reporting obligations are clearly believed to have a dampening impact on task effectiveness and on the quality of organizational tools that are supposed to safeguard humanity, security, and rehabilitation. Prison officers and middle managers often feel pressured to produce false and meaningless reports: a tactic of simply reaching the target without paying much, if any, attention to content.

> With respect to the required cell inspections, they go 'yes, I haven't even been there, but I just filled it out. At least my list is ticked. […]' And if I put all the reports of the team meetings next to each other, I notice they have just copied that same meeting three times and registered it under different dates. Just to tick the box of the required number of meetings. That really defeats its own purpose. (Managing director 2, facility 1)

> Now, each day it costs you two hours, by yourself, to report everything. I think that's a lot. And what they are doing now is in fact just working the numbers. If the list is there, everything is fine. Do you have to check if it has been filled out correctly? No, the list is there, so it is all good. (Prison officer 7, facility 1)

Moreover, number obsession is said to translate to systems that are numerically too rigid, and that do not take account of the human factor, giving rise to conflicts between effectiveness, and the four intrinsic values involved in serving prison inmates on the work floor. To prison officers, and to a lesser extent also to middle managers, such systems render situations unworkable because they lack the time and staffing to fully manage the many different daily tasks of detainee care. Such implied measurability generates very narrow interpretations of humanity, security, reintegration and task effectiveness that many at implementation level seem not to agree with. The examples offered are rampant. They include a system that regulates meticulously what the detainees and prison officers have to do at specific times of the day, and prescribes how many minutes this should take, at the expense of humanity:

> Then they said: Ok, hear this: we have created time, white planes in the system [of the daily programs]. But that is impossible, it is still human work. Every day is different. I cannot foresee that a detainee will come to me crying that his mom has died. (Prison officer 7, facility 1)

A further example shows security under threat from a system that now assigns fewer, and a fixed number of, prison officers to a fixed number of detainees:

> …sometimes theory and practice bite each other on paper. […] He [the prison officer] is working incredibly hard but still does not manage to get his tasks done, that is what happens. And he feels unsafe. That feeling of being unsafe is so profound for people, it restrains them and in the long run also harms them. Not even the fact that the situation is so unsafe, but the feeling of being unsafe. If you experience that for a long time, it is very harmful. (Middle manager 2, facility 2)

A jungle of prison courses, evaluation surveys and other rehabilitation tools that undermines, rather than contributes, to the value of reintegration is also cited:

> Everything is just one big theatre play and the boys [inmates] know it. Every day is a play with them in the lead. When they don't do things, they are sanctioned. You always have to ask yourself, if someone participates in the course 'Choosing for Change,' or a rehabilitation survey, or the 'responsible parenthood' program, whether they really support it. I am fairly confident in saying that with many courses, the boys do not support them, but they have to take part because otherwise they lose out on other things. So then The Hague will brag again: we have taken so many rehabilitation surveys, things are going in the right direction. Bullshit story. Ain't true. You are fooling yourself. (Prison officer 1, facility 2)

Organizational Reforms and Cutbacks Destabilize Work Values and Commitment

Managers and frontline workers in the case put much emphasis on the role of ongoing penal organizational reforms and cutbacks as the two major manifestations of efficiency measures. They describe extensively the negative effects they experience from the closing down (case 1) and merging (case 2) of the facilities they are part of. The concurrent pressure to not only slim down the number of facilities but also the number of personnel working in those facilities, destabilizes the workforce. This comes at the expense of work quality – the four intrinsic values – and work pleasure. Both facilities increasingly report prison officers calling in sick, being overworked, or experiencing job stress and frustration with the job and organization. On top of

this overall demotivation for the realization of intrinsic values, prison officers are increasingly moved around, both within and between facilities.

> Every morning when we come in we have to wait and see where we have to go and that is extremely frustrating. Especially because we are expected to have our mentor conversation with detainees and fill out our reports, but if I am on another location or at another detainee unit two or three times every week, I cannot possibly make all of that work out. (Prison officer 4, facility 1)

Rather than a lack of motivation, workplace rotation represents a lack of ability to optimize the intrinsic values of humanity, security, reintegration, and task effectiveness. Respondents explain how prison officers need to be able to invest in relationships with detainees in order to realize these core values. Only by monitoring detainees' behavior and entering into personal dialogues with them, are prison officers able to gain their trust, detect underlying tensions and problems, and offer tailor-made treatments.

> My prison officer says: that's all good, but it has been three days now working with a stranger and you expect me to do six or seven mentor conversations". "Yes that is what I expect." "You are mental". And I understand why he says that. (Middle manager 1, facility 2)

If prison officers do not get to work with the inmates and colleagues they know, they are less able to find the time to work on inmates' rehabilitation and to put the detainee at the center of humane treatment. Having less insight into the peculiarities of the detainee's background and behavior also limits their ability to write meaningful reports about inmates' development, and hence also undermines the task effectiveness of the prison worker. Finally, workplace rotation may endanger the core value of security. A quote from a prison worker:

> We have too few people to do what needs to be done. In the morning they deploy you to a detainee unit where you have never been, with someone who also has never been there, and you just have to cope and be OK. But you also need to report on that detainee unit, and you do not have time for that. Look at it this way: you are on the floor, it is the end of recreation, you have to lock in 12 men, and you really do not have a clue who is

> in what cell. That is tough, especially when they do not cooperate. (Prison officer 2, facility 1).

Likewise, job stress resulting from the threat of efficiency measures may hamper security. If emotions run high among personnel (from fear of losing their job, of being transferred, or of losing valued colleagues) it becomes more difficult to control such emotions, and might affect their behavior towards inmates, for instance by being less patient, less responsive, or less alert. As a result, officer-detainee interaction might become more prone to escalation.

6.4.4 Experience of Moral Dilemmas

Under these circumstances of widespread implementation problems, it is notable that only less than one-third of the respondents (16 out of 55: 29%) actually recognize, or experience, moral dilemmas on the penal shop floor. After all, the implementation problems threaten some of the most important core values, and moral dilemmas arise when two or more values cannot be realized at the same time. The respondents that do discuss moral dilemmas (about one third of the prison officers (9), half of the middle managers (5), and a few managing directors (2)) regard this as a direct effect of the value gap between the focus on numbers, targets, cutbacks and reorganization they need to comply with, and the focus on intrinsic values of good work they would rather pursue. No clear relationships were found in the extent to which respondents perceive a somewhat narrower divergence (in prioritization and enactment only), or more comprehensive divergence (also in identification). The most frequently mentioned clash is between effectiveness and efficiency on the one hand, and humanity and task effectiveness on the other. The enforced numeric focus (and the practical problems it brings along) jeopardizes sufficiently meeting standards of humanity in detainee care:

> Yes well, you know, people would perhaps like to spend some more time with, give more individual attention to a certain detainee who has made a request for care and help, but the reality prevents you from doing so [….]. You do not have time to do your work properly, and in principal I want to do my work well, but if I wanted to do it really well, well I would be completely knackered at the end of the day. (Prison officer 12, facility 2)

In terms of task effectiveness, the numeric focus also undercuts the time and space prison officers have to get their daily tasks done, undermining their professional autonomy, the quality of the detainee program, and resulting in mounting frustration and stress:

> If everything is prescribed, top-down, and you only have to score and gain your points and besides that nothing is taken into consideration, it does, it becomes an erosion of your work in my opinion. […] Your position in completely undermined. You kinda went from machinist to conductor or cleaner so to speak. (Prison officer 6, facility 2)

However, the majority, 71% of respondents, in this case study did not experience these dilemmas, nor large dilemmas between other values. Although most respondents have experienced frustration with the reporting burden and, in their eyes, problematic cutbacks, they tend not to experience the severe undercutting of other values to the extent that they can no longer realize these values. This can be explained by the two distinct coping mechanisms that respondents employ to deal with the implementation problems and potential moral stress that result from value divergence.

Coping Strategy 1: Street-level Workers Use Cognitive Distancing and Indifference

First, a clear coping strategy that prison officers are found to revert to in dealing with value divergence is a strategy of *cognitive distancing* through an attitude of *indifference*. The following quotes well illustrate what this coping strategy is about:

> Interviewer: Do you mind the focus on numbers and having to account for what you do? Respondent: No. I don't see them , I don't hear them, they are not my responsibility. No. (Prison officer 2, facility 2)

> I think the prison officer parks the differences in vision. And at a certain point switches to a mode of 'I will just execute what I think my work is about, and I will just let changes pass.' (Middle manager 4, facility 1)

When street-level workers do not have an influence on a situation and they do not have the

possibility of realizing their aspirational values of good public service delivery, the chances are that they will accept the situation even when it is perceived as wrong:

> I notice that people become more indifferent. Many feel something like '(let them) just all go to hell.' (Prison officer 5, facility 2)
>
> Also, we are becoming part of the charade. At a certain moment you do things because they ask you to do it, because they demand it, and not because you yourself would want it. (Prison officer 1, facility 2)

Prison officers are seen to revert to a minimalist performance of the job, aiming just to do things as they have always done them in an attempt to escape the obligations that new policies, including those revolving around number obsession and cutbacks, require from them. It enables them to ignore both the moral dissonance and the responsibilities that value divergence inevitably brings to the street-level shop floor. They cognitively distance themselves from their managers, creating a strong us–them divide of "good workers and crooked bosses" (Stanojevic, Akkerman, & Manevska, 2019, p. 1). Along the line, this triggers an attitude of overall minimalist performance and commitment that also extends to a minimal realization of other core values that demand extra effort, such as humanity and rehabilitation. These prison officers limit their work practices to obtaining security and task effectiveness only. This first group of prison officers has become indifferent to their superiors' values, to policy values, and to what they are supposed to do with them.

Respondents firmly underline the indifference strategy of cognitive distancing is a direct side-effect of the constant pressure of new policy directions and tools, including increased performance measurement, in combination with the severe austerity measures. It causes the limits of the perceived value divergence to be aggravated and overstretched, and causes street-level workers to experience what respondents classify as "change fatigue." As a coping strategy, this recusing behavior entails withdrawal, neglect, and minimal effort to facilitate policy reform and value changes.

Coping Strategy 2: Street-level Workers Combine Bureaucratic Loyalty With Discretionary Flexibility

Finally, a second group of street-level workers employs a coping strategy that is located at the other extreme –that is, one of street-level change willingness rather than obstruction. To deal with increasingly challenging moral demands, this second coping strategy concerns the combination of *bureaucratic loyalty* and *discretionary flexibility*. The nature of prison officers instructs them to be loyal to superiors and the policy enforced upon them, even if they strongly disagree, and they use their discretionary power and experience on the ground to find ways of evading the most undesirable effects of value divergence, operating "on the edges."

These street-level workers employ the experience they have to optimize working practice and to find inventive ways of adapting policies and demands from the top to street-level realities. Through the full exploitation of their discretionary space (and, sometimes, beyond), they alleviate policy effects that undermine core values in service delivery, and actively circumvent the negative consequences of value divergence for their own psychological well-being and for the well-being of the detainees they cater for:

> I think along with the system. (Prison officer 7, facility 1).
>
> No, I move along with the developments of the world so to speak. Change remains always necessary. […] I am bound to protocols and if I cannot evade them, I just have to support them. (Prison officer 18, facility 1)
>
> Basically you are in a straitjacket, so it can go two ways: you become a chameleon and try to adapt to the situation, so that everything, well, runs smoothly again. We are very creative when it comes to that. Or you say 'I quit the job, because that is the other side of the story.' (Prison officer 14, facility 2)
>
> I will always find a way to fix it. (Prison officer 13, facility 1)

In both the interviews and observations, we found many examples that characterize this second group of prison officers. They put loyalty first in two ways: towards clients and also towards the penal policies, values, and mission. In this case study, these prison officers were found still to be in majority, but the balance could easily reverse because of the mounting and enhancing

pressure of cutbacks and the consequent uncertainty. As one respondent put it: "*You know, as long as you enjoy your work, that flexibility remains present, but if you are hit in the face over and over again, yes, at a certain point you will start biting. Then it is over."* (Prison officer 1, facility 1)

6.5 Discussion

Discussing our findings in the light of relevant literatures, we find they have implications for a range of different theoretical fields. From our case study on the Dutch prison, we conclude that value divergence gives rise to practical implementation problems, and practical implementation problems get in the way of value realization at street-level. Prison workers are supposed to realize the four intrinsic values of penal service delivery, but in practice spend most time on mitigating the negative effects of the institutional focus on output measurement and far-reaching efficiency measures. This is at the expense of the values of humanity, security, reintegration and task effectiveness: they are not optimally realized. This leads us to our first two propositions:

> *Proposition 1:* Value divergence leads to ineffective governance in frontline public service delivery, i.e. it undermines the realization of core values.
>
> *Proposition 2:* The graver the value divergence between intrinsic values of public service delivery and instrumental values of organizational profitability, the graver the implementation problems on the frontline due to a mismatch between policy ideals, and practical policy tools and instruments.

Our findings provide strong evidence that the negative effects of value divergence should not be underestimated (Vogel et al., 2016) and endorse how good public service delivery avails itself of value convergence in public policy domains (Jensen et al., 2018). When detailing the types of implementation problems that results from divergence on output measurement and efficiency, we derive the following propositions:

> *Proposition 3*: An overemphasis on effectiveness in the instrumental interpretation of output measurement undermines the realization of intrinsic values at the frontline and shifts the focus of value attainment from addressing content to superficial box ticking in public service delivery.

> *Proposition 4*: An overemphasis on efficiency at the expense of intrinsic values of public service delivery, causes mutually reinforcing, vicious, cycles of implementation problems (understaffing, lack of time, and lack of workforce stability) and the undermining of the willingness and ability of street-level managers and workers to realize intrinsic values.

This confirms an earlier study concluding that a perceived manager-led and manager-created clash between the "lifeworld of intrinsic values" of good work and the "systemic environment of numerical control" acts to "create negativity in staff and thwarts policy implementation" (Paanakker, 2019, p. 894). Despite the growing claim in the field of public administration that the era of new public management has now passed (De Vries & Nemec, 2013; Dunleavy et al., 2005), our study shows how policy practice may be lagging behind and still relies heavily on the performance logic of managerial and numerical control, with policies designed to foster economic values at the expense of other types of crucial values (Hood 1991, Tummers 2012, Overeem & Tholen 2011, Fernandez-Guttierez & Van de Walle 2018; Emery and Giauque 2003; Noordegraaf & De Wit 2012). Our findings confirm that number obsession leads to perverse effects (Pidd, 2005) and strategic behaviors (De Bruijn, 2002; Moynihan et al., 2011), also, and specifically, in terms of value realization at the frontline. Our findings also support theory that pinpoints how public officials may feel bound by a "bureaucratic ethos, which constrain[s] them to focusing on achieving administrative efficiency through the application of utilitarian, market-based tools" (Nabatchi, Goerdel, & Peffer, 2011, p. i38). Although recent empirical work indicates that elite civil servants at policy level apply a variety of values in their decision making on cutback management – not just efficiency, but also values such as robustness and fairness (Schmidt, 2019) – our study shows this is not the case from the subjective viewpoint of the executive branch.

Furthermore, our findings carry important implications for theory on change management (Jensen et al., 2019; Tummers, 2013; Wynen et al., 2019) and suggest that value divergence may be an important explanatory variable of change resistance.

Finally, our study underscores how, despite the contextuality and subjectivity of public values and value divergence, value divergence is perceived on a large scale and, even if open to dispute

from an objective point of view, forms a vital reality to respondents, with major impact on frontline public service delivery. Value divergence constitutes a reality that frontline workers and executive managers alike align their attitudes and behaviors to, and as such, it is a reality to be taken into account by managers of all levels. From these concluding findings on implementation problems, we derive two more propositions:

> *Proposition 5:* The graver the value divergence with respect to the higher echelons of management, the more street-level managers and workers feel alienated from policy, and the less their willingness to implement policy(changes) and its underlying values.
>
> *Proposition 6:* The stronger the *perception* of value divergence throughout the public domain (even if independent of actual divergence), the stronger the perception of implementation problems on the frontline in terms of their frequency and severity, and collective frontline inability to adequately deliver the public service.

Contrary to the expectations we expressed in earlier work that value divergence is likely to result in distinct moral dilemmas among street-level professionals (Paanakker, 2019), our case study did not support the one-to-one relationship between value divergence and frontline moral dilemmas. This is explained by the mechanisms used by individuals who are in a situation where intrinsic values are threatened. They are able to cope by not recognizing the situation as a moral dilemma, especially if they have the feeling that (1) they did not cause the bad situation, and (2) they cannot change the situation (De Graaf, 2016; De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015). With respect to value divergence, our analysis distinguished the two specific coping strategies of indifference through cognitive distancing, and of bureaucratic flexibility.

The former is a form of what is described in the literature as "cognitive coping", but rather than "emotional detachment from clients" (Tummers et al., 2015, p. 1102), it represents employees' emotional detachment from managers. Street-level professionals turn a blind eye to the value divergence with their superiors at organizational and policy level. Hence, they actively ignore organizational–professional as well as policy–professional role conflicts (Vink et al., 2015). In terms of coping literature, this strategy can be classified as cognitive coping that takes place beyond, rather than within, client–worker interactions and includes "cognitive restructuring, cynicism towards work, and work alienation" (Tummers et al., 2015, p. 1102). As a result of indifference strategies, and exacerbated by the experience of change fatigue (see also Van

Engen, Tummers, Bekkers, & Steijn, 2016; Wynen et al., 2019), frontline workers may move away from clients (for instance by routinizing behavior) or even against clients (for instance by rigid rule following) (Lipsky, 1980; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Tummers et al., 2015).

Unlike well-known strategies of rule bending or rule breaking (Tummers et al., 2015) and the aforementioned indifference strategy, the second frontline coping strategy of bureaucratic flexibility is supportive of doing the work in the most loyal way possible, to the best of one's ability. With this coping strategy, street-level workers put loyalty first in two ways.

First, they display loyalty towards clients in terms of attending to the needs of inmates no matter how stressful or contrarian daily practice becomes. This resonates with the important notion of Public Service Motivation (Perry, 2000; Perry et al., 2010) that frontline workers want to perform meaningful public service (Tummers, 2013) and that high scores on public service motivation (especially on "self-sacrifice") makes frontline workers less change-resistant (Wright et al., 2013).

Second, prison officers are loyal in terms of performing executive tasks in line with penal policies, values, and mission as much as possible. This is in line with literature stressing the important of organizational mission in employee work motivation (Wright, 2007), and shows that, especially in command cultures, in addition to self-sacrifice, bureaucratic loyalty and obedience may be important in explaining compliance. The above findings on moral dilemmas lead us to formulate our final propositions:

> *Proposition 7:* Within a sector, value divergence between different public sector levels does not necessarily lead to moral dilemmas experienced at the frontline.
>
> *Proposition 8*: The coping mechanisms of *indifference by means of cognitive distancing* and *bureaucratic flexibility* prevent the majority of street-level workers from experiencing moral dilemmas.

Future research on these propositions is encouraged, specifically in other types of frontline public service delivery, such as the police, health and care, or education, to examine the

generalizability of the nature and dynamics of the effects of value divergence in public policy domains and organizations.

6.6 Conclusion

With the discussion and propositions above, we have an answer to our main question: *what effects on policy implementation result from value divergence in the Dutch prison sector?* The overall conclusion is that value divergence undermines the realization of the core values in the prison sector through a range of practical implementation problems, but does not necessarily lead to the experience of moral dilemmas in a one-to-one relationship.

A value imbalance between the instrumental values that support the organization, as enforced by managers, and the intrinsic values in serving prison inmates, as aspired to by frontline workers, forces street-level prison officers to reorganize their work routines. As a result, many report that they experience implementation problems in trying to enforce policy in line with its underlying values, and that they feel value divergence seriously undermines their ability to pursue the intrinsic values of penal service delivery. Interestingly, the value divergence between frontline prison officials and their managers, either at lower, higher, or policy management level, does not subsequently lead to a high level of moral dilemmas being experienced. This is because prison officers have strong coping mechanisms in place that either make them turn a blind eye to value changes and imbalances, or test the limits of their resourcefulness within the confined settings of their loyalty.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

As its final chapter, this chapter presents the general conclusions and discussion of the thesis' main findings. What does this thesis teach us about public values and street-level craft? What can be learned about the role of values in defining craft at the frontline? What overarching insights are provided into value convergence: the degree to which, and fashion in which, these values are considered alike by street-level professionals, managers, and policy makers? How do the findings relate to broader areas of research on public values, street-level functioning, public management, or public governance? And, from the effects it has on actual public service delivery, how may we understand the importance (or not) of value convergence for theory and practice? Ultimately, I set out to identify remaining questions and how they suggest an agenda for future research.

The central research question examined in this thesis reads "*How convergent are public officials' value approaches toward street-level craft in the Dutch prison sector, and in what way does value convergence or divergence affect administrative practice?"* This question consists of three elements, with a corresponding subset of three research questions. Hence, the thesis was structured in three main parts, each of which addressed one of these subsidiary research questions. In providing an answer to the central research question, this chapter synthesizes the conclusions elicited by the three research questions. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the study and an agenda for future research, the study's contributions to the academic field, and, lastly, its contributions to policy practice.

7.1 Answering the Main Research Question

The thesis set out to enhance public values research in two ways. First, the empirical study of public values research tends to consider values as rather abstract principles, using a predefined and prearranged set of values with an often generic meaning for the public sector at large. In contrast, this thesis aimed to increase our knowledge of the practical role, meaning and enactment of values in administrative practice, specifically with respect to craftsmanship in frontline public service delivery.

Second, there is a paucity of empirical knowledge on the extent to which public value approaches actually converge within and between different public sector levels, from policy level down to implementation level. In addition, the impact on public service delivery of value approaches when they are convergent or divergent remains unclear. Whether it matters if value approaches towards the frontline craft are alike or not, and, if they don't, whether this is a desirable predicament, and whether strong divergence causes problems – have all remained unresearched.

To address these issues, the thesis aimed to advance insight on the dynamics and effects of value convergence and value divergence in the public domain, explicitly throughout a specific policy sector. Using a mix of interviews (*N*=55), participatory observations and document analysis in an explorative case study of the Dutch prison system, the following central research question was addressed:

> *How convergent are public officials' value approaches toward street-level craft in the Dutch prison sector, and in what way does value convergence or divergence affect administrative practice?*

Data collected in two prisons, including in-depth interviews with 32 street-level prison officers, nine middle managers, and eight prison managing directors, and, in addition, six policy advisors working at ministerial level, provided a rich and elaborate dataset on values, craft, convergence and perceived effects. The data was subjected to a rigorous analysis by means of an extensive computer-assisted coding process (MAXQDA) to compare value approaches and dynamics on different dimensions, as well as within and between the different levels of the prison hierarchy. Throughout the thesis, value convergence or divergence is seen as a sliding scale (from very convergent value approaches to very divergent value approaches) on three dimensions: value identification (which types of values matter), value understanding (how the meaning of these values is interpreted), and value prioritization or enactment (which values are actually emphasized in practice, and how). The result is an analysis of what respondents deem important indicators of (the effectuation) of street-level craft, what value patterns can be inferred from this, and how this impacts and interacts with values, behaviors, attitudes, and practical problems in public service delivery in the prison.

7.1.1 Part 1: Value Convergence and Value Facilitation According to Prison Officers

First, the thesis explored value convergence and value facilitation in the eyes of street-level prison officers. This answered research question one: What do values of public craftsmanship constitute, both in terms of ideals and in terms of their institutional facilitation, in the administrative practice of the frontline, and to what degree are those views convergent among prison officers? The results show that prison officers put forth a very compact set of four values only as uniquely characterizing the penal craft: humanity, security, reintegration, and task effectiveness.

This rendered a mixed image of convergence: prison officers were found to adhere to the same types of (ideal) values, and prioritize them in a similar way (i.e. displaying strong convergence on the two dimensions of value identification and prioritization), but were found to attach a considerable variety of concrete skills, types of knowledge, and practices to these values (i.e. displaying some more divergence on the dimension of value understanding). Indeed, it is clear that prison officers jointly put emphasis on certain interpretations of values, creating a shared sense of the *most* common or important ways to translate values into concrete craftsmanship practices. This indicates a global contour of convergence, also on the dimension of value understanding. However, in practice this can still produce very different ways of behaving in practicing craftsmanship, as prison officers may differ in the way they apply skills within value categories, or in the way they apply skills from different value categories.

Furthermore, prison officers displayed strong convergence in their views on the institutional facilitation of craftsmanship values in practice. This is exemplified by a negative perception of the penal institutional climate as one that evokes overall negativity and frustration with their tasks and work context. It is seen as having a powerful focus on efficiency measures and an interpretation of task effectiveness as mere box ticking and number obsession. Specifically, this is a first indication of organizational managers who may enforce instrumental values of target-oriented and performance-induced managerial control at the expense of the attainment of the personal, intrinsic, and moral values of professionals at street level. As such, it is a first indication of value divergence between different levels.

7.1.2 Part 2: Value Convergence and Mutual Perceptions Between Different Levels

Second, in part 2, the thesis explored value convergence between the different penal sector layers: street-level implementation, organizational management, and policy formulation. This addresses the second research question: To what degree are prison officers' views on street-level craftsmanship convergent with the views on street-level craftsmanship of prison middle management, prison management, and penal policy officials, and what explains their mutual perceptions?

This section of the thesis confirmed and further developed the notion of divergence that the findings among prison officers hinted at. In particular, the results in the second section specified that the divergence is mainly found in mutual perceptions. Interestingly, the actual views on the values that are considered important to frontline craftsmanship proved to be highly convergent, at least in terms of the contextual and profession-bound identification of humanity, security, reintegration, and task effectiveness. Due to strong formal and informal socialization processes, actors at street-level, managerial, and policy levels have very similar views on which values matter (i.e. strong convergence on value identification) and broadly speaking also on how the values relate to specific skills and knowledge "on the floor" (i.e. quite strong convergence on value understanding). At least for the prison sector, this signals a remarkably high commonality in value interpretation within public professions and their policy domains.

Yet, even though it is not supported by the value patterns respondents actually put forward, the vast majority of respondents *perceive* divergence rather than convergence between the different levels. In their mutual perception of each other's value approaches to frontline craftsmanship, actors enlarge role and value differences in a stereotypical fashion and lay the source of the divergence in value prioritization and enactment. In addition, there is a high degree of divergence on value understanding with respect to the value "task effectiveness": in the mutual perceptions, its positive connotation of "getting things done" changes to a range of different negative connotations of managerial self-preservation, suppression, control, and a distorting number focus.

In the mutual perceptions, immense differences arise. A focus on the key public service values of humanity, security, reintegration, and task effectiveness is perceived only in the personal

commitment and harnessing of the discretionary authority of street-level professionals, for the sake of controlling the delivery of good work themselves. It is mostly perceived to be absent in other groups, particularly in those higher up the hierarchy, who are seen to restrict their value focus to efficiency in its connotation of severe and directly undermining cutbacks, and to effectiveness in its connotation of rigid performance measurement and superficial output control. Irrespective of the exact position they hold, public officials were found to be entangled in a deeply toxic organizational stereotyping and to be consistently biased to believe that management above them prioritizes targets over content.

Clearly, value contextuality is key not only to the specific types of values that play a role in the sector at large, but also to the internal value dynamics between different sectoral levels, which includes the fronts on which values are perceived to clash and how. Section 2 postulated that such perceived value divergence is deeply problematic to respondents working at implementation level (street-level workers and managers alike) and is felt to severely undermine their (influence on good) public service delivery at street-level.

The question remains whether the analyzed mutual stereotyping is truly a misconception of the views of other groups, or is it simply a discrepancy between what respondents preach and what they practice? Do managers' ideal values of craftsmanship differ from what they, willingly or unwillingly, act out in practice? And, even if misperceptions are partially imaginary, how does the resulting divergence affect actual street level service delivery, and what potential problems does this render? These remaining questions are addressed in the third section of the thesis.

7.1.3 Part 3: The Effects of Value Divergence

Finally, in part three, the thesis explored the effects of the established value divergence on policy practice, specifically on implementation problems and the experience of moral dilemmas in frontline public service delivery. This addressed research question three: How and to what degree does value convergence between prison officers and their superiors at middle, senior, and policy management level affect public service delivery at the frontline? In this section, the notion of divergence was yet further developed and seen as a spectrum on which lie two opposing sets of values that each tier within the sector relates differently to. This section took

a slightly broader perspective on divergence by including data on how respondents perceive a shared value vision in general (and not only with respect to good frontline work). Once more, this provided overwhelming evidence of the type and nature of the value divergence that arose from the empirical results in parts one and two. This can be summarized in three points: more than 90% of all respondents perceive the value divergence to be large, grave, and problematic; the value divergence mainly manifests itself in terms of value prioritization and enactment in practice; and there is little to no divergence on value understanding.

The nature of public value divergence is characterized as two mostly clashing realities: instrumental values that support the organization (effectiveness, as a focus on quantifiable targets, and efficiency, as severe employee and budget cuts), being pursued at the expense of intrinsic values that serve prison inmates (humanity, security, reintegration, and task effectiveness). Respondents from all levels perceive these values in a highly similar way (i.e. strong convergence on value understanding). The value divergence is most visible in the values that different levels prioritize and enact in practice (i.e. most strong in value prioritization and enactment). This is in line with previous results and is subscribed to by virtually all respondents (54 out of 55). It should be noted however that, unlike the results of part one and two, here just under 50% of respondents (spread out over different levels) also perceive value divergence in value identification. In their eyes, different levels do not only *act out* different values, but also genuinely *believe* that different values matter to public service delivery. Despite the different perceptions of how far and deep the divergence really stretches, the result is the same. In effect, value divergence represents a clash between the lifeworld of prison officers who seek to realize intrinsic values of public service delivery, and the system world of managers who the higher the level the more strongly they are perceived to prioritize instrumental managerial values that run counter to that.

This settles the question of whether the value divergence experienced is a matter of perception only: at the expense of genuine attention to and room for the values of frontline craftsmanship, many actors at management levels are sucked into the managerial logic of measurable outputs, quantifiable targets, and lean management. They often practice different values, or practice them differently, from the ones they preach. Especially for organizational managers (prison directors and middle managers), this is often a matter of regret, suggesting that role differences

may lead to enforced rather than actual value differences, and, in practice, to a gap between beliefs and demands.

Finally, the third part confirmed several of the propositions derived from the results in earlier chapters about the problems that value divergence creates. It shed light on how the divergence can result in a state of organizational paralysis within prison facilities, with street-level workers working at one end of the spectrum of intrinsic values that serve prison inmates, and managers from organizational and policy level at the other. This shows value divergence to lead to ineffective governance, with prison officers having to rearrange their work routines to the detriment of realizing key values of penal service delivery. Concrete frontline implementation problems include workplace rotation, lack of time, lack of room to create the necessary bond with prison inmates, systems and tools that are inadequate to safeguard intrinsic values, and an enforced box-ticking mentality. They all function to undermine support of the detainee (humanity), minimizing tensions, aggression and violence (security), the rehabilitation of inmates (reintegration) and effective street-level administrative and organizational tasks (task effectiveness) being put center stage. Hence these implementation problems function to undermine the frontline craft as well as (the quality of) public service delivery in general. Moreover, value divergence is shown to lead to (the aggravation of) job stress, job alienation, frustration with the organization, and general policy alienation.

Contrary to the expectations, and despite its overall negative impact on street-level service delivery, value divergence is found to lead relatively few prison officers to experience moral dilemmas (less than one-third). The two distinct coping strategies that the thesis puts forth explaining how prison officers either circumvent the negative impact of value divergence through their bureaucratic flexibility, or ignore the existence of the value divergence altogether through cognitive distancing, may prove useful in explaining the moral impact of value divergence on street-level professions throughout the public sector.

7.1.4 In Conclusion

I will now return to the central research question of how convergent public officials' value approaches are toward street-level craft in the Dutch prison sector, and in what way value convergence or divergence affects administrative practice? In response to the first half of this

question, it is concluded that whereas the penal officials converge around ideals, they differ in value realization in practice. The divergence is not in *value identification* or in *value understanding*: the values that respondents (street-level prison officers, managers, and policy advisors alike) deem important in the context of the concrete public service delivered are highly similar – as is the interpretation of the associated necessary skills, knowledge, and practices. They separately define the same set of four core values and very much share a vision of what these values mean, and how they should ideally shape concrete skills, knowledge, and practices at the frontline.

Rather, the divergence is on *value prioritization* and *enactment* in practice, and it is large and problematic to all levels charged with public service delivery. Managers, both at policy and organizational level, tend to enact different values from the ones that street-level workers seek to realize, but also different values from those that managers themselves say they aspire to. Instead, they prioritize instrumental values of effectiveness and efficiency in a negative fashion over intrinsic values of humanity, security, reintegration and task effectiveness. This is aggravated by the mutual perceptions that further stereotype along these lines those values that superiors (especially at management level(s) above one's own level) focus and steer on in practice.

Even more strongly than the actual value divergence, such perceived value divergence culminates in toxic and hostile stereotypes and relationships, predominantly from street-level prison officers toward policy level, but also toward their other superiors at the management layers in between, and in turn from the management layers in between toward *their* superiors. Surprisingly, at penal implementation level, this value divergence does not necessarily correspond with street-level workers experiencing moral dilemmas. But the value divergence between instrumental and intrinsic values does create a range of implementation problems that cripple the realization of key values of penal service delivery and have a range of detrimental effects on street-level behaviors and attitudes. As such, public value divergence is argued to be an undesirable reality that undermines good frontline work.

7.2 Limitations of the Study and an Agenda for Future Research

As with any research, the research in this thesis has some limitations that affect the reliability and generalizability of the findings and need to be taken into account to determine the scope and positioning of the research (R.K. Yin, 1989). The reflection on the limitations also provides suggestions for future research on value (divergence) and street-level craft. This will be discussed below.

First, a common limitation of case study research is its scope in terms of the number of cases and respondents taken into account (R.K. Yin, 1989). The data in this thesis was collected only in the prison sector in one country, although in two different facilities to account for interorganizational differences. The results generated value patterns that were internally very consistent. This seems to confirm that the findings reveal value approaches and dynamics that are widespread and endemic to penal service delivery, and therefore generalizable to the Dutch prison sector at large. The analysis did not generate significant differences between the two cases, which seems to confirm that there is a shared sense-making and problematizing of value (divergence) between penal facilities, despite and beyond their differences in geographical setting, size, and phase of detention, and confirm that, for the purpose of this explorative study, the set-up of the study was broad enough in its scope.

The same can be argued for the number of respondents. An inherent limitation of the case study design in this thesis is that the respondent categories vary in number of respondents. For instance, each facility only has a team of three or four managing directors in total, so this group is by necessity smaller than the group of prison officers. When the groups reflect on each other's views, this inevitably also generates slightly different numbers per respondent group, which could distort the findings. Although no indication of skewed balance was found, it is acknowledged that a larger number of respondents, especially from policy level and management levels, could contribute to a more representative picture. However, it should be noted that, for each of the two cases, the entire staff of directors was interviewed, and a very large share of its middle managers, which adds to the credibility of the findings and increases intra-case generalizability. Nevertheless, additional quantitative empirical research can help to process the qualitative assessment of value approaches into the development of penal surveys that can incorporate a larger number of cases, particularly with a larger number of respondents

from policy and management levels. In addition, it would be interesting to incorporate the perspectives of inmates in future research on penal craftsmanship, to adopt a clientele lens to the topic, and to counterbalance possible tunnel vision on account of employees.

Furthermore, the prison qualifies as a total institution (Goffman, 1968) with its very own dynamics of staff–inmate interaction and relationships (Liebling et al., 2010). Such interdependency is likely to be found in prisons around the globe, which likely makes the specific interpretation and meaning of penal craft transferable to other countries. This goes particularly for the Western context, and notably mostly so in countries such as Norway, Denmark, or Austria that share the strong emphasis of the Dutch penal climate on humane treatment and rehabilitation of the detainee. The interpretation and meaning of craft is also likely to be transferable to other types of imprisonment than adult male detention, such as detention of immigrants, youth, or women. Countries whose penal systems, in comparison, have a stronger focus on repressiveness, punitiveness, and retaliation, or include privately run facilities, may produce different value patterns. Future studies on other types of detention, and in other countries, are needed to assess whether this expected generalizability to the wider context of imprisonment holds.

Beyond the prison sector, the nature of the penal service delivery is not likely to be directly comparable to the interplay between street-level bureaucrats and clients or citizens in other frontline organizations. The alternative case of public–private partnerships adopted in this thesis illustrates that very different values, and value dynamics, are likely to be at stake in different cases and sectors. This could produce potential threats to the external validity of the research's applicability to other sectors. Nevertheless, value dynamics of humanity and security may be comparable to other frontline professions with a similar public service type, such as field military personnel, street-level police officers, or paramedics, although the concrete skills, knowledge and practices to enact these values will differ significantly to the reality and logic of the penal system. This underlines the call of this thesis to examine value approaches to frontline craft in context. Future qualitative studies are encouraged to use this bottom-up, contextual approach to provide similar in-depth accounts of frontline craftsmanship in other public sectors and to test the propositions of this study.

The underlying dynamics of value convergence and divergence across sectors, and the types of

effects and responses this creates at the frontline, may well be generalizable to other public sector organizations. The motivation to select the Dutch prison sector as a case study was partly due to thematic and cross cutting issues that have a strong potential to be applicable to many other (types of) frontline organizations in public service delivery. For instance, the prison sector was selected because the role of values in its public service delivery is markedly complex, with multiple inherently conflicting public service values, a large distance between policy formulation level and policy implementation level, and street-level workers operating in demanding and unpredictable contexts in terms of the nature of the work and the beneficiaries they attend to, as well as in terms of the political volatility that shapes its institutional context (Gofen, 2013; Stewart, 2006; Stewart & Kringas, 2003).

In addition, the prison sector provides a context of public sector change and reform, cutbacks and neoliberal strategies and performance rhetoric that inherently affects values and their attainment, also in relation to a frontline public craft that comes increasingly under pressure as a result (Connell et al., 2009; Maroulis & Wilensky, 2014; Pollitt, 2008; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; Trommel, 2018; Tummers et al., 2015; Van de Walle, 2006; Wynen et al., 2019). These characteristics describe the settings of many public service organizations nowadays. Hence, frontline organizations throughout the public sector may very well experience a comparable high level of value divergence on value enactment and comparable dynamics of toxic stereotyping throughout policy sectors. In addition, frontline workers from other organizations may employ the same types of strategies to cope with value divergence, indicative of their adaptivity and resilience on the one hand, or of their alienating attitudes otherwise. This constitutes an interesting avenue for future research.

Another important limitation of the case study method employed is that the findings do not always allow for hard causal inference (R.K. Yin, 1989). This does also not fit the explorative aims and set-up of the study, but does provide important leads for future studies to build on. Specifically, future research should assess whether, and how, the degree of value divergence impacts on the level and nature of implementation problems and moral dilemmas. Larger scale quantitative data collection and analysis can help to provide insight into the exact nature and strength of these relationships. It could also provide more insight into the differences in causation of *experienced* and *real* value divergence, an issue this thesis provides strong indication of – with the former having graver impact than the latter – but could not be settled in

terms of quantitative causality. Finally, the thesis derived a considerable number of propositions on street-level behaviors and attitudes that may be explained by high value divergence and that necessitate further causal examination. This includes propositions on the relationships between value divergence and job satisfaction, work and policy alienation, and change willingness – the further exploration of which can advance our knowledge in these fields of study (cf. T. Evans, 2013; Lipsky, 1980; Tummers & Den Dulk, 2013; Tummers, Steijn, & Bekkers, 2012).

Finally, it is possible that the positive effects of value convergence on public service delivery are overshadowed by the strong (perception of) value divergence in this study. It remains to be seen whether public service cases not only with convergence on ideal values, but also convergence on value prioritization and enactment in practice, are exempted from or less gravely impacted by the negative effects on public service delivery found in this study. For instance, do cases with more value convergence between different levels actually encounter fewer implementation problems, moral dilemmas, job frustration, or toxic inter-level relationships, or is this only the perception that public officials have? And cases with even less value convergence, more of such negative frontline effects? To adequately address this question, future comparative studies are encouraged that will select cases that differ in the extent and manifestation of value convergence.

7.3 Academic Contributions

What, then, can be regarded as the main contributions of this thesis to the academic field? There are three that I want to highlight in particular: the added value of the perspective of frontline craft, the advancement of knowledge on the complexity of public value convergence, and the advancement of knowledge on the importance of value convergence to public service delivery.

Added value of the perspective of frontline craft. Although public values research often underlines the contextuality of public values, a limited number of studies address this empirically, or have it as their main analytical focus. Theoretically and methodologically, considering public values from the perspective of frontline craft has proven to be a powerful framework for addressing the context-dependency of public values and to examine how public values acquire meaning in actual practice (cf. L. B. Andersen et al., 2012; Rutgers, 2008). From a bottom-up perspective of public officials' signification and construction, the study shows how the application of concrete skills, knowlegde, and practices at street-level, and the conflicts

arising from that, can be categorized and explained in terms of the aspirational qualities that constitute values and help make sense of the hands-on work that is street-level public service delivery. This way, the thesis merges literature on public values with literature on street-level bureaucracy. As such, it provides more in-depth understanding of how abstract public values apply to concrete work situations in street-level public service delivery, and how various actors see the salience and centrality of values to the meaning of the work at the frontline.

Advancing knowledge on the complexity of public value convergence. Second, this thesis shows how, in terms of *ideals*, public officials from different levels have surprisingly convergent value approaches to good craftsmanship on the frontline and to good public service delivery in general. This is an interesting refutation of the commonly held notion that managers are an inherently different "species" from street-level workers (Freidson, 2001; Hanson, 1996). In line with the main findings of this thesis, it may be argued that policy advisors, managers, and professionals actually have, more than is often thought, a shared basis of beliefs and ideals of what "good" work is, but are pushed in different directions when it comes to execution. This also explains why, for instance, middle managers are very unhappy with the values they (are forced to) enact. It also provides further nuance to recent strands of street-level bureaucracy research on the supposed alignment of street-level workers and street-level managers (Keulemans & Groeneveld, 2020) using a lens of policy clientele in the way they exercise their function (Gassner & Gofen, 2018). The remarkably high convergence on the importance of four confined core ideals, and on the skills, knowledge, and practices through which, ideally, they shape street-level behaviors, also stresses how the value approaches of frontline craft are unique to the professional logics, realities, and beneficiaries of the street-level service delivery in question. This thesis confirms the presence of strong formal – but specifically also informal – socialization tactics in public domains (Moyson et al., 2018; Van Kleef, Steen, & Schott, 2019), not only within discrete organizations or subgroups, but, as in the case of this thesis, even throughout an entire public sector.

On a related point, the convergence around ideals of public service delivery shows how the street-level context pinpoints highly contextual values when it comes to what it means to deliver good work. These are values that are not necessarily in line with the predetermined and predefined sets of general public sector values that public values studies often tend to use in their research designs (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Reynaers, 2014b; Van der Wal & Huberts, 2008; Yang & Van der Wal, 2014; Zhang & Chen, 2015). This strongly underlines the

importance of not overestimating the applicability of general public values frames (Nabatchi, 2018) and the importance of taking the specific type and nature of the frontline service delivery into account in approaching and understanding value dynamics at the frontline.

The rationale of contextuality supports the usefulness of case based public values research, at least as a starting point of further (and where fitting, quantitative) empirical examination, as "[s]tandardization encourages researchers to ignore the unique aspects of each site", including the influence of its historical, institutional and social context (Herriott & Firestone, 1983, p. 16). It would be interesting to see if other public service domains also have such a high degree of convergence on ideal values, and if the identification and interpretation of values (as well as the associated skills, knowledge and practices) are just as strongly influenced by the specific street-level nature of the public service delivery, i.e. just as profession-bound, as the prison values in this study. Or do some street-level professions share craft characteristics across sectors, for instance police officers and prison officers on security, or prison officers and nursing personnel within a public service ethos of care? This poses interesting questions to the benefit of the advancement of street-level bureaucracy theory. Future research on inter-sectoral comparison of street-level craft and value divergence is encouraged to address these questions.

The observation that the (experienced) value divergence represents a much more dominant reality to respondents furthers our knowledge on the complexity of value (dis)similarity. It reveals how divergence can manifest itself at different levels that are not necessarily aligned. A shared identity of value identification and understanding does not mean a shared enactment of value in practice. Evidently, divergence on which values to prioritize in practice and how to enact them is both more visible and is perceived to have the most perverse effects.

Moreover, the thesis makes an important contribution in revealing how mutual perceptions can substantially shape, and even distort, the role of value approaches in the public sector. This means that examining public officials' own value approaches tells only part of the story of how values play out in practice. Indeed, managers at policy and organization level often practice different values from those they preach, but the mutual perceptions of divergence are still much graver and much more negative than the actual divergence. This points at the complexity of real-life value interpretation between different levels of public sector actors, particularly in

demanding administrative contexts. As such, the findings reaffirm that "there are no inherently prime values, or no indisputable self-evident truths" (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007, p. 373), also not at the intersections of policy-implementation, policy-management, and management-implementation. As obvious as this observation may sound, it is still only taken into account in debates on public value scope and solidity in a limited way. The thesis clearly shows that, even for public officials within the same sectoral setting, determining how values do, can, and should actually shape the frontline craft in public service delivery is a complex area of contestation and dispute. Public values research should seek to take this better into account.

Advancing knowledge on the importance of value convergence to public service delivery. Finally, this thesis is a first step in stimulating scholarly debate on the actual role and effects of public value divergence, in the context of the frontline craft in public service delivery and beyond. From studies in the field of for-profit organizations we know that convergence between personal and organizational values is key to a range of positive effects in employee behavior and organizational performance (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Edwards & Cable, 2009; Kristof, 1996; Lee et al., 2017), whereas divergence produces the adverse effects of employee stress, discomfort, lower engagement and job satisfaction, and lower productivity (Vogel et al., 2016). For *public* values research however, a category of values with a distinctly different nature and a different object (Bozeman, 2007), the premise of convergence remains a rather unexplored phenomenom, whose desirability lingers as an implicit underlying assumption in value debates. For instance, Van der Wal appealed for public values studies to undertake more empirical research on value differences and their potential problems (2008, p. 186). The findings in this thesis answer this call and show evidence of a range of profound implementation problems that come to the detriment of public value realization at the frontline. In addition, the findings demonstrate that, in the eyes of penal offials from policy level down to shop floor, value divergence is a critical source of organizational conflict and dysfunctionality, of street-level frustration and, to a lesser extent, of moral stress.

As a final point, this thesis contributes insight to the exploration of frontline coping mechanisms and identifies specific coping strategies that are additional to existing lists of strategies (Tummers et al., 2015; Vink et al., 2015). This is indicative of how other mechanisms than value conflict or divergence may be found to explain what causes some street-level workers,

under the exact same conditions, to experience moral stress, whilst others do not. As such, the findings also provide a contribution to the exploration of coping in street-level theory. The fuzzy relationship with the experience of moral dilemmas particularly needs to be further explored. This, and as mentioned in the discussion of the limitations, together with a range of additional hypothesized effects, merits further examination and provides a fruitful ground for the development of a future research agenda on public value convergence and divergence and its effects.

7.4 Contributions to Policy Practice

Besides their important theoretical implications, the findings of this thesis also carry implications for practitioners operating in the field of public sercive delivery. One of the most important insights public officials may derive from this thesis is awareness of how their commitment to, and involvement with, frontline craftsmanship is reflected in their value management.

For middle-management and managing directors, it can create awareness that they may tend to disperse and demand different values from the ones they would ideally see shaping frontline behaviors in public service delivery. Willingly or unwillingly, they tend to be absorbed by the institutional logics of performance measurement, output control, and lean management at the expense of genuine attention to craftsmanship values, at the expense of the mental state of their employees, and at the expense of the quality of the service delivered to service recipients. And even when they do explicitly and consciously seek to address intrinsic values that support good public service delivery to clients, citizens, or patients, they should be aware that they are unlikely to be perceived as doing so. This can create different types of cognitive dissonance between apsired and enacted values, and behaviors, that is not to the benefit of the street-level worker, but also not to the benefit of managers themselves. Managers may feel caught between two fires: of “making the numbers add up” for the sake of their superiors, and of safeguarding intrinsic value realization at street-level, neither of which they can sufficiently satisfy.

For policy makers, the thesis can raise awareness of the profound value gap that the policy department is perceived to create between themselves and management and street-level implementation in penal facilities. This perceived value gap of an elite team at headquarters

enforcing instrumental values that support the organization over intrinsic values of good public service delivery forms the ideal breeding ground for negative value stereotypes, and indeed, they run rampant, and strengthen the experience of all types of implemenatation problems at the frontline. It is a wake-up call to acknowledge that their expression of intrinsic values does not reach the frontline shop floor sufficiently. Or even the level of the prison director, for that matter. Policy makers may need to realize there is a lot of goodwill and commitment to penal values that serve detainees among street-level workers, and even significant adaptive capacity and resilience to deal with the challenges presented by reform and cutbacks, but this is not endless. Failure to close or narrow this perceived value gap further exacerbates hostile and toxic relationships throughout the organization and thwarts policy implementation and organizational coherence.

At the same time, this thesis may give insight to street-level workers that their perception of value divergence might be overstated, identifying common ground for frontline workers to level with their superiors, and to put forward their concerns and the challenges they face in making key values work. Speaking up and openly discussing value doubts and problems is required: turning a blind eye and pretending it is not there will not do.

It may also give street-level workers in the penal services trust and confidence if they see the commonality in craftsmanship perspectives among their direct colleagues and how they experience them in the challenges they face. This is a recognition of their nature as craftsmen and women and the great lengths they go to in trying to safeguard the quality of their service delivery. However, an important issue remains in that they do not feel this recognition, something that further contributes to the perceived value divergence and the perception of its negative effects at the frontline.

To mitigate the rough edges of value divergence and the perverse effects it creates, policy makers and public managers have an important role to play in value acknowledgment and communication. Ideally, they should address the root problem of implementation levels not seeing or recognizing how intrinsic public service values are layed down in policy tools, systems, and instruments. Where there is a verifyable mismatch between the institutional policies and the safeguarding of values, open discussion and shared deliberation need to take

place on how to finetune policies based on the practical knowledge and experiences of street-level workers. Sometimes, this means adjusting policies to frontline craft, and not the other way around.

At a minimum, it seems key for policymakers and public managers to equip frontline professionals to critically assess how and why (as well as why not) they can mold their professional practice to safeguard the values of the frontline craft in a sometimes-thorny administrative context. But for the sake of upholding craftsmanship, job satisfaction and commitment, and the quality of public service delivery, it is equally important to create an organizational climate that does not repel but assilimates street-level values and perspectives, and that equips professionals to voice their concerns when they feel their work(attitudes) are compromised or threatened by value divergence that is grave and problematic, be it perceived or real.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL PRISON OFFICERS

Introduction

My name is Hester Paanakker and I am conducting PhD research at the Department of Public Administration at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. My research is about core visions on the penal job. In the first place I examine the similarities and differences between visions down vertical lines. Next, I examine the effects of such similarities and differences on how the prison officer experiences and carries out the penal job. Included are prison officers, middle managers, managing directors and their staff, and the Custodial Institutions Agency (DJI) headquarters. In this research, prison officers are the largest and most important group, because they are the experts on the job. You are one of them.

This interview will last an hour at most. The results will be processed anonymously and quotes cannot be traced back to individuals. Am I allowed to record the interview? This is for personal use only. Do you have any questions before we start?

Interview Questions (Part 1: Craftsmanship, Ideal Values, and Institutional Facilitation)

1. Can you briefly explain what your position is about? What is the role of prison officers in the prison system? Why are prison officers important?
2. Irrespective of current developments in the prison sector, what do you find appealing in the work of a prison officer? And irrespective of current developments in the prison sector, what do you find *less* appealing in the work of a prison officer?
3. What, to you, characterizes ideal prison policy? What does a detainee need during detention, or not?
4. What, to you, characterizes a good prison officer?
5. In your opinion, how should prison officers ideally approach and interact with detainees?
6. In your experience, how do prison officers approach and interact with detainees in practice? And how do you do this yourself?
7. In your opinion, what characterizes the current core vision/mission of the Dutch prison system?
8. If you were to describe this vision/mission in three key words, which key words or principles would, in your opinion, best describe its foundation?

9. For the sake of simplicity, I will now refer to these key words as key values or key principles. Are these key principles implemented in or translated to concrete policies? If so, in what way? Can you give some examples?
10. When you look at the context of your work (of what you do and how you do it), which principles, to you, should not be put in question at any time?

Interview Questions (Part 2: Value Convergence and Mutual Perceptions Different Levels)

I am interested in your view about how different levels perceive and deal with various values. Let's use the key values or principles you just mentioned as a point of reference. [*Questions 11, 12, 13, 18 and 19 were used for the analysis in part 3*]

11. In your opinion, to what extent does the penal sector have a shared vision on the values the sector stands for?
12. Between which staff levels do you perceive views to clash the most, and how does this show?
13. Between which staff levels do you perceive views to be the most aligned, and how does this show?
14. When do you do their job well and what objectives do you pursue in your daily work?
15. In your opinion, when does your direct manager feel you do your job well? What objectives does he/she feel you should pursue?
16. And what about your prison managing directors, when do they feel you deliver good work?
17. And what about DJI headquarters, when do they feel you deliver good work?
18. To what extent do you feel different levels have different interpretations or understandings of values?
19. To what extent do you feel different staff levels have differing views on how to enact values in practice?

Interview Questions (Part 3: Effects of Value Convergence or Divergence)

I am also interested to learn what potential effects differences in views may have.

20. [In case of differences] How do you perceive that the differences on key views and principles you witness impacts the way prison officers carry out and experience their work at street level? And how does it affect you personally?

21. Do you feel the differences that you, or other levels, witness cause problems on the shop floor? [Follow up question: the result of differences in key views, or other causes?]
22. Do you feel the differences you, or other levels, witness result in incompatibility with prison officers' own ideas about delivering good work? [Follow up question: the result of differences in key views, or other causes?]
23. In general, do you think prison officers can identify with the policy from "The Hague"?

Gender:

Age:

Years of service:

Do you have any further questions or remarks? Or advice? What do you think my findings will be in this study? I want to sincerely thank you for your time and effort.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL MIDDLE MANAGERS

Introduction

My name is Hester Paanakker and I am conducting PhD research at the Department of Public Administration at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. My research is about core visions on the penal job. In the first place I examine the similarities and differences between visions down vertical lines. Next, I examine the effects of such similarities and differences on how the prison officer experiences and carries out the penal job. Included are prison officers (the largest group), middle managers, managing directors and their staff, and the Custodial Institutions Agency (DJI) headquarters. Middle managers are included as the essential linking pin between managing directors and the shop floor. This interview with you is part of that.

This interview will last an hour at most. The results will be processed anonymously and quotes cannot be traced back to individuals. Am I allowed to record the interview? This is for personal use only. Do you have any questions before we start?

Interview Questions (Part 1: Craftsmanship, Ideal Values, and Institutional Facilitation)

1. For the sake of completeness, I would like to note down some of your details. This information cannot be traced back to individuals.
   Gender:
   Age:
   Years of service:
2. Can you briefly explain what your position is about and how you see your role in the prison system?
3. What, to you, characterizes a good penal climate? What does a detainee need during detention, or not?
4. What, to you, characterizes good prison policy?
5. In your opinion, what characterizes the current core vision/mission of the Dutch prison system?
6. If you were to describe this vision/mission in three key words, which key words or principles would, in your opinion, best describe its foundation?

7. For the sake of simplicity, I will now refer to these key words as key values or key principles. Are these key principles implemented in or translated to concrete policies? If so, in what way? Can you give some examples?

Interview Questions (Part 2: Value Convergence and Mutual Perceptions Different Levels)

I am interested in your view about how different levels perceive and deal with various values. Let's use the key values or principles you just mentioned as a point of reference. [*Questions 8-11 were used for the analysis in part 3*]

8. In your opinion, to what extent does the penal sector have a shared vision on the values the sector stands for? How does this show?
9. To what extent do you perceive similarities or differences in how different staff levels deal with values? In how values are interpreted and understood? In how values are enacted in practice?
10. Between which staff levels do you perceive views to clash the most, and how does this show?
11. Between which staff levels do you perceive views to be the most aligned, and how does this show?
12. In your opinion, what are obstacles in communicating or implementing values down vertical lines?
13. What are the most important objectives a prison officer has to pursue in his/her daily work? When does a prison officer do their job well?
14. When do prison officers feel they do their job well? What objectives does he/she pursue?
15. And according to prison managing directors, when do they feel prison officers deliver good work?
16. And according to DJI headquarters, when do they feel prison officers deliver good work?

Interview Questions (Part 3: Effects of Value Convergence or Divergence)

I am also interested to learn what potential effects differences in value approaches may have.

17. [In case of differences] How do you perceive that the differences you witness on key views or principles impact the way prison officers carry out and experience their work at street level?

18. Do you feel the differences that you, or other levels, witness cause problems on the shop floor? If so, have does this show? [Follow up question: the result of differences in key views, or other causes?] If not, why not?
19. Do you feel the differences you, or other levels, witness result in incompatibility with prison officers' own ideas about delivering good work? If so, have does this show? [Follow up question: the result of differences in key views, or other causes?] If not, why not?
20. In general, do you think prison officers can identify with the policy from "The Hague"?

Do you have any further questions or remarks? Or advice? What do you think my findings will be in this study? I want to sincerely thank you for your time and effort.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL MANAGING DIRECTORS

Introduction

My name is Hester Paanakker and I am conducting PhD research at the Department of Public Administration at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. My research is about core visions on the penal job. In the first place I examine the similarities and differences between visions down vertical lines. Next, I examine the effects of such similarities and differences on how the prison officer experiences and carries out the penal job. Included are prison officers (the largest group), middle managers, managing directors and their staff, and the Custodial Institutions Agency (DJI) headquarters. Managing directors are included as the essential linking pin between headquarters and the shop floor. This interview with you is part of that.

This interview will last an hour at most. The results will be processed anonymously and quotes cannot be traced back to individuals. Am I allowed to record the interview? This is for personal use only. Do you have any questions before we start?

Interview Questions (Part 1: Craftsmanship, Ideal Values, and Institutional Facilitation)

1. For the sake of completeness, I would like to note down some of your details. This information cannot be traced back to individuals.
   Gender:
   Age:
   Years of service:
2. Can you briefly explain what your current position is about and how you see your role in the prison system?
3. What, to you, characterizes a good penal climate? What does a detainee need during detention, or not?
4. What, to you, characterizes good prison policy?
5. In your opinion, what characterizes the current core vision/mission of the Dutch prison system?
6. If you were to describe this vision/mission in three key words, which key words or values would, in your opinion, best describe its foundation?

7. For the sake of simplicity, I will now refer to these key words as key values. Are these key values implemented in or translated to concrete policies? If so, in what way? Can you give some examples?

Interview Questions (Part 2: Value Convergence and Mutual Perceptions Different Levels)

I am interested in your view about how different levels perceive and deal with various values. Let's use the key values you just mentioned as a point of reference. [*Questions 8-11 were used for the analysis in part 3*]

8. In your opinion, to what extent does the penal sector have a shared vision on the values the sector stands for? How does this show?
9. To what extent do you perceive similarities or differences in how different staff levels deal with values? In how values are interpreted and understood? In how values are enacted in practice?
10. Between which staff levels do you perceive views to clash the most, and how does this show?
11. Between which staff levels do you perceive views to be the most aligned, and how does this show?
12. In your opinion, what are obstacles in communicating or implementing values down vertical lines?
13. What are the most important objectives a prison officer has to pursue in his/her daily work? When does a prison officer do their job well?
14. When do prison officers feel they do their job well? What objectives does he/she pursue?
15. And according to middle managers, when do they feel prison officers deliver good work?
16. And according to DJI headquarters, when do they feel prison officers deliver good work?

Interview Questions (Part 3: Effects of Value Convergence or Divergence)

I am also interested to learn what potential effects differences in value approaches may have.

17. [In case of differences] How do you perceive that the differences you witness on key values impact the way prison officers carry out and experience their work at street level?

18. Do you feel the differences that you, or other levels, witness cause problems on the shop floor? If so, have does this show? [Follow up question: the result of differences in key views, or other causes?] If not, why not?
19. Do you feel the differences you, or other levels, witness result in incompatibility with prison officers' own ideas about delivering good work? If so, have does this show? [Follow up question: the result of differences in key views, or other causes?] If not, why not?
20. In general, do you think prison officers can identify with the policy from "The Hague"?

Do you have any further questions or remarks? Or advice? What do you think my findings will be in this study? I want to sincerely thank you for your time and effort.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL POLICY ADVISORS

Introduction

My name is Hester Paanakker and I am conducting PhD research at the Department of Public Administration at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. My research is about core visions on the penal job. In the first place I examine the similarities and differences between visions down vertical lines. Next, I examine the effects of such similarities and differences on how the prison officer experiences and carries out the penal job. Included are prison officers (the largest group), middle managers, managing directors and their staff, and the Custodial Institutions Agency (DJI) headquarters. I start with actors employed at headquarters, because of their helicopter view on the prison system. This interview with you is part of that.

This interview will last an hour at most. The results will be processed anonymously and quotes cannot be traced back to individuals. Am I allowed to record the interview? This is for personal use only. Do you have any questions before we start?

Interview Questions (Part 1: Craftsmanship, Ideal Values, and Institutional Facilitation)

1. For the sake of completeness, I would like to note down some of your details. This information cannot be traced back to individuals.
   Gender:
   Age:
   Years of service:
2. Can you briefly explain what your current position is about and how you see your role in the prison system?
3. What, to you, characterizes a good penal climate? What does a detainee need during detention, or not?
4. What, to you, characterizes good prison policy?
5. In your opinion, what characterizes the current core vision/mission of the Dutch prison system?
6. If you were to describe this vision/mission in three key values, which key values would, in your opinion, best describe its foundation?
7. Are these key values implemented in or translated to concrete policies? If so, in what way? Can you give some examples?

Interview Questions (Part 2: Value Convergence and Mutual Perceptions Different Levels)

I am interested in your view about how different levels perceive and deal with various values. Let's use the key values you just mentioned as a point of reference. [*Questions 8-11 were used for the analysis in part 3*]

8. In your opinion, to what extent does the penal sector have a shared vision on the values the sector stands for? How does this show?
9. To what extent do you perceive similarities or differences in how different staff levels deal with values? In how values are interpreted and understood? In how values are enacted in practice?
10. In your opinion, what are obstacles in communicating or implementing values down vertical lines?
11. What are the most important objectives a prison officer has to pursue in his/her daily work? When does a prison officer do their job well?
12. When do prison officers feel they do their job well? What objectives does he/she pursue?
13. And according to middle managers, when do they feel prison officers deliver good work?
14. And according to managing directors, when do they feel prison officers deliver good work?

Interview Questions (Part 3: Effects of Value Convergence or Divergence)

I am also interested to learn what potential effects differences in value approaches may have.

15. [In case of differences] How do you perceive that the differences you witness on key values impact the way prison officers carry out and experience their work at street level?
16. Do you feel the differences that you, or other levels, witness cause problems on the shop floor? If so, have does this show? [Follow up question: the result of differences in key values, or other causes?] If not, why not?
17. Do you feel the differences you, or other levels, witness result in incompatibility with prison officers' own ideas about delivering good work? If so, have does this show? [Follow up question: the result of differences in key values, or other causes?] If not, why not?
18. In general, do you think prison officers can identify with the policy from "The Hague"?

Do you have any further questions or remarks? Or advice? What do you think my findings will be in this study? I want to sincerely thank you for your time and effort.

SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

VALUE DIVERGENCE

Introduction and Background

The important role of public values in the design and implementation of public service delivery is undisputed. However, the study into such values is often restricted to a set of fixed and very abstract principles. It remains unclear what the concrete role, meaning and enactment of public values is in administrative practice. This renders a blind spot, especially with respect to hands-on frontline professions, such as police officers, teachers, or nurses. Exactly how do public values relate to craftsmanship at the frontline of public service delivery? To what extent do frontline professionals, their direct supervisors, their higher management, and policy makers share a common understanding and evaluation of values of frontline craftsmanship in their sector? And how does that affect the quality of public service delivery, and the professionals employed at the shop floor? This thesis examines these central questions within the Dutch prison sector.

The primary role of the prison sector is to reduce recidivism and to contribute to a safe society. Despite the societal relevance of this role, what prison personnel does and how they do it is largely shielded from the outside world. But prison officers are true professionals who enact a multitude of –often inherently conflicting- public values in highly demanding contexts. In the Dutch model, prison officers are granted a high level of discretionary power and perform a range of different psychological, social and administrative tasks of detainee care. Therefore, it is of crucial importance how prison officers safeguard public values within the context of their craftsmanship, and to what extent this is impacted by the value convergence, or value divergence, in their sector.

The research is guided by the following research question:

> *How convergent are public officials' value approaches toward the street-level craft in the Dutch prison sector, and in what way does value convergence or divergence affect administrative practice?*

The research was conducted in two correctional facilities for adult males. Data collection consisted of a period of extensive participatory field observation, document analysis, and 55 in-depth interviews with 32 frontline prison officers, nine prison middle managers, eight members

of the prison's central management team, and six policy advisors at the ministerial department that constitutes the prison sector's headquarters at the Ministry of Justice and Security.

Value Convergence and Value Facilitation According to Prison Officers

What stands out in the research findings is prison officers' description of penal craftsmanship, which first and foremost adheres to a very compact set of four very distinct (ideal) values. To prison officers, penal craftsmanship is about humanity (putting care and support to the individual detainee center stage), security (minimizing aggression, violence, and tensions), reintegration (changing the detainee's mentality and behavior through resocialization), and task effectiveness (being granted sufficient time, and an environment of sufficient peace and quiet, to conduct daily administrative and organizational penal tasks, such as cell inspections and mentor commitments).

Despite the strong similarities, prison officers' description of penal craftsmanship is best described as a mixed image of convergence. On the one hand, the results show that, among themselves, frontline prison officers adhere to the same types of (ideal) values in their profession, and that they prioritize them in a similar way. This is evident of a strong convergence in value *identification* and value *prioritization*: prison officers have a shared understanding of the values that matter *most* and of the *most* important ways to translate these values to concrete penal skills, knowledge and practices of their craft. On the other hand, the results show slightly more divergence in value *interpretation.* Underlying the similarities at the aggregated level, we see that prison officers mentioned a considerable variety of skills, knowledge, and practices that can produce different ways of behavior in practicing craftsmanship. Prison officers may thus differ in the way they apply skills within value categories, or in the way they combine skills from different value categories. For instance, some are strict and distant in their interaction with detainees (more emphasis on security and disciplining behavior), whereas others are informal and engaged (more emphasis on humanity and close and personal interaction with detainees).

Furthermore, prison officers displayed strong convergence in their views on the institutional facilitation of craftsmanship values in practice. They depict a highly uniform picture of a strong institutional focus on efficiency measures and an overriding managerial fixation with task effectiveness, exemplified in an obsession for numbers and a box-ticking mentality. This is a first indication of value divergence between different hierarchical levels – one based on the idea

that organizational managers from all levels enforce instrumental values of target-oriented and performance-induced managerial control at the expense of the attainment of the intrinsic and moral values of frontline professionals.

Value Convergence and Mutual Perceptions Between Different Layers

When comparing the value approaches of the different layers, the results specified that the divergence is mainly found in mutual, and stereotypical, perceptions. Interestingly, the actual views of the different groups are highly convergent: Actors at street-level, managerial, and policy levels have very similar views on which values matter (i.e. strong convergence on value *identification*) and broadly speaking also on how the values relate to specific skills and knowledge "on the shop floor" (i.e. quite strong convergence on value *understanding*). Due to strong formal and informal socialization processes within the prison organization, the different organizational levels unanimously subscribe to the four contextual and profession-bound values of humanity, security, reintegration and task effectiveness.

However, this finding of value convergence is not the image that penal actors (professionals, managers and policy makers alike) themselves have. The vast majority of respondents perceive *divergence* rather than convergence between the different levels, and particularly with respect to how values are prioritized and enacted in practice. In the eyes of these penal actors themselves, the four core values are primarily connected to frontline prison officers, and the widely held conviction is that managers and policy makers enshrine a value focus on efficiency (by means of severe, and severely undermining, cutbacks) and effectiveness in its connotation of rigid performance measurement and superficial output control. Irrespective of the exact position they hold, actors were found to enlarge role and value differences in a stereotypical fashion, into patterns of deeply toxic relationships. The result is a consistently biased believe that management above them prioritizes plain targets over the content and quality of good public service delivery.

Here, public value divergence reflects a spectrum of penal values with two mostly clashing extremes: one the one hand, the instrumental values that support the organization (negative enactment of efficiency and effectiveness), and, on the other hand, the intrinsic values that serve policy clients, in this case prison inmates (humanity, security, reintegration, and task effectiveness). The higher up the hierarchy, the more managers are seen to restrict their value focus to instrumental values at the direct expense of (care for or attempts to safeguard) intrinsic

values. Policy advisors are most negatively evaluated, followed by prison central managers, and then prison middle managers.

Effects of Value Divergence

Further analysis of the nature, form and level of value divergence shows that differing views on the frontline craft are not a matter of perception only: at the expense of genuine attention to and room for the values of frontline craftsmanship, many actors at management levels are sucked into the managerial logic of measurable outputs, quantifiable targets, and lean management. They often practice different values, or practice them differently, from the ones they preach.

Virtually all respondents (54 out of 55) agree that the value divergence is most visible and most noticeable in value *prioritization* and value *realization* in practice. On top of that, just under 50% of respondents feel that the different levels do not only *act* out different values, but also genuinely *believe* that different values matter to frontline implementation. This means almost half of respondents are of the opinion that the divergence stretches even further and deeper than a dissimilar prioritization perspective only.

Independent of the exact manifestation level, more than 90% of all respondents (spread out over different levels) perceive the value divergence to be large, grave, and problematic. The value divergence increases and aggravates –in actual sense, but even more so in perceived sense- the practical implementation problems at the street level. This includes problems such as workplace rotation, lack of time, lack of room to create the necessary bond with prison inmates, an enforced box-ticking mentality, and systems and tools that are inadequate to safeguard intrinsic frontline values. This way, value divergence forces prison officers to rearrange their work routines in favor of values of organizational management and to the detriment of realizing key values of penal craftsmanship and service delivery. In terms of frontline behavior and attitudes, and especially in the perception of respondents, this leads to (the aggravation of) job stress, job alienation, frustration with the organization, and general policy alienation.

The results demonstrate that value divergence leads to ineffective governance, creates a state of organizational paralysis due to toxic relationships and stereotypes, and undermines the realization of public values in public service delivery at the frontline.

Contrary to the expectations, value divergence causes relatively few prison officers to experience moral dilemmas. Less than one-third of prison officers explain that value divergence seriously hampers their proper enactment of (the values of) their craft. The remaining majority of prison officers employ distinct coping strategies to circumvent or mitigate the negative impact of value divergence: some through their bureaucratic flexibility in a combination of loyalty and optimal utilization of their discretionary decision-making power, others by ignoring the existence of the value divergence altogether through mechanisms of cognitive distancing and indifference.

Implications for Research and Practice

This study into value convergence and divergence in relation to street-level craftsmanship in the prison sector generates the following overall conclusions. The value divergence found between instrumental managerial values on the one hand, and intrinsic public service values of professionals on the other:

(1) mainly establishes in value *prioritization* and value *realization* in practice, and much less in value *identification* and value *understanding* (i.e. convergence in ideals, divergence in practical enactment);
(2) is even more strongly manifested in the mutual stereotypical perceptions that groups have of each other than in the actual value approaches they pursue or would like to pursue, and;
(3) leads to number of implementation problems in street-level practice and in frontline behaviors and attitudes, but does not necessarily lead street-level professionals to experience moral dilemmas.

With these findings the thesis contributes to the academic field of public values by providing insight into the complexity of public value divergence. It illustrates how value divergence can manifest itself at different organizational levels *and* in different dimensions that are not necessarily aligned, and that agreement on ideals (as it is often measured in public values research) can be something very different than consensus on or conformity in practical implementation. Obtaining knowledge on the public values that public officials deem important thus tells only part of the story. It has proven to be of key importance to take into account the enactment of values (in addition to the identification and interpretation of values), but also to take into account the mutual perceptions that employees have of each other. Desirable or not:

these mutual perceptions substantially shape, and even distort, the reality of the frontline craft, as well as how values come into play.

Furthermore, this thesis contributes insight into how value divergence can be a critical source of organizational conflict and dysfunctionality, of poor public servic delivery, and of street-level frustration and, to a lesser extent, of moral stress. This provides a fruitful ground for future research into related and unrelated sectors, to further examine and specify the type of effects and the existing causal relationships.

Finally, this thesis advances understanding of how often abstract public values apply to concrete work situations in public service delivery at street level, and how different types of actors in the policy hierarchy understand the role, prominence, and meaning of values in the light of public craftsmanship at the frontline. For street-level professionals in the prison sector, this can create awareness on the shared identity they and their direct frontline colleagues have in craftsmanship perspectives, on the common challenges they face in penal practice, but can also help identify common ground for frontline workers to level with their superiors.

For policy makers, the thesis can raise awareness of the profound value gap that the policymaking level is perceived to create between themselves and management and street-level implementation in penal facilities. Also for middle-management and managing directors, it can create awareness that they may tend to disperse and demand different values from the ones they would ideally see shaping frontline behaviors in public service delivery. And even when they do explicitly and consciously seek to address intrinsic values that support good public service delivery to clients, citizens, or patients, they should be aware that they are unlikely to be perceived as doing so by the hierarchical layers below them, be it managers, or street-level professionals.

This perceived value gap forms the ideal breeding ground for negative value stereotypes and their negative effects at the frontline. For the sake of upholding frontline craftsmanship, frontline job satisfaction and commitment, and the quality of public service delivery, this is a wake-up call to managers at all levels to further close or narrow this value gap.

Policy makers and managers need to acknowledge there is a lot of goodwill and commitment to penal values that serve clients among street-level workers, need to actively facilitate frontline professionals to understand and recognize how their core values are reflected by policy tools, systems and instruments, and need to equip them to critically assess how and why (as well as why not) they can mold their professional practice to realize intrinsic values in sometimes

thorny administrative contexts. It is, however, equally important to create an organizational climate that does not repel but assilimates street-level values and perspectives, and that equips professionals to voice their concerns when they feel their work(attitudes) are compromised or threatened by value divergence that is grave and problematic, be it perceived or real.

SAMENVATTING WAARDENDIVERGENTIE EN HET FRONTLINIE VAK

(SUMMARY IN DUTCH)

Introductie en Achtergrond

Hoewel we weten dat publieke waarden een belangrijke rol spelen in de vormgeving en uitvoering van publieke dienstverlening, blijft de bestudering van die waarden nogal eens beperkt tot een set van vaste en erg abstracte principes. Het is dan onduidelijk wat de praktische rol, betekenis en totstandbrenging van die waarden is in de uitvoeringspraktijk. Vooral in frontlinie beroepen, zoals politieagent(e), onderwijzer(es), of verpleegkundige, levert dat een blinde vlek op. Hoe verhouden publieke waarden zich nu precies tot vakmanschap in de frontlinie? Hebben de frontlinie professionals, hun directe managers, hun directie, en beleidsmakers die opereren binnen dezelfde sector eenzelfde beschouwing en begrip van waarden van frontlinie vakmanschap of niet? En hoe beïnvloedt dat de kwaliteit van publieke dienstverlening en de professionals die daar werkzaam zijn? In dit proefschrift worden deze vragen onderzocht in het Nederlandse gevangeniswezen.

Ondanks haar belangrijke maatschappelijke rol in het terugdringen van recidive en het bijdragen aan een veilige samenleving, blijft de werkwijze van penitentiair personeel voor een groot deel van de buitenwereld verborgen. Maar gevangenisbewaarders, in Nederland penitentiaire inrichtingswerkers (PIW'ers) genoemd, zijn rasechte professionals die in een veeleisende omgeving uitvoering geven aan een keur aan, vaak inherent conflicterende, publieke waarden. Hoe zij publieke waarden hanteren in de context van hun vakmanschap, en in hoeverre waardenconvergentie en -divergentie in de sector daarop van invloed zijn, is daarmee van cruciaal belang.

Hieruit volgt dat de centrale onderzoeksvraag van dit proefschrift luidt:

> *Hoe convergent zijn de waardenoriëntaties van publieke werknemers met betrekking tot frontlinie vakmanschap in het Nederlandse gevangeniswezen, en op welke wijze beïnvloedt waardenconvergentie of waardendivergentie de publieke uitvoerings-praktijk?*

Het onderzoek werd uitgevoerd in twee penitentiaire inrichtingen die reguliere volwassenendetentie voor mannen verzorgen. Naast uitvoerige participerende observatie en documentenanalyse werden er 55 diepte-interviews gehouden met 32 PIW'ers, negen

middenkaderleden, acht leden van de gevangenisdirectie, en zes beleidsadviseurs van het Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen (DJI) hoofdkantoor (het justitiële beleidsdepartement op het Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie).

Waardenconvergentie en Waardenfacilitering volgens PIW'ers

Wat valt op? In hun beschrijving van penitentiair vakmanschap, blijken PIW'ers allereerst een zeer compacte set van vier hele specifieke waarden te onderschrijven. Penitentiair vakmanschap draait voor hen om humaniteit (het helpen en ondersteunen van de individuele gedetineerde centraal), veiligheid (het minimaliseren van agressie, geweld en spanning), re-integratie (het resocialiserend veranderen van de mentaliteit en het gedrag van de gedetineerde), en taakeffectiviteit (voldoende tijd en rust hebben om effectief uitvoering te kunnen geven aan dagelijkse administratieve en organisatorische penitentiaire taken, zoals celinspecties en mentorgesprekken).

Dit geeft een gemengd beeld van convergentie. Het toont aan dat PIW'ers onderling dezelfde typen waarden van belang achten in hun vak en die grofweg gezien op eenzelfde manier prioriteren. Ze leggen daarmee een hoge mate van convergentie in waarden*identificatie* en in waarden*prioritering* aan de dag. En hoewel ze een gemeenschappelijk begrip hebben van de *meest* voorkomende en *meest* belangrijke wijzen om deze waarden te vertalen naar de concrete vaardigheden, kennis en praktijken in hun vakmanschap, lijkt er in verhouding toch iets meer sprake van divergentie in waarden*interpretatie*. PIW'ers benoemen binnen de vier waarden veel verschillende vaardigheden, kennis en praktijken. Ondanks de overeenkomsten op geaggregeerd niveau, kan dat in de praktijk toch tot heel verschillende gedragingen en vormen van vakmanschap leiden, omdat PIW'ers hun eigen accenten liggen in hoe ze vaardigheden combineren binnen en tussen verschillende waardencategorieën. Zo kan de een strikter en afstandelijker zijn in de omgang met gedetineerden (meer nadruk op veiligheid en disciplinerend gedrag) en de ander losser en meer betrokken (meer nadruk op humaniteit en de nauwe omgang met gedetineerden).

Daarnaast laten de PIW'ers een zeer hoge mate van convergentie zien in hun perceptie van de institutionele facilitering van vakmanschap in de praktijk. Hierin schetsen zij een uitermate uniform beeld van een sterke institutionele focus op efficiëntiemaatregelen en een nauwe sturing op taakeffectiviteit in de interpretatie van cijferobsessie die een afvinkmentaliteit met zich meebrengt. Dit is een eerste indicatie van waardendivergentie tussen verschillende niveaus, waarbij het idee bestaat dat managers op alle niveaus van de sector instrumentele waarden van

doelbereiking en prestatiesturing laten prevaleren boven het faciliteren van de intrinsieke en morele waarden van de professionals in de uitvoeringspraktijk.

Waardenconvergentie en Wederzijdse Percepties tussen Verschillende Lagen

In de vergelijking van de waardenoriëntaties van verschillende lagen blijkt dat de divergentie vooral gelegen is in de wederzijdse, en stereotype, percepties die frontlinie PIW'ers, managers, en beleidsadviseurs hebben van elkaar. Interessant genoeg bestaan er in de feitelijke visies relatief weinig verschillen tussen deze groepen in de waarden die er idealiter toe doen in penitentiair vakmanschap en hoe die in brede zin gerelateerd zijn aan vaardigheden, kennis en praktijken op de werkvloer. Door sterke processen van formele en informele penitentiaire socialisatie scharen de verschillende niveaus zich unaniem achter de vier contextuele en professiegebonden waarden van humaniteit, veiligheid, re-integratie, en taakeffectiviteit en laten daarmee een sterke convergentie in waardenidentificatie en waardeninterpretatie zien.

Dat is echter niet het beeld dat bij penitentiaire actoren zelf bestaat. Zij zien vooral verschillen tussen de niveaus, met name in waardenprioritering in de praktijk, waarbij de vier kernwaarden vooral worden toegeschreven aan PIW'ers, en de breed gedeelde opvatting is dat managers en beleidsadviseurs een waardenfocus uitdragen die zich richt op efficiëntie (in de vorm van zware, ingrijpende, en direct ondermijnende, bezuinigingen) en effectiviteit in de vorm van rigide prestatiesturing en oppervlakkige outputmeting. Ongeacht het organisatieniveau waarop ze werkzaam zijn, vergroten penitentiaire medewerkers de rolverschillen op stereotypische wijze uit tot toxische onderlinge relatiepatronen en hebben ze heel consistent het vooroordeel dat de managementlagen boven hen platte *targets* de boventoon laat voeren ten koste van de inhoud van goede publieke dienstverlening.

In essentie betreft dit een waardenspectrum met twee sterk uiteenlopende kanten: aan de ene kant de instrumentele waarden die ondersteunend zijn aan de organisatie (negatieve invullingen van efficiëntie en effectiviteit) en aan de andere kant de intrinsieke waarden die dienstbaar zijn aan de cliënten van publieke dienstverlening, in dit geval gedetineerden (humaniteit, veiligheid, re-integratie en taakeffectiviteit). Hoe hoger het niveau, hoe sterker er een beeld van hen is dat zij niet geven om, en niet sturen op, intrinsieke waarden, maar enkel op instrumentele waarden. Dat betekent dat van beleidsadviseurs het meest negatieve beeld bestaat, gevolgd door gevangenisdirectie, en tot slot het middenkader.

Effecten van Waardendivergentie

Nadere analyse van de aard, vorm en de mate van divergentie laat zien dat de verschillende visies op frontlinie vakmanschap echter niet alleen een kwestie van perceptie is: in de praktijk worden veel managers, of dat nu op middenmanagement-, directie, of beleidsniveau is, meegezogen in de instrumentele logica van neoliberale sturing, bemoeizucht en controle. Zij brengen dan andere waarden in de praktijk dan de ideale waarden die zij voorstaan of belangrijk achten. Nagenoeg alle respondenten (54 van de 55) zijn het erover eens dat de waardendivergentie het meest zichtbaar en merkbaar is in waardenprioritering en waardenrealisering in de praktijk. Iets minder dan de helft denkt daarnaast dat de verschillende lagen ook wezenlijk anders denken over welke waarden belangrijk zijn op implementatieniveau, en geloven daarmee dat de divergentie nog verder en dieper reikt dan enkel een ander prioriteringsperspectief.

Los van het precieze manifestatieniveau, vindt maar liefst 90% van de respondenten, verspreid over de verschillende niveaus, de waardendivergentie die zij waarnemen groot, ernstig en problematisch. De waardendivergentie versterkt en verergert –in feitelijke zin, en zelfs nog sterker in gepercipieerde zin– praktische implementatieproblemen in de frontlinie, zoals werkplekroulatie, tijdsgebrek, gebrek aan ruimte om de benodigde band met gedetineerden te smeden, een opgelegde en afgedwongen afvinkmentaliteit, en beleidssystemen en –instrumenten die onvoldoende recht doen aan intrinsieke frontlinie waarden. Daarbij moeten PIW'ers hun werkroutines ombuigen ten gunste van waarden van organisatiemanagement en ten koste van kernwaarden van penitentiair vakmanschap en dienstverlening. Op het gebied van frontlinie gedrag en attitudes leidt dit, zeker in de perceptie van respondenten, ook tot (de versterking van) werkstress, werkvervreemding, frustratie in en ten aanzien van de organisatie, en algehele beleidsvervreemding.

De resultaten demonstreren hoe waardendivergentie kan leiden tot ineffectief bestuur, tot organisationele verlamming door toxische verhoudingen en stereotyperingen, en tot het ondermijnen van het realiseren van publieke waarden in publieke dienstverlening in de frontlinie. Tegen de verwachting in leidt dit er niet noodzakelijkerwijs toe dat frontlinie professionals morele dilemma's ervaren. Slechts een-derde van de PIW'ers geeft aan dat de waardendivergentie hen wezenlijk beperkt in het goed uitvoering kunnen geven aan hun vak(waarden). De overige PIW'ers blijken gerichte *coping* strategieën toe te passen om de negatieve weerslag van waardendivergentie te omzeilen en te verzachten: sommigen door hun

bureaucratische flexibiliteit aan te wenden in een combinatie van loyaliteit en de optimale benutting van discretionaire ruimte, anderen door het bestaan van de waardendivergentie met hun managers te negeren middels mechanismen van cognitieve distantiëring en onverschilligheid.

Implicaties voor Wetenschap en Praktijk

Op basis van dit onderzoek naar waardenconvergentie ten aanzien van frontlinie vakmanschap binnen het gevangeniswezen wordt het volgende geconcludeerd: de vastgestelde waardendivergentie tussen instrumentele managementwaarden enerzijds, en intrinsieke dienstverleningswaarden van professionals anderzijds, komt (1) met name tot uiting in waardenprioritering en waardenrealisering in de praktijk, en minder in waardenidentificatie en waardeninterpretatie, (2) komt nog sterker tot uiting in de wederzijdse stereotypische percepties die lagen van elkaar hebben dan in de feitelijke waardenvisies die zij nastreven of zouden willen nastreven, en (3) leidt tot een keur aan problemen in de uitvoeringspraktijk en in frontlinie gedragingen en attitudes, maar niet noodzakelijkwijs tot het ervaren van morele dilemma's.

Met deze bevindingen levert dit proefschrift een bijdrage aan het wetenschapsveld van publieke waarden door inzicht te verlenen in de complexiteit van publieke waardendivergentie. Het toont aan dat waardendivergentie zich op verschillende dimensies én verschillende organisatie-niveaus kan manifesteren die niet per definitie overeenkomen, en dat ideële overeenstemming (zoals die vaak gemeten wordt in onderzoek naar publieke waarden) iets heel anders kan zijn dan gezamenlijkheid in de uitvoering in de praktijk. Het verkrijgen van kennis over de publieke waarden die publieke werknemers belangrijk achten vertelt dus maar een deel van het verhaal. Naast het in acht nemen van de tenuitvoerlegging van waarden (in aanvulling op de identificatie en interpretatie van waarden) is hierin ook het in acht nemen van onderlinge wederzijdse percepties cruciaal gebleken. Gewenst of ongewenst: deze percepties kleuren de werkelijkheid van frontlinie vakmanschap en de manier waarop waarden zich daartoe verhouden.

Daarnaast geeft dit proefschrift inzicht in hoe waardendivergentie een kritieke bron kan zijn van organisatieconflict, organisationeel disfunctioneren, gebrekkige publieke dienstverlening, en frontlinie frustratie en, in mindere mate, morele stress. Hier ligt een interessante agenda voor verder onderzoek hiernaar in aanverwante en niet-aanverwante sectoren om zo het type effecten en de causale verbanden met betrekking tot die effecten nader te specificeren.

Tot slot levert dit proefschrift een beter begrip op van hoe abstracte publieke waarden van toepassing zijn op concrete werksituaties in publieke dienstverlening in de frontlinie, en hoe

verschillende typen actoren in de beleidshiërarchie de rol, prominentie en betekenis van waarden beschouwen in het licht van publiek vakmanschap in de frontlinie. Voor de frontlinie professionals in het gevangeniswezen kan dit inzicht genereren in de eensgezindheid van visies op vakmanschap onder hun directe frontlinie collega's, en op de uitdagingen waaronder zij gebukt gaan in de penitentiaire uitvoeringspraktijk, maar ook het besef kweken dat er een gemeenschappelijke basis bestaat tussen hen en hun leidinggevenden.

Voor beleidsmakers kan het bewustwording vergroten over de enorme waardendivergentie die zij verondersteld worden te creëren tussen het beleidsdepartement enerzijds en de managers en professionals in de uitvoeringspraktijk anderzijds. Ook directie- en middenkaderleden in publieke organisaties kan het er bewust maken dat zij andere waarden verspreiden en vereisen dan de waarden die zij idealiter gewaarborgd zouden zien in frontlinie vakmanschap. En dat, zelfs als zij weldegelijk intrinsieke waarden voorop hebben staan, dat vaak niet als zodanig herkend of erkend wordt door de hiërarchische lagen onder hen, of dat nu managers (in lagere functie) zijn of frontlinie professionals.

Deze ervaren waardenkloof vormt de ideale voedingsbodem voor negatieve waarden-stereotyperingen en de negatieve effecten daarvan in en op de frontlinie. In het belang van het waarborgen van frontlinie vakmanschap, frontlinie baantevredenheid en betrokkenheid, en de kwaliteit van de publieke dienstverlening, is het van belang die kloof te dichten. Beleidsmakers en managers dienen te erkennen dat er in de frontlinie veel welwillendheid en toewijding aan penitentiaire waarden bestaat, en dienen actief te faciliteren dat frontlinie professionals begrijpen hoe waarden verankerd zijn in beleidsmaatregelen, - instrumenten, en –systemen en hoe daar zo goed mogelijk recht aan te doen. Maar evenzo belangrijk is het dat er een organisatieklimaat gecreëerd wordt dat frontlinie waarden en perspectieven niet afstoot maar assimileert, en dat frontlinie professionals in staat stelt de zorgen en problemen aan de kaak te stellen die veroorzaakt worden door waardendivergentie – of dat nu een kwestie van perceptie is of niet.

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Hester Paanakker (1984) obtained a Master's degree in Public Administration from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (2007, *cum laude*), International Development Studies from the University of Amsterdam (2009, *cum laude*), and Advanced International Development Studies from the Radboud University, Nijmegen (2010). From 2008 onwards she was employed as lecturer and researcher at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, except for a short gap in 2010 when she worked as a junior policy officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (a side-step some academic colleagues foresaw she would come back to). In 2019, she switched positions to the Radboud University in Nijmegen, her home town.

Her research focuses on issues of quality of governance, integrity and ethics of governance, public values, and organizational dynamics and management at implementation level. The topic of her dissertation is the role of values and value convergence in the context of the public craft in frontline service delivery, focusing on how street-level professionals are shaped, facilitated and managed to deliver "good work" in complex and demanding administrative contexts. She published her work in various journals (including The American Review of Public Administration, International Journal of Public Administration, International Journal of Public Sector Management, and Public Integrity), research reports, and book projects, and was the lead editor of an edited volume on "Quality of Governance" with Palgrave Macmillan.

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The important role of public values in the design and implementation of public service delivery is undisputed. However, there is a blind spot on the level of convergence of public officials' perception of the concrete role, meaning and enactment of public values in hands-on street-level professions. With the prison sector in the Netherlands as its case study, this thesis examines the extent to which professionals, managers, and policy makers share a common understanding and evaluation of the values that relate to craftsmanship at the frontline of public service delivery.

The results reveal a complex dynamic of convergence on key street-level values, but also a dynamic of divergence, toxic value stereotypes, and targets over content - a clash between instrumental values and intrinsic values, between ideals and enactment, between management and professionals, and above all between mutual perceptions and public officials' own views. Value divergence is shown to create organizational paralysis and practical implementation problems, to negatively affect street-level attitudes, and to undermine the realization of public values in public service delivery, but also to spur creative coping mechanisms.

In a plea to better understand the value divergence on the surface and to better facilitate the value convergence that goes unnoticed, the thesis advances scholarly as well as practitioner knowledge on the role of public values and the frontline craft.

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